

THE RAISON D'ÊTRE OF THE MUSLIM MISSION PRIMARY SCHOOL IN CAPE TOWN
AND ENVIRONS FROM 1860 TO 1980 WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE ROLE
OF DR A. ABDURAHMAN IN THE MODERNISATION OF ISLAM-ORIENTED SCHOOLS

by

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Cape Town's Muslim Community, the focus of this research project, richly deserves first mention in my long list of benefactors for having over a period of three centuries created and maintained their institutions of cultural transmission, their mosques and schools. As their beneficiary, the Islamic features of the unique cultural landscape of the city of my birth have long intrigued me. My present frame of reference permitted me to examine only one aspect of their enduring influence on me and all who once were children in the Bo-Kaap.

My wife, Gaironesa, for many years engaged with me in the education of the Bo-Kaap's children, and who shares my concern for their right to an effective role in their country, sustained me with many words of encouragement. Her sacrifices have made me much indebted to her.

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I dedicate this work to those teachers and students of Cape Town in whose company I learned my craft and whose companionship in my journey through life I greatly value.

MOGAMED AJAM

KENSINGTON

FEBRUARY, 1986

ABSTRACT

THE RAISON D'ETRE OF THE MUSLIM MISSION PRIMARY SCHOOL IN CAPE TOWN
AND ENVIRONS FROM 1860 TO 1980, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE ROLE
OF DR A. ABDURAHMAN, M.P.C., IN THE MODERNISATION OF ISLAM-ORIENTED
SCHOOLS

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This dissertation concerns the modernisation of Islam-oriented schooling in Cape Town and environs whereby Muslim Mission Primary Schools emerge as a socio-cultural compromise between community needs and State school provision policy.

It proceeds from the recognition of the cultural diversity that has since the pioneering days characterised the social order of the Mother City. Two religious and cultural traditions have coexisted here in a superordinate and subordinate relationship; one developed a school system for domestication and cultural assimilation, and the other a covert instructional programme for an alternative religious system and behaviour code.

The thrust of the argument is that the Islamic community, developed on the periphery of society that excluded non-Christians, were in the main concerned with cultural transmission, first in the homes of Free Blacks during the Dutch regime, and later in the mosques that arose when religious freedom was obtained.

Traditional schools for Islamic culture transmission were conducted by imams and tended to attract in large numbers the children of slaves and other non-white children causing concern among evangelists.

In 1863, a political understanding between the governments of Britain and Turkey resulted in Abu Bakr Effendi being assigned by

the Sultan to conduct a school in Cape Town to effect some uniformity of Islamic instruction. A latent consequence of this Turkish-funded school was the production of the first Afrikaans textbook on Islam, a step in the modernisation of cultural transmission. After Effendi's demise the school was discontinued. State education policy ensured that non-white children generally were educated only at State-funded Christian Mission schools. Most Muslim children received only Islamic instruction at the various madressahs (traditional schools) as a result.

An increasingly rigid segregation of public schools oriented towards reproducing the superordinate-subordinate culture relationship resulted in a widening gap of literacy which was increasingly important for the economic and political dispensation. Concerned Muslims organised themselves to address the educational deficiency. The South African Moslem Association urged more educational opportunity but floundered before accomplishing anything noteworthy. Their importance lay in their making the Muslims more aware of the need to have a secular education in a changing social order.

It was self-evident that education had to be seen in the political context: the weaker community was most likely to suffer the greatest lack of schools.

Dr A. Abdurahman, foremost political figure of the first forty years of this century, took the first steps in establishing State-aided primary schools for Muslim children. Whatever success he had in this regard was entirely due to his personality and political acumen. In contrast to Abdurahman was the philanthropic effort of Hajee Sullaiman Shah Mohamed to build a school with an Islamic ethos. Why he failed is considered against the social historical background of the Cape Muslims and the communities' manifest needs. Politically, Abdurahman was in a better position and better equipped to address the problem. He served as manager of three Muslim primary schools, the development of which form a substantial part of this study.

Abdurahman could harness the creative energies and resources of immigrant and indigenous Muslims in creating these schools. But the Cape Malay Association, disenchanted with Abdurahman's perceived partisanship, politically sought to advance Malay communal interests

in the political patronage of the Afrikaner political faction in power. In terms of schooling policy they were to be disillusioned.

Small Muslim communities faced with a lack of schools in their towns were inspired by the existence of Abdurahman's Muslim primary schools to establish their own. At Salt River, Simonstown, Paarl, Strand and Worcester schools arose during the vital years of Abdurahman's involvement in public education. The Mohammedeyeh Primary School of Wynberg was the only school initially associated with the Cape Malay Association and, ipso facto, excluded Abdurahman's influence. They had reservations about Abdurahman the politician. Perhaps Abdurahman's most ambitious social advancement project was the Schotsche Kloof Institution where shrewd negotiating skill allowed him to obtain the assistance of the Cape Town Municipality in building an Islam-oriented primary school.

How the State's education policy affected the Muslim community within the selected time-span is incorporated in this study and the relevance of the various statutory commissions on education from 1863 to 1976 is considered.

The intensified residential segregation occasioned by the Group Areas Act was to force several Muslim Mission Schools to close down, for no similar schools were allowed in the allocated areas where compulsory education was to be expanded.

Informal Islamic education and the increase of educational opportunity for indigent Muslims attempted by the Moslem Teachers' Association are considered along with the social significance of the organisation as part of the Abdurahman educational legacy. Whether an Islamic influence in public education is still possible within the parameters of current State education policy is addressed in the final stages of the dissertation.

Factors promotive and restrictive of Muslim Mission Schools as part of the Coloured school system of the Western Cape are identified and analysed in terms of modernisation theories which constitute the diagnostic paradigm.

An ethnocentric perspective of the history of education in the Cape

explains the fact that prior to this investigation the cultural transmission by Muslims was either cursorily treated, ignored or seen as part of the "Coloured Education" sphere of interest. Theses and books about the Cape Muslims were also not specifically focussed on this matter. In each of the historical phases selected to trace the development of Islam-oriented schools, newspapers, journals, magazines and books have allowed a broadly coherent process of development to be traced.

Primary sources were in the main official reports and publications by the education department of the Cape Province, records of the Administration of Coloured Affairs, official documents of schools and the Cape Town City Council.

Judgements of the Cape Supreme Court, trust deeds and wills related to the schools or personalities mentioned proved invaluable primary sources for this research.

Personal interviews with people associated with the personalities and institutions selected filled many gaps which the available documents could not.

It was especially rewarding to have had access to the personal correspondence of Dr A. Abdurahman with regard to the establishment of the Rahmaniyyeh Institute. These letters written between 1912 and 1915 have not been available to a previous researcher.

The importance of this research lies in the correction of the perspective regarding the effects of schooling policy and the focus on the initiatives of the Muslim community, a cultural minority without significant political power, to modernise the agencies for the socialisation of their children.

OPSOMMING

DIE BESTAANSREDE VIR DIE MOSLEM SENDING PRIMÊRESKOOL IN KAAPSTAD EN
OMGEWING VAN 1860 TOT 1980, MET SPESIALE VERWYSING NA DR A.
ABDURAHMAN SE DEEL IN DIE MODERNISERING VAN ISLAM-GEORIENTEERDE
SKOLE.

deur

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Promotor : Dr Gerhard van Wageningen
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Graad : Ph.D

Hierdie verhandeling gaan oor die modernisering van Islam-geïntereerde skole in Kaapstad en omgewing waarin die Moslem Sending Primêreskool uitstaan as 'n sosio-kulturele kompromie tussen gemeenskapbehoefte en die Staat se skoolvoorsieningsbeleid. Die uitgangspunt is die erkenning van die kulturele diversiteit kenmerkend van die maatskaplike bestel sedert die vroegste jare van die Moederstad. Twee religieuse en kulturele tradisies het hier saambestaan in 'n dominante en onderdanige verhouding; een het 'n skoolstelsel vir inburgering en kulturele assimilasië ontwikkel, die ander 'n versteekte onderrigprogram vir 'n alternatiewe godsdiensstelsel en gedragskode.

Die kerngedagte van die argument is dat die Islamitiese gemeenskap, wat ontwikkel het aan die periferie van die samelewing wat nie-Christene misken het, was gemoeid met kultuuroordrag, eers in die wonings van Vrye Swartes tydens die Hollandse bewind, en later in die moskees wat ontstaan het nadat godsdiensvryheid verkry is. Tradisionele skole vir kultuuroordrag is deur die imams gereël en was geneig om groot getalle slawekinders en ander nie-blanke kinders aan te lok tot ontsteltenis van evangeliste.

In 1863, na aanleiding van 'n politieke ooreenkoms tussen die regerings van Engeland en Turkye, is Aboe Bakr Effendi deur die Soeltan aangewys om 'n skool, ter bevordering van eenvormigheid in

die Islamitiese onderrig, hier to stig.

'n Uitvloeiing van die Turks-geborgde skool was dat die eerste Afrikaanse handboek oor die Islam die lig gesien het, 'n voorwaartse stap in die modernisering van kultuuroordrag. Na Effendi se dood is die skool gestaak. Die amptelike onderwysbeleid sou verseker dat nie-blanke kinders in die reël slegs by Staatsondersteunde Christen Sendingskole opgevoed word. As gevolg het die meeste Moslem kinders net Islamitiese onderrig by verskeie madressahs (tradisionele skole) ontvang.

Vanweë strengere toepassing van rassessekering in die openbare skole ingestel op die reproduksie van die dominante-onderdanige maatskaplike relasie het die kloof tussen die geletterdes en ongeletterdes aansienlik verbreed. Geletterdheid was toenemend belangrik in die ekonomiese en politieke bestel.

Besorgde Moslems het hulle ten doel gestel om die opvoedingsgeleenthede te verbeter. Derhalwe het die South African Moslem Association hul geloofsgenote aangemoedig tot groter ywer in die opvoeding. Voordat hy enigiets noemenswaardig kon vermag, het die organisasie opgebreek. Hy het tog die Moslems meer bewus van hoe noodsaaklik sekulêre opvoeding in 'n veranderende maatskappy is, gemaak.

Dit was ooglopend dat die onderwys gesien moes word in sy politieke konteks: die swakker gemeenskap sou aan die kortste ent trek wat skoolvoorsiening betref.

Dr A. Abdurahman, vooraanstaande politieke figuur van hierdie eeu se eerste veertig jaar, sou die eerste stappe neem om 'n Staatsondersteunde skool vir Moslem kinders daar te stel. Sy welslae is in groot mate te danke aan sy persoonlikheid en politieke vernuf.

In teenstelling met Abdurahman was daar die poging van Hadjie Soelaiman Sjah Mohammed, 'n filantroop, om 'n skool met 'n Islamitiese etos in die lewe te roep. Waarom hy misluk het word oorweeg teen die sosiaal-historiese agtergrond van die Kaapse Moslems en hul klaarblyklike behoeftes. Polities was Abdurahman beter daartoe in staat en beter bekwaam om die probleem aan te pak. Hy het as bestuurder van drie Moslem laerskole, wat 'n vername deel van hierdie studie uitmaak, gedien.

Abdurahman kon die kreatiewe energie en hulpbronne van immigrante en Kaapse Moslems inspan om hierdie skole te stig. Maar die Cape Malay

Association, verontnugter deur Abdurahman se vermoede partydigheid op politieke gebied, wou liever die gemeenskapsbelange van Maleiers bevorder deur die faksie van Afrikaners aan bewind as beskermhere te verkry. Wat skool beleid betref was hulle teleurgesteld.

Klein Moslem gemeenskappies wat 'n tekort aan skole in hul dorpe ondervind het, is bemoedig deur die bestaan van Abdurahman se Moslem primêre skole om hul eie te stig. In Soutrivier, Simonstad, Paarl, Strand en Worcester het daar dus in die belangrike jare van Abdurahman se betrokkenheid by onderwyssake skole ontstaan.

Wynberg se Mohammedeyeh Primêre Skool was die enigste skool wat in sy stigtingsjare met die Cape Malay Association geassosieer was en daarvolgens is Abdurahman se invloed uitgesluit. Hierdie organisasie het sy misnoeë met Abdurahman, die politikus, gehad. Miskien was die Schotsche Kloof Institution Abdurahman se ~~me~~ ambisieuse onderneming vir maatskaplike opheffing. Sy onderhandelsvermoëns het die Kaapstadse Stadsraad oorreed om die oprigting van 'n Islam-geörienteerde skool te finansier.

In hoe 'n mate die Staat se onderwysbeleid die Moslemgemeenskap geraak het in die gekose tydspan is ook by hierdie studie ingelyf en daar is besin oor die relevantheid van die verskeie statutêre onderwyskommissies van 1863 tot 1976.

Die strenger toepassing van residensiële skeiding vereis deur die Groepsgebiedewet het etlike Moslem Sendingskole genoodsaak om te sluit omdat dergelike skole nie in die aangewese gebiede waar skoolplig toegepas sou word, geduld is nie.

Informele Islamitiese opvoeding asook die uitbreiding van opvoedings geleenthede vir behoeftige Moslems soos ten doel gestel deur die Moslem Teachers' Association word toegelig saam met die sosiale belang van hierdie organisasie as deel van Abdurahman se opvoedkundige nalating.

Of 'n Islamitiese invloed in die openbare onderwys nog moontlik is al dan nie, altans binne die raamwerk van die huidige Staatsonderwys beleid, word bespreek aan die einde van die verhandeling.

Faktore bevorderend of belemmerend van die Moslem Sendingskole as

deel van die Kleurling skoolopset in Wes-Kaapland is uitgeken en ontleed volgens die moderniseringsteorieë wat die diagnostiese riglyne vir analise vervat.

'n Etnosentriese perspektief van die geskiedenis van die onderwys in Kaapland sou kan verantwoord vir die feit dat voor hierdie ondersoek is die kultuuroordrag deur Moslems bra stief behandel, misken, of is behandel as deel van "Kleuringsonderwys". Proefskrifte, referate en boeke oor die Kaapse Moslems was ook nie op dié aangeleentheid gefokus nie. In elkeen van die historiese fases gekies om die ontwikkeling van die Islam-geörienteerde skool na te gaan, het koerante, joernale, tydskrifte en boeke dit moontlik gemaak om 'n breë en samehangende proses van uitbreiding te volg.

In die reël was die navorser se primêre bronne amptelike verslae en publikasies van die Kaaplandse Onderwysowerheid, lêers van die Administrasie van Kleurlingsake asook amptelike stukke van die skole en die Kaapstadse Stadsraad.

Uitsprake van die Kaapse Hooggeregshof, trust dokumente en testamente wat betrekking het op skole of persoonlikehede vermeld in die verhandeling was uiters waardevol vir die navorsing.

Dit was veral nuttig kom toegang te kon hê tot die persoonlike briewe van Dr A. Abdurahman met betrekking tot die stigting van die Rahmaniyyeh Instituut. Hierdie briewe, geskryf van 1912 tot 1915, was nie voorheen vir 'n navorser beskikbaar nie.

Die belang van hierdie navorsingstuk is regstelling van die perspektief aangaande die uitwerking van skoolbeleid en die fokus op die inisiatief van die Moslemgemeenskap, 'n kulturele minderheidsgroep sonder noemenswaardige politieke magte, om die instellings vir die sosialisering van hul kinders te moderniseer.

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*I appreciate very much your kind expression
of good will towards the Malay people, and
I am beginning to think that the little school
which will be opened on the 1st November will
confer more lasting benefits on the Moslems
than anything I have done for my people
previously.*

Dr Abdullah Abdurahman in a letter to a donor -
15 October, 1912

INTRODUCTION

History of Education texts on the development of the school system in South Africa too often present a picture of a benevolent State providing educational opportunities for the children of non-white communities. Among the a priori assumptions associated with this approach is that the non-whites or "Coloureds" constituted a culturally homogeneous social collectivity and had no claim to any other type of school than the churches and, later, the State, provided. A corollary to that would be the further assumptions that there was no other religious community in Cape Town where the educational system began, or if there were, then they were incapable of operating another type of school with the objectives of producing a civilised citizenry.

Perhaps the most regrettable feature of the customary discourse on educational institutions of Cape Town is the lack of acknowledgement by Eurocentric writers that schools, per se, constitute a part of the cultural ecology, cannot and do not function in isolation of the social formations. They are in fact political statements, either to reproduce the surrounding social formations and intercultural relations or to transmit and reinforce the dominant belief and value system.

If it were not for the cold charity of official statistics on school provision during the first fifty years after Union (1910) there would be little acknowledgement that politically subjugated and socially marginal people made a tangible contribution to the number of schools. *That they did so of their volition, from their own resources and as a positive step in ameliorating their social condition is the major theme of this dissertation.*

The progenitors of Cape Town's Muslim community, bearers of another cultural tradition, required opportunities and venues for establishing schools to preserve and perpetuate that system of beliefs, customs, behaviour codes, in fact, the symbolic and learned aspects of societal existence. Certain assumptions embodied in the white ethnocentric perspective of schools promote a false consciousness about the validity and universality of their own values and its manifest benefits for all people.

In their close and often intimate contact European settlers and Asian slaves or exiles borrowed cultural traits and indeed were borrowed from. The heterogeneous society that fortune brought into existence in Cape Town constitutes a synthesis derived from co--existence, a cultural history that testifies to cultural diffusion.

Only the schools of both religious communities, their agencies of socialising the young and of cultural transmission to succeeding generations allowed for the retention of links with their parents' societies in Europe and Asia.

But for this diversion the interdependence of the communities continued and a mutual respect and religious toleration based on very practical considerations made it possible to build and maintain a city and develop a unique indigenous culture.

From the earliest time of their co-existence in which Christianity dominated, the assumed superiority of the Christian tradition relegated the Islamic to the periphery of the social focus, even in a segmental scrutiny of the population, whether white or non-white. Those who have traced the history or considered the impact of places of worship and education have given little or incidental account of the Islamic-oriented institutions. Mission schools were generally assumed to be Church-related and preparatory to the life-style that the Christian religion upheld, prescribed and perpetuated. Other schools were thus per definition disregarded in any discussion on schools. For centuries there was, nevertheless, the tacit - and occasionally public - acknowledgement of the interdependence of the Christian and Islamic cultural entities while concurrently there existed a polarisation that these opposing belief systems engendered. Religious polarisation is not unrelated to the social status relationship.

Any suggestion that such cultural diffusion that occurred between these two religious communities was unqualified, unobstructed or even, unstructured (given their different schools and educational emphasis) would be simplistic.

Killian and Turner's description of cultural diffusion in an open society could not in the same measure have occurred in Cape Town:

More important than borrowing (cultural traits) is the discovery that there is a vantage point from which one's own values no longer appear unquestionable axioms but merely one among alternative systems of value. Thus it is not so much the particular culture with which culture contact takes place as it is the attitude towards one's culture that is induced by any serious cultural contact... Culture contact gives rise not only to borrowing but to new ideas concerning the necessity for change in the established order and the directions in which such change should go.¹

Clearly that attitude on culture contact in Cape Town in its formative years was informed by the political and social positions of the dominant group in relation to the subjugated.

Schooling in the colonial context - and to the present day - tended to be seen as an expression of European altruism, a symbol of the social conscience. It presented everyone exposed to it with the prospect of vertical social mobility once the linguistic skills and the behaviour patterns of the dominant culture were internalised by the subject people. Thus in the ethnocentric model the history of education was effectively the history of domestication and successful socialisation. The cultural diffusion perspective as an analytical paradigm is accordingly defined out of this enquiry.

But the relevance of sociological theories is here of central significance. All of them, in different ways, emphasize, illuminate and elaborate the extension, accumulation, improvement and dissemination of knowledge as the basis of social development. All have their explanatory value in the consideration of a multi-faceted structure that the school as an institution represents in the social order. All rest on the classification of types of society, and the comparative and historical study of institutions within this classification.

When we look at the two religious communities that took root in Cape Town we are also concerned with two types of ethnocentrism - one in a politically dominant position and the other subjugated. Their economic interdependence, however, demanded an accommodation that cannot be fully explored within the parameters of this inquiry.

Out of each ethnocentrism developed a concern for cultural transmission by means of schooling making schools an arena for cultural conflict. More so, if cultural transmission by one is perceived as domestication and imposition by the other. Initially, the politically subjugated could resist cultural imposition for as long as the economic basis of the social order allowed a fair measure of autonomy. Expansion and increasing complexity of the capitalist economy placed a greater emphasis on schools as agencies of socialisation especially as social role division became increasingly viewed through the lenses of ethnocentrism. It was in the largest concentration of people that the schools started to show, and were designed to show, changes of curricular emphases to allow for their social selection role. Accordingly the State's involvement in school provision reflected the ethnocentrism that informed such involvement. In the subjugated community the effect of this involvement was that grievances of social justice and school provision converged.

It would be appreciated that the city of Cape Town, the large concentration of people, the hub of the commercial and industrial life, the seat of government, should then be the geographic location of this study. A need for school provision or the modernisation of existing educational institutions was more keenly felt here.

At the risk of oversimplifying a complex sociological problem that such need represented to an important sub-culture in the urban milieu, it is, perhaps, possible, in ideal type form, to identify inter-group and intra-group differences around the constructs of problem, conflict and accommodation. Capetonian Muslims, a marginal community in economic and social terms, wished to move from the periphery to the centre, to provide a type of school that would allow its greater participation. Their problem was not only the moral and social dimensions of urban life, but the interaction of changing environment, population distribution, technology and social organisation upon their education's relevance. Survival as a distinct sub-culture was predicated on school provision or modification.

In order to extrapolate a trend in the attitudes to schools we must have a starting point and a terminal point between which change proceeds. For present purposes we have taken the traditional schools of the mosques, the madressahs, and the totally State-funded school system as the opposite ends of the spectrum of change. In effect, we are looking at institutional modernisation, from preparation for the moral order to socialisation for the complex economic life of urban communities.

An historical survey becomes an indispensable aspect of the research design.

If we wish to understand social change, that is, 'the alteration of a social structure over time, we must be aware of its double character: i.e. on the one hand we are dealing with a product of human actions rendered independent within temporal limits and, on the other, with actions of society's members producing history.²

While modernisation theories feature in this study as the major analytical paradigms it is useful to acknowledge that at best, the sociological discipline is presented as a multiparadigmatic science.³

The central concern of this study, the *raison d' être* of the Muslim Mission School, has its own complexity in the socio-political context. Its development was closely related to social need and manifested in school provision. Mission schools, per se as part of the educational dispensation for the subjugated people with limited political participation, have had a profound effect on the quality of schooling in South Africa. By extension, such schools were also related to the socio-political development of people classified as "Coloured" which includes the Muslim community of Cape Town and environs.

It is in this ascriptive duality that the complexity of the problem being investigated lies. For the people concerned, as Du Plessis⁴ has noted, placed a high premium upon their cultural homogeneity while aspiring to greater access to and mobility within the mainstream culture. Their own ethnocentrism dictated the operation of traditional schools, often as part of their places of worship and religious expression.

Movement away from that model of schooling signified not only surrender of some of their cultural autonomy and by extension an increased subordination to the dominant culture, but also the implicit danger of their children's alienation in the realm of values and norms of behaviour. Assimilation dictated by economic necessity could only be with many reservations. Therefore, in structural terms, the Muslim Mission School symbolises a compromise, if not an expediency to ameliorate their social condition. Conceptually, it was different from the conventional Christian-oriented mission schools which with churches were created for overt evangelical purposes.⁵

While administratively treated as a "denominational school" the historical processes leading up to the founding of the Muslim Mission Schools were not similar to those of the denominational schools. Conventionally, denomination connotes doctrinal variation but with certain fundamental premises shared or considered axiomatic. Islam, per definition, is not easily accommodated, unless a legal fiction is contrived, viz. that the Islam-oriented schools subsidised by the State are classified as "mission" schools.

These schools were in fact by virtue of this contrivance allowed to slip in at the back-door, as it were. Nevertheless, the de jure recognition of Islamic education in the conventional curriculum was in this way accomplished, albeit in a limited context. The historical significance of the event becomes accentuated in the context of this study for it represents more than a "naturalisation" of a system of belief in part of the public school system; it reflects a level of maturity not previously exhibited towards an alternative system of values.

Once established the first Muslim State-subsidised school becomes a model for others. To Dr A. Abdurahman, public figure and visionary of a tolerant society and a just social order, a powerful statement is being made for the modernisation of a neglected community.

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pioneer. The education of Muslim children then brings within the community a conflict of formulae for patronage and the greatest advantage representing the methods of the romantic-traditionalists on the one hand and the bolder rational-evolutionists on the other. These contradictions arise from sets of expectations all of which claim legitimacy. At community, institutional and classroom levels a new possibility of vertical social mobility becomes available. Once that might allay the fears of those further from the scene and inspire them to exert themselves for the creation of their own schools, that might also overcome their alienation and powerlessness.

Historical conditions and the alliance of various members of the Muslim middle-class coincided advantageously for the advancement of the Muslim Mission School idea to spread to smaller communities. This study brings these factors into sharper focus.

Educational expansion and reform, however well-intentioned, can never be removed from the economic dimensions of life. Thus modernisation was a matter of raising the standard of living of the impoverished and politically disadvantaged.

The liberal faction of the local élite perceived that its interests would also be served by such modernisation of the school for Muslim children. Modernisation in one case meant opportunity for basic literacy and the other, employment prospects. For the State it meant socialisation of marginal groups at minimal costs for their absorption into a consumer-oriented economy with an industrialised base.

What makes the Cape Town situation so different, however, are the political overtones to education as a matter of public interest. Colour discrimination and the attempts to enforce racial compartmentalisation of the social order through education will loom large on a generally bleak and depressing landscape that encompasses the selected time span. Most humiliating of the political dispensation from the earliest times was the covert antagonism towards non-Christian religions that manifested itself in an exclusivist public policy. Coincidentally, Islam was brought here by dark-skinned people and flourished among the demeaned immigrants from Holland's far-flung Asian Empire and slaves from East and West Africa. In social-psychological terms, Islam had had fertile ground for growth as an alternative value system, social structure, a counter culture

and an opposing ethnocentrism. It's educational traditions were thus also transplanted by the bearers of this form of civilisation, that commanded the allegiance of many millions in Asia, Africa and Europe, as it does to this day.

Two parallel systems of schooling, therefore, existed in Cape Town from the earliest days of settlement to the present.

Although tied in a web of economic mutuality the two communities achieved their social distance as much by means of their different schools as by their forms of worship with which schooling was initially and necessitously associated. Stripped of their rituals each religion contributed to the moral tone of the townsfolk. Establishment of Muslim Mission Schools therefore represents at once a sign of resurgent Islam and a political statement of increasing communal confidence in being part of the mainstream culture on its own terms. But it is as a political statement that the Muslim Mission School assumes a special importance.

Without his political vocation - and a passionate concern about education and its salutary social value - Abdurahman might well have been incidentally remembered as the first Cape Muslim medical practitioner. It remains for future scholars to attend to his psycho-social profile in greater depth. For present purposes his dual role as political pragmatist and educational innovator will have to suffice. He casts a long shadow over the political and educational field simply because the ideological dimensions of the public education process constantly occupied his mind and shaped his motivations. Much of the substance of this study concerning the first Muslim Mission School is unavoidably centred on Abdurahman. What he had to say to his admirers in the African Political Organisation has been held up for scrutiny by many scholars. Undoubtedly a rich lode to mine for present purposes and for the sake of perspective. But as the first manager of the Rahmaniyyeh Institute his thoughts on education, per se, and his administrative skills are of crucial interest. It was thus this researcher's good fortune after much effort and persuasion to obtain a collection of letters written by Abdurahman from 1912 to 1915, while he served as the chairman of the management committee of the Rahmaniyyeh Institute. As a public figure and elected representative his utterances and actions were also given prominence in the press and in books dealing with outstand-

ing figures of Cape Town. These sources have been applied with great care and circumspection, for in their various ways they illuminate the complexity of the man and the onerous responsibilities he had assumed.

Being concerned with schools founded by community initiatives, constitutions, notarial deeds, trust deeds, wills, minutes of meetings and records of litigation provided information serving as the building blocks for an edifice painstakingly constructed into their monument of communal initiatives at school provision. If one were to find an architect, site-manager and labour-organiser to whom much credit is due the name of Abdurahman makes a powerful claim. In tracing the development of Muslim schooling we are at a great disadvantage in an assessment of Abdurahman's role. He kept no diaries nor confided his thoughts to any biographer as might have been the case in a society where meritorious service is soon recognised and acclaimed. He seemed to have cherished his privacy. For that reason the letters he wrote as the manager of Rahmaniyyeh Institute provide valuable insights into his personality.

Since society is made by men and constituted by the goals they strive for, history must, at first, be understood as a condensed development of goal-oriented actions and only in the second place as a manifestation and consequence of the dynamic groupings and institutions in society.

If the morpho-genetic, i.e. structure-building society is the subject matter of sociology, nay of all social sciences, it follows that every theory of society implies a theory of social stability as well as one of social change.⁶

Parsons has argued that "institutionalisation" concerns the development of links between society and culture on the one hand and personality and motivation on the other.

Put in personality terms this means that there is an element of super-ego organisation correlative with

every role-orientation pattern of the individual in question. In every case the internalisation of a super-ego element means motivation to accept the priority of collective over personal interests, within the appropriate limits and on the appropriate occasions.⁷

Any examination of the school provision for Muslim children between 1900 and 1940 that does not recognise this phenomenon regarding Abdurahman would be looking at "Hamlet" without the Prince. In the context of public education we find Abdurahman moving from the periphery of the political stage towards the centre and leading a cast of committees and deputations behind him. Max Weber would have recognised this example of charismatic leadership and its implications for social organisation. Abdurahman was as much a representative of a privileged social class such as he gathered about himself in various school committees. That class, in the metaphor of functionalist sociology, seeks to move from the periphery to the centre of the social or political stage, where is to be found the ultimate source of authority, where is to be found legitimation of rewards and roles in the social system. If they could not obtain it for themselves, then they were powerfully persuaded by Abdurahman to obtain it for their children. They were the rational-evolutionists who founded schools. By the same token, Abdurahman and his associates, within the Muslim community of Cape Town, were themselves at the centre of the stage where they were supplanting the traditional Muslim leadership in the educational concerns. Challenges did come from dissidents, but they proved to be weak adversaries to Abdurahman. There was, nonetheless, consensus between Abdurahman and his Muslim detractors that the school could be and should be a vehicle for their community's movement towards the centre. Modernisation theories would thus be apposite for the illumination of such movement.

We must, however, acknowledge the objection to modernisation theories, viz, that the First World societies (the West) are taken as the reference group with the assumption that it is an ethnocentric model of social development and that the peripheral group could only benefit from modernisation. Given the geographic context and the

political climate in which the rise of the Muslim Mission School is considered and given the socio-political disabilities that the peripheral status denoted, the analytical paradigm is thus eminently defensible and appropriate.

Here an attempt has been made to (1) formulate the problem, (2) organise a suitable research design, (3) collect the data, (4) analyse the data, and (5) draw the valid conclusions. All these stages of research have been followed without sacrifice of objectivity and ethical neutrality. The modernisation theories have allowed for the systematic organisation of the considerable body of facts into a comprehensive elaboration of the Cape Muslims' efforts at school provision.

The range and scope of this study had necessarily to be wide in response to a number of questions that the researcher set for himself. Our diagnosis as to the manner of development, and our prescriptions are predicated upon the status in the political order of the community concerned. Here we have shown that modern men had to precede modern institutions and the institutions themselves had to various degrees modernising effects. How modern men and modern institutions of education are related produces divergent answers and raises some fundamental issues that engage the social sciences today.

Because of the collective conditions treated here with regard to the development and modernisation of the Islam-oriented school, the theme of social justice is a recurrent one. What is presented here is a part of a concern for justice in education and through education; for equality of opportunity and the exclusion of arbitrary privilege. Education's dimension beyond those of public utility, the focusing on the rights of man and the central ideal of social progress, viz., the recognition of cultural differences as assets rather than liabilities of the social order are inherent in the notion of modernisation of the schools, especially in the cities.

This research into the cultural history of the Muslims of Cape Town and environs would not have been possible, nor access to primary sources obtained, without empathetic understanding of the people concerned, to wit, the verstehen approach.

Peter Winch, himself an enthusiast of this approach, recommends that

(An) historian or sociologist of religion must himself have some religious feeling if he is to make sense of the religious movement he is studying and understand the considerations which govern the lives of its participants.⁸

Any study of the Mission School system in the Western Cape reflects on the religious diversity of the area and the ideological contestation that diversity entailed. No Mission School whether Christian or Muslim was conceived and operated without religious aspirations embodied in their function. The validity of a religious component to the curriculum of the school is, therefore, the main thrust of this dissertation, and it is the process, by which a cultural minority sought to assert its right to ensure that this occurs, that is being presented here.

Few developing countries, such as South Africa is, have the time to promote, let alone indulge in the pursuit of education in which communities do not share, nor create schools with which communities cannot identify.

Current educational organisation restricts the sharing in and identification with the State schools. That brings into question the level of public confidence with which professional educators could discharge their responsibilities to both the child and the State. A state of alienation in home and school relations is not conducive to the social good. It is this estrangement that results in social dissonance and which will negate the merits of universal public education.

THE CASE FOR ISLAM-ORIENTED SCHOOLS

Schooling for children who are white, and ipso facto intended to be trained and socialised with the view to political dominance, can charitably be described as functional. In South Africa schooling is a means to economic and political ends. Teleology is essential and concepts are defined in terms of the purposes they are expected to serve. Those who exercise political power deliver the educational services and formulate the concepts associated with State-funded education. Thus it is contextually inapposite to regard the two systems of schooling operated by the churches and later emulated by the State school system as similar, identical or even equal. For the white children there have been "Church" schools; for non-white children there have been "Mission" schools. By racial definition Muslim children were excluded from Church schools, and by the objectives of the Mission Schools, Muslim parents could not identify nor Muslim homes complement the educational tasks of Christian Mission schools. There would thus be little opportunity for formal schooling for those whose conscience would not accept the educational dispensation as right. Logically, the answer was a pro forma incorporation of Muslim Mission Schools into the state-aided school system.

Muslim educators would agree that Islam's purpose in education is to produce a balanced social being.

In the first place it (Islam) warns those who are not only indifferent to the spiritual side of their lives but actually deny the existence of God and consider luxury and self-indulgence to be the be-all and end-all of life.

It warns them that there is undoubtedly a Creator of this world and we owe some duties to Him. Then, on this spiritual edifice of altruism - duties towards fellow creatures.

It lays particular stress on social good and emphasises the argument that if all human beings are engaged in the pursuit of their own objects of desire, and altruism had no place in the

original nature of man, it would follow that the natural state would be a state of contention, enmity and war, and peace and tranquility would be only transitory.⁹

Thus in a school having an Islamic ethos the curriculum would not be a mere programme of intellectual and manual skills, but one designed to train the character, feelings, will, aesthetic taste and refine the moral being. Muslim parents place great value on academic achievement because of the many traditions of Muhammad that urge the search for knowledge as an ennobling human activity. But the practical effects of worthwhile knowledge are an active involvement in promoting the social good and extending the influence of harmonious inter-personal and inter-group relations. Knowledge cannot be pursued for its own sake, nor for the overt economic interests that the State considers paramount. Yet there are large and significant areas where the interests of the State and the Muslim educator do coincide. Schools of an Islamic-orientation have, for this crucial reason, a justification to exist and to lay their claims for their share of the tax funds that fuel the engine of public education in South Africa.

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CHAPTER 1GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.0 THE SCOPE OF THE ENQUIRY

1.1 Cape Town, Mother City of the Republic of South Africa, seat of its legislature, has been the confluence, from the earliest years of its existence, of two distinct cultural streams - one, the dominant Protestant Christian culture of the North European founders; the other, Islamic, brought here by bondsman, political exile and voluntary immigrant from South East Asia in the main.¹

1.2 Each of these culture streams and the religious values it fostered, exerted its formative influence and shaped the fortunes of the populace of what came to be Cape Town and its satellite towns, that arose in the course of over three centuries.

Today the churches and mosques feature prominently as part of the city's architectural and its cultural heritage.

Christians and Muslims have since the earliest days involved themselves in a moral mission to the local people, establishing along with places of worship, schools for the socialisation of their young; thereby promoting the perpetuation of the distinctive life-styles. The dominant group was to develop the most elaborate buildings and organisational structures to these ends in the course of time.

1.3 As a field of academic concern the distinct cultures of the heterogeneous populations in Cape Town and the creation of educational institutions is a relatively underdeveloped area. In the light of this the role of the minority culture such as Islam is still unexplored and merits its due consideration.

1.4 This enquiry focuses on schooling as a deliberate process of cultural transmission and cultural reproduction with particular

reference to the adherents of Islam as a subordinate cultural collectivity seeking the establishment of schools whereby their beliefs and folkways could be preserved within the context of the publicly-funded school that developed.

- 1.5 The historic growth of Cape Town from a Dutch colony of settlement in the 17th century to the bustling metropolis of the present can be viewed over three centuries as a process of educational development and the area as an arena for the making of fundamental conflicts and contradictions. This domicile of slave-owners and slaves, of domesticated indigenous people and Asian exiles at first required a school for the preparation of prospective Church members. But the present social order requires four distinct school systems conforming to a racially segregated society.

Along this continuum Muslims have been involved in the city's growth and their children have had a need for schools conceived in terms of their own religious requirements.

- 1.6 To appreciate the city's Muslim community's concern for their children's education, particularly from 1860 onwards, the socio-political dimensions of their development as a distinct cultural entity will be explored in the light of their interaction with the dominant European settler group. Modernisation will thus be the analytical paradigm of this study particularly because of the time scale involved, viz. the past century and a quarter.

1.2 THE URBAN CONTEXT

- 1.2.1 Schools as socialisation institutions of citizens/town-dwellers have a distinct interest in a survey of educational development for here we address not only the moral and social order but also the interaction of environment, various cultural interests, technology, social organisation in relation to educational opportunity and policy.

For purposes of subsequent discussion it can be postulated that:

- 1.2.1.1 cities, their literature and art, observed over a period of time, reflect in great measure the social condition;
- 1.2.1.2 overtly or covertly, consciously or unconsciously, every city allows for the expression of certain beliefs, subscribes to a value system which its schools transmit, builds temples to its deities or organises its material resources in terms of perceived needs;
- 1.2.1.3 the city is structured and formed by man, but that structure can affect man's behaviour and world view, influence the citizen's self-concept and mould the future generations;
- 1.2.1.4 differences that would otherwise be accepted or ignored under the guise of tradition, established class structure, or as "our lot in life" become bared in the city;
- 1.2.1.5 perceptive young people of the city are most likely to grapple with the issues deriving from disparities and question the mores or seek to effect tangible change in their condition or the institutions at their disposal;
- 1.2.1.6 city-dwellers are more conscious of socio-political change or the hiatus between the promised and the delivered;
- 1.2.1.7 the city is a poor concealer of social injustice - its institutions and its practices bring the observer face to face with the socio-economic differences that do really exist between its people.

1.3 THE PROBLEM (as a declarative statement)

- 1.3.1 The Muslim Mission School was the institutional end-product of

the process of resisting cultural assimilation promoted by public schooling policies towards Muslims, a subjugated social collectivity; it was also an effort at modernisation, serving as a bridging agency between the religious and secular aspects of education, between the spiritual and the temporal needs of the young. Two views of Islam-oriented schooling will emerge in this study: the romantic traditionalist and the rational-evolutionist.

1.3.2 Sub-problems:

- 1.3.2.1 Examination of the socio-political status of Muslims as a cultural minority in Cape Town during the Dutch regime (1652 to 1806), and the attempts at operating denominational schools.
- 1.3.2.2 Muslim schools during the first half of the 19th century as agencies in resisting cultural imperialism or domestication through schooling, as well as Christian and Muslim contest for the religiously uncommitted non-white inhabitants of the town.
- 1.3.2.3 State involvement in public education and the Muslims' educational concerns from 1860 to 1910, i.e. from Representative Government for the Cape Colony to the founding of the Union of South Africa.
- 1.3.2.4 Personalities and organisations associated with the advancement of Muslim cultural, social and educational interests, and the founding of State-aided schools for Muslim children in Cape Town with special reference to Dr A. Abdurahman, M.P.C.
- 1.3.2.5 Challenges and achievements of the Muslim Mission Schools and their teachers from 1913 to 1964, from Provincial to Central Government control.
- 1.3.2.6 National education policy and its implications for Muslim educational aspirations viewed against the background of the Group Areas Act's implementation.

1.3.2.7 The Muslim teaching fraternity and the pressures of secularism.

1.3.2.8 Factors affecting the future form and function of the Islam-oriented school in Cape Town; the problems and prospects of the independent, autonomous private school.

1.3.2.9 Whether perspectives and ideologies are relative to some static, unchanging characteristic of Muslims as a social collectivity in Cape Town and environs or whether they are relative to certain universal stages of development in the modernisation of schools as agencies of socialisation.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TIME-SPAN

1.4.1 Chronologically the focus of this research is the period 1860 to the present, that is, from the time that the foundation of the Cape's schooling system was laid with the retirement of the first superintendent-general of Education, Sir James Rose-Innes (1860) to the institution of the Tricameral Parliament (1984) whereby the publicly-funded schools for Coloured children became an "Own Affair" within the legislative jurisdiction of the House of Representatives.

1.4.2 This period also covers the socio-political change that Cape Town Muslims underwent from complete legal equality with whites to a statutory inferior citizenship contrived by group representation, with Muslims categorised, "Coloured". However, to clarify the socio-political status of Muslims, their attempts at schooling the young during the Dutch regime (1652 to 1806) requires discussion as a prelude to the main body of the thesis.

1.5 THE AIMS OF THIS RESEARCH

1.5.1 By means of this study it is hoped to place the Muslim Mission Primary School as a community-funded and Islam-oriented education facility in its historical, political and sociologic-

cal context, and in the process thereof:

- 1.5.1.1 to evaluate the process of a community's modernisation and the Islam-oriented public school as a means thereto in the Christian socio-political order;
- 1.5.1.2 to promote a sense of the historical in understanding the urban context of cultural contestation with particular reference to the establishment of schools for furthering the moral order among the population of Cape Town and environs, bearing in mind the aphorism of Victor Hugo: the opening of a school may lead to a closing of a prison;
- 1.5.1.2 to present a culturist perspective of urban schooling as a deliberate process of cultural transmission and cultural reproduction;
- 1.5.1.4 to describe a religious minority's resistance to cultural hegemony effected by schools as agencies of social control;
- 1.5.1.5 to analyse the schooling policy of the dominant group as an aspect of State ideological strategy with regard to group identity in general and the Cape Muslim's public identity in particular;
- 1.5.1.6 to identify factors promotive or restrictive of Islam-oriented schools within the larger public school system;
- 1.5.1.7 to present a decision-oriented analysis of the recognition of cultural diversity within the public education system with a view to:
 - 1.5.1.7.1 mutual appreciation of the dominant culture and subordinate religious culture in the common society;

1.5.1.7.2 promoting the freedom of a culture to perpetuate its religious beliefs and ideals, family structures and folkways.

1.6 TERMS AND CONCEPTS USED IN THE TITLE

1.6.1 The concept "Moslem" to denote the cultural minority which is the subject of this inquiry merits definitional precision.

An English dictionary definition is:

Moslem (say mozlem), noun
also spelled Muslim, a follower of Islam.
Word Family: Moslem, adjective.²

An adherent of Islam is called a Muslim as Henning's definition illustrates:

Einer der sich vollig in Gottes Willen ergeben
hat, ist ein Moslem.³

Encyclopaedia contributors, Gibb and Kramer, provide further linguistic clarity:

... in Arabic literature the term Muslim is and
always has been used to denote the adherents of
Islam.⁴

1.6.2 Adherents of Islam in Cape Town and environs have had several designations in the literature of the city and the official records wherein they are variously described as "Malays", "Mohammedans", "Mahometans" and "Moslems". Their religion, Islam, has been termed "the Mohammedan faith" or "Mohammedanism" as the following extracts from two books bear out:

Die Maleier verteenwoordig 'n Oosterse element
afkomstig van die Maleise Skiereiland in the
Nederlandse tyd. Vele van hulle voorvaders was
politieke bannelinge. Hulle Mohammedaanse
geloof het as bindende element gedien, want

hulle voorvaders was politieke bannelinge. Hulle Mohammedaanse geloof het as bindende element gedien, wat hulle tot 'n aparte kultuurgroep gevorm het. Hulle is veral saamgetrek in Kaapstad in dié deel van die Skiereiland wat omarm is deur die grafkelders van godsdienstige leiers soos sjeik Josef, om maar een te noem.⁵

1.6.3 Mayson and Kollish, respectively, two important observers of the Islamic life in 19th century Cape Town, describe its adherents in these ways:

In 1652 a few Malays of Batavia were brought by the Dutch into the Residency, and subsequent Settlement of the Cape of Good Hope. In 1658, more of both sexes were imported at considerable cost. It is said that a large portion of them came as free servants, but on their arrival were registered as slaves; some were sailors drafted there as in Ceylon. By these bondmen and by a few free Malay settlers Mohametanism was sown in South Africa... Again in 1737 and 1749, a number of Malays of distinction were condemned to the Colony as State prisoners. These had great influence on the Mahometans whom they found here.⁶

(Note how Mayson refers to the different designation of this Dutch outpost as "Residency", "Settlement" and "Colony" to indicate a growth process and a changing status; the idea that Muslims were present from the earliest time is clearly conveyed).

The term "Mussulman", sometimes used by orientalist scholars also gained currency with regard to the Muslims of Cape Town, as is shown in the following extract from a relevant monograph:

In 1856 Mr De Roubaix, who is now a member of the Legislative Council at the Cape of Good Hope and a British subject, was the means of rendering

most important services to the Mussulman cause there by establishing a proper and dignified exercise of Mohammedan faith in the Colony.⁷

- 1.64 The terms, "Malay", Mohammedan", "Moslem", in the course of time, came to be used interchangeably for Capetonians of the Islamic religion and thus a peculiar South African usage of "Malay" developed; a connotation by way of public identity suggesting religio-cultural affiliation rather than ethnicity as Shirley Judges argues:

During the 1830's contemporaries often referred to 'the Malays' or 'Mohammedans'...

The term does not seem to have had a precise definition during the 1830's. Technically it refers to people from Malaya, or more broadly, the Dutch East Indies, but by the 1830's the pure Malays had mixed with non-Malay elements in Cape Town's community. By that time, 'Malay', had come to have a religious meaning.⁸

- 1.6.5 Recognising the power of customary usage, a recognised authority on the community concerned, I.D. Du Plessis, posits this view:

In Cape Town the terms Malay and Mohammedan are often used as synonyms; but strictly speaking Malay stands for that section of the local Muslim community in which the descendants of the Eastern Malays are found.⁹

- 1.6.6 A Muslim social historian of Cape Town corroborates Judges' argument and presents additional semantic refinement:

The term 'Cape Malay' which is of linguistic origin, has been avoided (in this book) except in quotations.

The more correct and sober term, 'Cape Muslims', is employed. The term cuts across artificial

racial barriers and more accurately describes the origin of their culture and religion.¹⁰

1.6.7 As to their public identity in contemporary South African society, Marquard contends:

Although the Malays are classed, officially, as Coloured, their religion keeps them separate from the rest...

The Malays belong mostly to the Sunni sect of Mohammedanism and look to Mecca for their religious leadership.

Though their home language is usually Afrikaans, the language of the Mosque is Arabic, and all religious feasts and fasts are scrupulously observed.¹¹

1.6.7 Marquard's description of the Cape Malays demonstrates how the statutory racial categorisation of non-whites in contemporary South Africa is fraught with broad generalisations. No similar sub-division of the "White", or dominant group would have such far-reaching consequences. Such broad generalisations are anathema to Davids who considers the collective name "Coloured" arbitrary, misleading and untenable. Hence Davids prefers the "More correct and sober term", Cape Muslims, which is comparatively free of pejorative connotations as well. However, Marquard's description accords with Proclamation 46 of 1959 as amended in 1961, whereby the "Coloured" community is statutorily divided into the following: Cape Coloured, Cape Malay, Griqua, Indian, Chinese, 'other Asiatic' and 'other Coloured'.

1.6.8 Considered anthropologically, the Cape Muslims, according to Hellman and Abrahams, are of diverse ethnic origin reflecting the various African and Asian elements that circumstances brought together on the shores of Table Bay:

Their racial components are: Javanese, Arab, Indian, Singalese, Chinese, Negro (East and

West) African, Madagascar, Malabar, Mozambique, Cape Coloured, and, to a very minor extent, Bantu. They would undoubtedly have approximated the Cape Coloured even more in their racial admixture had not the demands of their ritual proved too rigorous for the Hottentots and the Griquas.¹²

- 1.6.9 Cape Muslims, in relation to the world community of Muslims, are Sunnis or Sunnites, a theological category of Islam's followers. They are distinguished from the other categories by their strict orthodoxy, rigid adherence to the creed expounded by the Prophet Muhammad.

According to The Encyclopaedia of Religion, Sunnites are:

One of the main divisions of the Moslem world, the other being the Shi'ites. The Sunnites comprise 150 000 000 Moslems and represent the largest body of the faithful. They are the orthodox party, accepting as authoritative traditions (Sunna) of Mohammed rejected by others. They acknowledge the first four caliphs to be the true successors of Mohammed.

Most Muslims in Turkey, Arabia and Africa are Sunnites.¹³

- 1.6.10 Islam, like all religions, requires to be taught so that its precepts are understood and practised. Its adherents brought here to the Cape of Good Hope taught others and thus enlarged their numbers. In the course of time they, too, established schools that later became State-funded "Mission Schools". In the context of the thesis title the term "Mission School" has a peculiar connotation.

- 1.6.11 De Kock Fowler¹⁴ asserts that church congregations during the 19th century founded schools to prepare children - and some adults - for membership of their churches. Basically, induction into the life-style of the congregants as well as instruction in their creed was the educational objective.

Throughout the 19th century these were the only educational facilities that also trained their charges in the skills of literacy and numeracy. Being similar in concept to the charity schools of England, they were the only facilities accessible to the poor of Cape Town. It was with the view to evangelisation that benefactors in Europe provided funds for the establishment and operation of these schools. Hence their designation "mission" schools.

- 1.6.12 Although the moral mission to the townsfolk not committed to Christianity necessitated the establishment of denominational schools we find in later legislation of the Cape Province a distinctive nomenclature for two different classes of schools funded in whole or in part by religious organisations. "European" or "white" children being specifically catered for in "church primary school" are mentioned in the Cape Provincial Ordinance No. 20 (1956), Chapter 6, Section 8, subsection (3).

Schools attended by "Coloured" children and founded by the various church bodies for such purpose were designated "mission schools" in Chapter 12 of the same legislation.¹⁵

- 1.6.13 What was the custom in Cape Town of the 19th century became enshrined in laws pertaining to the education of the different races in the Twentieth.

The laws governing education are a reflection of the social realities whereby the descendants of the settlers from Western Europe and later white immigrants became a privileged part of the population. "Church schools" and "mission schools" were manifestations of the different socio-political status of the children to whom they opened their doors. Being neither Christian nor of European descent, the Muslims, a socially marginal community, sent their children to the church mission schools. This was the trend wherever Muslims had been colonised. One effect of this was that less time could be spent in the care of the traditional Islamic teachers to whom the children were customarily entrusted. This imposition has been explained by a Muslim writer thus:

Knowing full well, as it did, that Islam was its most potent political enemy, and indeed its sole ideological rival, colonialism set out in all Muslim countries to destroy Islamic education while nurturing Euro-Christian system(s) of education in its place.¹⁶

- 1.6.14 In Cape Town the "nurturing" of the Christian school meant that Muslim educational efforts, their establishment of schools, did not enjoy recognition or favour from officialdom until after the Union of South Africa was established in 1910.

It will be shown in this study of schooling in Cape Town that the Muslims for many centuries conducted in their homes various religious services, but the homes of the pious and learned were centres for formal instruction.

- 1.6.15 A changing social and economic order made the inadequacy of their traditional schools keenly felt - there was a steady natural increase as well as augmentation by conversion against a background of a broader social order of increasing economic complexity. The advent of immigrant traders from India who married into the local Muslim community during the latter half of the 19th century also accentuated the need for a type of schooling approximating more closely to that of the churches in the town. A trading class is more aware of the need for training in the literacy and numeracy related to the economy, but instruction therein could be coupled with traditional religious knowledge.

- 1.6.16 Jointly, the immigrant and the indigenous Muslims, in the course of time acquired buildings to operate their own community schools. Subsidisation on the same basis as that of the church schools was then sought. Since the Muslims were classified as "Coloureds" their schools so subsidised would be termed "Moslem Mission Schools" for administrative purposes.

1.6.17 Du Plessis calls these schools "Moeslim-skole" and mentions that in 1932 there were 11 such schools subsidised by the Cape Provincial Education department of which 7 were in the Cape Peninsula with an official enrolment of 1 737 pupils.¹⁷

The schools in the Cape Peninsula, founded within three decades after the establishment of the Union, were:

1.6.17.1 Rahmaniyeh Institute (1913)

1.6.17.2 Talfallah Institute (1917)

1.6.17.3 Salt River Moslem Primary School (1917)

1.6.17.4 Simonstown Moslem Primary School (1923)

1.6.17.5 Mohammadieya Moslem Primary School (1929)

1.6.17.6 Muir Street Moslem Primary School (1930)

1.6.17.7 Schotsche Kloof Moslem Primary School (1931)

1.6.18 Other Moslem Mission primary Schools were founded up to 1956 when the Muslims were disqualified from living in several traditional residential areas because of the Group Areas Act (1950). No similar schools were established in the new "Coloured" residential areas owing to a change in State policy regarding school subsidisation. This will be more intensively explored in the ensuing chapters. A few schools were fortunately located in "Coloured" areas such as Schotsche Kloof and continue functioning.

1.6.19 The Theron Commission's Report (1976)¹⁸ mentions in Table 8.1 that in 1953 there were 15 Moslem ("Slamse") mission schools accommodating 4 544 pupils and by 1963, 16 such schools were recognised and subsidised by the Cape Provincial Administration. The 1963 enrolment stood at 5 437 pupils.

1.7 METHODOLOGY OF THE PRESENT STUDY

1.7.1 The ensuing discourse is built on the Philosophic Method¹⁹ of research in Education for here the focus is "on values, the worth of experiences, or other qualitative factors". The presentation will include the following elements:

- 1.7.1.1 the problem researched clearly and succinctly stated;
- 1.7.1.2 the terms and concepts defined and their usage within the context of the inquiry explained or clarified;
- 1.7.1.3 the scope of the study set forth in carefully defined limits of space and time;
- 1.7.1.4 the rationale and the significance of the problem established;
- 1.7.1.5 the pertinent literature reviewed and the relationship to this study established;
- 1.7.1.6 consideration of extant documents of organisations and personalities associated with the formal education and the establishment of Islam-oriented schools in Cape Town and environs;
- 1.7.1.7 the location of Muslim mission schools and their relation to community needs;
- 1.7.1.8 problems related to the public identity of Muslims and their responses to secularisation of education;
- 1.7.1.9 the procedure of this research outlined in such a manner that the collection of data as well as the logic of analysis can be followed from the source of evidence, primary and secondary to the completion of the investigation;
- 1.7.1.10 the implications for a national education policy in respect of this cultural collectivity;
- 1.7.1.11 the possibilities for further research in view of the constraints imposed by the limitation of this study, in terms of space and time.

1.8 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

1.8.1 In 1957 there were 15 Moslem Mission Schools, subsidised by the Cape Provincial Administration in the Cape and environs, geographically distributed as follows:

1.8.1.1	Cape Town Central	-	4
1.8.1.2	Salt River	-	1
1.8.1.3	Claremont/Lansdowne	-	2
1.8.1.4	Wynberg	-	2

1.8.1.5	Simonstown	-	1
1.8.1.6	Atlone	-	1
1.8.1.7	Elsies River	-	1
1.8.1.8	Strand	-	1
1.8.1.9	Paarl	-	1
1.8.1.10	Worcester	-	1

- 1.8.2 Each school was located in a residential area with large concentrations of Muslim families who assured its continued existence because it provided them both Islam-oriented and secular instruction. In every locality the school was a focus of non-formal education, a venue for cultural activity symbolising community involvement in and identification with its purpose.
- 1.8.3 Consquent to the implementation of the Group Areas Act (No. 41 of 1950), the demolition of homes around these schools in Paarl, Claremont, Simonstown and Cape Town's District Six meant the redundancy of these schools. Removing people from community-oriented schools and denying their re-establishment constituted an effective diminution of community identification with formal education.
- 1.8.4 Wherever Muslim families are now dispersed they have been reconstituting communities, erecting new places of worship and building community sentiment through new ad hoc organisations for preserving their cultural identity. The lack of continuity through destruction of their cultural milestones seems to have adversely affected the socialisation of the young because of alienation. In the areas of resettlement feelings of powerlessness seem to have resulted from the absence of community cohesion and the solidity of social institutions. The relationship between Islam-oriented schools and the broader educational endeavour thus needs to be analysed.
- 1.8.5 Arabic, the language of Muslim Scripture, the Quran, has been prominent in the curriculum of the Muslim Mission School and the need for studying this important world language has resulted in various universities having academic departments of Arabic and Islamic Studies. Islam-oriented schools can

ensure community support for the teaching and research potential of such departments.

A report in The Argus of 3 August 1984, mentioned the intention of the University of Cape Town to establish a Chair of Islamic Studies. The local Muslim population and the university could have mutual advantage if Arabic and Islamic culture were included in school curricular options.

1.8.6 Other academic disciplines such as History, Theology, Anthropology and Sociology when studied in the African context could have their research greatly assisted by students conversant with the Arabic language and its associated culture. The Cape Town Muslim community to whom the Arabic language is of central importance might thus be a bridge to studies of the larger world Muslim community.

1.8.7 Schools operating in terms of the Islamic ethos, discharging their pastoral and didactic responsibilities according to Islam's educational objectives, could present teacher training opportunities to universities offering Arabic and its method of teaching.

1.8.8 Gerhard Lenski²⁰ asserts that Durkheim saw religious expression and community life as inseparable because religion sustains community, effecting close social contact promotive of consensus in a "moral community" which is vital to the general stability and peace within the broader social order.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

1.9.1 Being geographically confined to the Western Cape by the historical context of the inquiry, the Muslim community of Cape Town and surrounding towns are central to our purpose. Other significant Muslim communities of the Republic of South Africa such as those in the Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Southern Transvaal and Natal are treated incidentally as when their interests coincide with those of the parent community in Cape Town. Therefore, significant as it may be, the educational initiative of Muslim communities

originating in Western India and largely settled in Natal and Transvaal could not be accommodated in the present study.

- 1.9.2 With regard to the source material it should be noted that a subjugated cultural minority tends to have few written records produced by itself regarding its historical development. The researcher is obliged to guard against ethnocentrism and related value judgements when dealing with records produced by representatives of the dominant culture.
- 1.9.3 Discussion of the Islamic ideals of education and the manner in which these ideals were realised or frustrated in Cape Town will also be presented relative to the particular society that cherished such ideals.
- 1.9.4 The disappearance of several Muslim Mission Schools and the change of State departments involved in the administration of existing ones caused many useful documents to be lost or destroyed. However, as complete as possible a picture has been reconstructed by recourse to official records such as Admission Registers and Inspection Reports. This is perhaps also attributed to the implementation of the Group Areas Act as uprooted people are often too embittered to preserve artifacts related to community facilities that no longer featured in their lives.

1.10 THE ANALYTICAL PARADIGM

- 1.10.1 A crucial function of formal education that brings the State into intimate association with schools is their task of cultural and political socialisation of the young. The State is never a disinterested benefactor, but is ever concerned with the task of teaching children what it meant to belong to their social environment. Thus cultural reproduction and cultural transmission prescribed and supervised ensure that formal education serves both political and economic ends. A politically marginal community and a societal sub-culture concerned with resisting assimilation and preserving its own values will tend to establish its own

schools charged with transmitting its own culture, preserving its public identity and training children in its own folkways and form of worship of its own deity. Yet, there is a need to prepare children for the broader social order adapting for the sake of security.

- 1.10.2 Security is an important consideration in the way that a cultural minority defines its relationship with the broader social order, and the values of the dominant culture in particular. Given the inferior and vulnerable social status of the pioneer Muslims and the subsequent exclusion of their descendants from the exercise of meaningful political participation it will be seen that provision of denominational schooling was a cherished civil liberty, one of which they long made use until prevented from doing so by education policy.

- 1.10.3 This would then justify their description here as a cultural minority as it is perceived by Louis Wirth:

(A cultural minority) is a group of people, who, because of their physical and cultural characteristics, are singled out from others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who, therefore, regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination. The existence of a minority in a society implies the existence of a corresponding dominant group with higher social status and higher privileges. Minority status carries with it exclusion from full participation in the life of the society.²¹

- 1.10.4 Creating an alternative system of schooling in Cape Town, Islam-oriented in a Christian dominated society, could also be deemed the making of a political statement. In an urban community, suggests Stuart Hall²², educational endeavours such as the founding of schools may conceivably be the pursuit of politics by other means.

- 1.10.5 Modernisation Theory is also applied here to explain the process of change of Islam's adherents, from a cult-status in a slave-based economy to a cultural minority status in a pre-industrial wage-labour economy that Muslims underwent over the first two and a half centuries of Cape Town's development.

Thereafter the social distance between the dominant and dominated became increasingly pronounced and reflected in legislation that variously circumscribed, denied and excluded from integration into the white social entity all "persons of colour". Muslims were ever a part of the city's economic life, but their changing educational needs and aspirations compelled them to move from an enclosed self-sufficient community more purposefully into the larger society about them. However, legislation determined their categorisation as "coloured" people and cultural-religious affiliations became a subordinate consideration in the type of public education available to them.

All this affected the existence and the survival of the Muslim Mission School in Cape Town and its satellite towns. It will assume in this study the overwhelming weight of interest.

- 1.10.6 The ensuing chapter sets out the historical background to the rise of formal Islam-oriented schooling in Cape Town. Similarities and contrasts between the Muslims and their reference group, the Christians, will be examined to show why a claim for Islam as a counter-culture can be justified bearing in mind the tendency for Muslims to resist their cultural assimilation.

- 1.10.7 The pioneering teachers of Islam at the Cape are brought into focus so that the basis of the Islamic subculture and its aspirations might be better understood.

- 1.10.8 Part of the Islamic ethos is the strong community sentiment that allows for a corporate identity, which in its turn is acquired both by precept and example for which there would clearly be both teachers and schools required. To clarify the presuppositions and the consequences of the Muslim public identity a writer has offered the following:

The question of Muslim identity has always been foremost in the minds of Muslims, and the core of this concern relates to Islamic education.

It is generally believed that the policy of any society with regards to its Muslim community can be adequately ascertained through an examination of the facilities available in that society for religious instruction of Muslims.²³

1.10.9 Our concern in the following chapter will therefore include the preservation of a corporate identity in the quest for both the right to worship and the right to reproduce Islamic culture in Cape Town and its environs.

It is proposed to present the relevant socio-historical data of the interrelationship between the Islamic sub-culture and the dominant or mainstream culture in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of social action promotive of cultural transmission. In this way we shall arrive at an interpretive understanding of the provision of schooling by examining the course of education policies and their effects on the schooling of Muslim children.

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CHAPTER 2

2.0 MUSLIM CULTURAL TRANSMISSION IN CAPE TOWN PRIOR TO 1860

- 2.1 In the rich *mélange* of Cape Town's diverse population, Christianity and Islam have both had an impact from the earliest days of the city's history.

Each religion's impact, its cultural influence, was commensurate with the socio-political status of its adherents. In the practices and traditions of each, worship and formal instruction have been inextricably bound. More so if such instruction is viewed as the acculturation of the newer and younger members of society by the older.¹

- 2.2 Bearers of each cultural tradition came to the Table Bay settlement founded by the Dutch East India Company in 1652 in starkly contrasting roles - the Dutch Christians as colonisers of a savage shore, and the Muslims as their slaves, servants, prisoners and wards; the former politically supreme and culturally dominant, the latter, subjugated and culturally of little consequence to the rulers.² Later to be the politically peripheral and the socially disadvantaged.

- 2.3 Throughout the Dutch regime from 1652 to 1806 Cape Town thus had two religious communities and two parallel systems of education, or two types of schooling, each operating in terms of the political dispensation.

Overtly, there were the schools founded by and operated within the precincts of the official Dutch Reformed Church, while covertly, instruction in the Islamic creed proceeded in the homes of "Free Blacks", designated in the official records as "imams" or "Malay priests".³ In this chapter the process of cultural transmission will be described and the origin of the Islamic subculture explained.

- 2.4 Both cultures sought their perpetuation, the preservation of their folkways in this new geographic location, by the establishment of places of worship and schools. The socio-economic context for these efforts at cultural reproduction determined that the economically powerful could marshal greater resources than the economically weaker elements of the community that ipso facto represented the politically impotent as well. Thus while worship and learning may for the dominant have been axiomatic, for the subjugated it was a cherished privilege that was arbitrarily conceded. For the Muslims, schools as social institutions in colonial Cape Town, were as defined in the observation:

Schools cannot be analysed as institutions removed from the socio-economic context in which they are situated, for the essence of schooling lies within the nature of its relationship to those wider societal forces of which it is a part.⁴

Given this operational definition of what schools consists in, i.e. as social institutions, it follows that an historical consideration of opportunities for schooling in the cultural growth of Cape Town must address itself to the two parallel systems of education that each culture generated and nurtured.

- 2.5 Initially, schooling was manifestly a religious exercise, and the *raison d'être* of the schools of the 17th century Holland as well as its overseas settlements was the young's preparation for life in the official Church.
- 2.6 The Dutch schoolmaster held his office at the pleasure of the Church elders and was thus a significant officer of the Church whose express purpose was to secure the future generation of devotees by precept and example.

The sophisticated organisation of Church life complete with prescriptive regulations was transplanted to the Cape of Good Hope.⁵ Political power therefore ensured a large measure of

continuity between the work of the Church in Holland with regard to formal education and that of its local branch. The Dutch schoolmaster was charged with the same responsibilities as his counterpart in Holland, viz, instruction of the young as well as pastoral care of the sick. Hence the interchangeable term "Ziekentrooster", to denote both a teacher and one ministering to the sick, gained currency at the Cape.

- 2.7 In contrast, the Muslim schoolmaster seemed to have had an enviable latitude precisely because he had no clearly defined status and no hierarchy to direct his activities. He was a freer agent, who, if not in bondage, could pursue an occupation such as tailoring and simultaneously conduct a school. In the Islamic tradition, each Muslim with knowledge to impart was ipso facto a teacher to the deficient.⁶ Islam, transplanted to the Cape, seemed to have a greater flexibility and adaptability without sacrificing its basic tenets and practices. This feature dictated by its historical expansion is illustrated by Michael Gilsenan, an anthropologist:

As the community became in effect many diverse communities with different historical, political, and linguistic roots, the unity of a normative, legal, and legitimating Islam was of crucial significance. The divisions of the polity that occurred from the death of the Prophet onward, and the great Ummayyad and Abbassid empires of the succeeding three centuries, made all the more vital the preservation of unquestionable Truth and its diffusion in society. If dynasties frequently seemed to rule in ways contrary to the Word of God, so much more important was it for Islam to be seen as the real underlying and continuous foundation of society, whatever the acts of the rulers.⁷

By the same token, European colonisation, motivated by economic considerations, held no fundamental threat to

Islam's prevalence for as long as Muslims could continue their religious expressions albeit as a concession from the rulers. The Dutch colonists by their exclusion of non-Christian elements from the political life at the Cape, therefore allowed Islam to develop as a counter culture and an opposite pole attracting the demeaned and deprived.

- 2.8 While Bradlow⁸ and Davids⁹ present a more accurate picture of the origin of the slaves and exiles that came to the Cape from 1652 to 1700, local lore suggests a preponderance of Indonesian men of learning and refinement being among the exiles. These were the "Malay priests" referred to in extant records of the Dutch and British colonial period. They were classed as "Free Blacks" (Vrije Zwarten) who in terms of their own beliefs and values imparted knowledge and ministered to the sick much as the "ziekentrouster" did for the Christian colonists and their converts.

The most significant political exile was Sheikh Yusuf of Bantam who arrived at the Cape in 1699 and died here after five years. Du Plessis¹⁰ mentions that he was followed into exile by loyal companions four of whom taught Islam to slaves and free persons in the colony.

- 2.9 His stature as a scholar and teacher can be seen in this description of "Sjech Jusuf" by an Indonesian historian:

In 1644 Sjech Jusuf went to Mekkah to perform Haj whence he went to Jaman (Yemen) m Zubaid where he was given advanced education by Aby Abdillah Mohammad Abd. Bagi and Sayid Aly and other teachers in Jaman at that time.

Later he proceeded to Madinah and visited the Rasullallah Mosque (the Great Mosque of the Prophet). There he also studied religion from his teachers, Sjech Burhanuddin Al Mulk and Sjech Ibrahim al Hussein bin Sjihabuddin.

From Madinah he went to Damascus ... after this he went to Istanbul.¹¹

Bantam, the town where Sheikh Yusuf taught Islam, was a renowned seat of learning prior to the Dutch invasion of the Indies. People came from outside Bantam to acquire knowledge in Islamic sciences.¹²

One might presume that so esteemed a teacher, even in the relative isolation of his place of confinement at a distant farm on the Cape Flats, was visited and consulted by his coreligionists in his twilight years prior to his death. His grave at Faure has become "the Mecca of the South, where thousands of pilgrims pay their respects annually to the memory of a noble exile".¹³ Another view of his contribution to Islam at the Cape is expressed by Hellman and Abrahams:

Today he is looked upon as the epitome of Muslim virtue and has become the patron saint of contemporary Islam at the Cape.¹⁴

- 2.10 The Islam that developed the Cape was not without some peculiar Indonesian nuances and accretions if it is remembered that much of its instruction was done by people themselves relatively recently brought into its fold.

Rolf Reichert¹⁵ formerly of the Universidade da Bahia do Brazil, when commenting on the Indonesians who settled in Suriname offers an explanation for the difference between Indonesian Islam and the pristine creed embodied in the Quran and the Prophetic Traditions:

- 2.10 Indonesian Islam is well known as a kind of eclectic faith. The Javanese believe not only in Allah, but also in numerous spirits.

Rather ignorant in doctrinal matters, they know very little of the Sharia (Islamic Law). The

only religious precepts which they follow scrupulously are the external ones: those referring to purity, alimentation, ablutions, prayers, etc.

It can be appreciated that Sheikh Yusuf, a widely travelled scholar, who had sat at the feet of great teachers of his day, could well have been a guide to humbler persons seeking Islam's propagation in early Cape Town.

It is not known whether Sheikh Yusuf wrote any guidebooks for local religious teachers, but the Dutch orientalist, A.A. Cense,¹⁶ notes that the Royal Batavian Society's Catalogue attributes some extant writing of 17th century Islam in Indonesia to him. However, David Lewis,¹⁷ posits the view that Sheikh Yusuf defied the Dutch authorities by attending religious gatherings held in homes in Cape Town. His teaching here could have been largely verbal.

- 2.11 It is the considered opinion of C.J.A. Greyling¹⁸ that the conversion of slaves to Islam during the 17th century in Cape Town was facilitated by the presence of refined and educated Indonesian exiles, leaders of resistance to Dutch colonialism who continued their opposition by propagating Islam in a Christian domain.
- 2.12 The native soil of the exiled Islamic pioneers of Cape Town seemed to have produced within their creed a system of values that emphasised equality and brotherhood in contrast to the colonial social order that stressed the division between slave-owner and slave. Thus was generated a group harmony within the under-class of the town which allowed a sense of security.

To a person bearing the shackle of slavery and its implied exclusion from the institutions of the dominant culture, the caring ways of the Indonesian learned men and beliefs they made known presented a measure of solace as well as a sense of worth derived in a counter culture and an alternative lifestyle.¹⁹

- 2.13 Davenport²⁰ sums up the socio-political contrasts between the Dutch colonial citizenry and the subjugated people of Cape Town during the first 150 years:

... Cape society developed on caste lines, and an almost unbridgeable legal and social divide separating free men who possessed civil rights - the right to marry, to own property, to provide for the children, to bring or defend an action in a court of law - and slaves, who, as Roman Dutch law enforced by the statutes of Batavia and local Cape placaaen made clear, possessed only natural rights necessary for survival - the right to eat and sleep, and to cohabit, and not to be deprived of life without sufficient cause.

- 2.14 Those who during the Dutch regime at the Cape were neither European Christians nor in bondage, and who were officially known as "Free Blacks" did enjoy some religious indulgence within the constraints of the Van Dieman Placaat, which had legal force and effect. This statute was first applied in respect of Indonesian mercenaries brought here in 1658. It stated, inter alia,

No one shall trouble the Amboinese about their religion or annoy them: so long as they do not practice in public or venture to propogate it amongst Christians and heathens. Offenders to be punished with death, but should there be amongst them those that had been drawn to God to become Christians, they were not to be prevented from joining Christian churches.²¹

For these non-conformists so necessary for the welfare of the Dutch settlement the Van Dieman Placaat allowed the pursuit of Islamic instruction and worship in secret and in private dwellings. Immigration of Muslims and the natural increase of those already settled at the Cape resulted in a need for schools which the laws permitted only in the homes of priests.

- 2.15 While the contributory factors of slave conversion to Islam are peripheral to the present study, the question of places for formal instruction does certainly arise because conversion required reinforcement. As more of the town's non-Christian people embraced Islam the need for special accommodation increased. According to both oral tradition and extant records the first public Muslim school opened towards the end of the 18th century when another distinguished Indonesian exile, Tuan Guru, was released from incarceration on Robben Island.

When Tuan Guru was released from Robben Island in 1793, his first concern was the establishment of a Muslim school at the Cape. Such a school was soon established and operated from a warehouse attached to the home of Coridon of Ceylon in Dorp Street. The school proved extremely popular with the local slave and free black community. It played an important role in converting the heathen slaves to Islam.²²

- 2.16 Official disregard for the establishment of the first non-Christian school could be explained by reference to (a) schooling as a political priority at the Cape at that time, and (b) the significant growth of the slave and Free Black population in a town with a burgeoning population and increasing complexity. Malherbe observes that education hardly ever featured as a matter of concern in the despatches of the Dutch Council of Policy until the first half of the 18th century because other matters were deemed more politically significant.²³

For as long as non-Christian elements of Cape Town observed the Dutch laws, scrupulously obeyed authority, and were not conspicuous in their religious expression, they seemed, for the official records, of no importance. But conversion to Islam and instruction in its tenets proceeded quietly and unobtrusively.²⁴

While Christian churches were the only architectural express-

ion of worship permitted, the homes of Free Blacks presented to slave and heathen both a refuge from physical oppression and opportunities for acceptance and solace.

- 2.17 Marais notes that by 1800 the benches of Cape Town's Groote Kerk - the most important building for Christian worship - were seldom occupied by slaves. Some benches were for their exclusive use. He contends further: "Islam did more than Christianity to bridge the gulf between slave and free born."²⁵ In substantiation of this Harris²⁶ mentions some official concern that slave children be taught in schools "knowledge of the principles of the Christian religion". Such instruction was addressed to the Earl of Macartney in 1796. But the Governor, Macartney, did not attend to the matter nor a related instruction to ensure "that nobody was allowed to run a school without a licence issued by him". Contemporary assumptions were that schooling was the task of religious communities and at best served the moral order of society.

Some religious toleration after 1780 permitted more than one religious community of European settlers to conduct schools.²⁷ Muslims were, however, not seen as a religious community entitled to similar public acceptance.

- 2.18 A steady growth in their numbers and the improvement of the economic position of some Free Blacks emboldened them to seek amelioration of their condition. An opportunity for the de jure recognition of Islam presented itself when in 1800 a petition was presented to Sir George Yonge that a mosque be built in Cape Town. By that token they might secure Islam's continued propagation by congregational worship and instruction. Records of the Burgher Senate do not mention the matter and it appears as if permission was refused.²⁸ But the secret schools in the homes were conducted with impunity.

By the beginning of the 19th century handwritten copies of the Quran were probably more common in the learning of Arabic reading and writing than before.

- 2.19 Using the Quranic text implies that rote memorisation of the Islamic scripture was improved upon, and this can be attributed to Tuan Guru's initiative. Lawrence G. Green²⁹ suggests that Tuan Guru was probably the most influential teacher of the Islamic creed in the early century because

(No one at the Cape possessed a copy of the Koran, so Towang Kuroo (sic) wrote out the whole book from memory. Years afterwards the Cape Koran was compared with an authorised version. There was hardly an error. Kuroo's wonderful feat of memory is still preserved and treasured by the Malay community. Kuroo built the first mosque, which still stands in Dorp Street. He was almost a centenarian when he died.

- 2.20 Du Plessis³⁰ recognises Tuan Guru as a man of "education and high character, and he helped to bring about a religious revival among the local Muslims." His distinction as theologian of the Muslims was borne out by the honorific title "Qadi" which his outstanding abilities earned him, and documents concerning him refer to him in Dutch as "Hooge priester".

His place in the cultural history of Cape Town is described thus:

He was certainly one of the Cape Muslim's most charismatic leaders who reigned virtually supreme as the main religious teacher for the better part of the first fifty years of religious freedom.³¹

- 2.21 To have earned the designation "Qadi" (or Cadi), which means "a civil judge usually of towns etc. in a Muslim country"³² suggests that the other religious teachers deferred to him in matters of dogma and orthodoxy. Such an office in Cape Town of the early 19th century conveys the idea of a substantial

number of Muslims functioning collectively like a state within a state, regulating their lives at least in terms of family law according to their own norms. Islamic marriages were contracted and solemnised, for example, regardless of the fact that the only legal marriages were those solemnised in the Church.

- 2.22 A demographic description of Cape Town's population by the missionary, Halbeck, in 1819 conveys an idea of how significant Islam, as a counter-culture to that of the dominant Dutch had become:

The town had a population of 7 460 Europeans, 1905 Free Blacks, 7 462 Slaves, 810 Prize Negroes and 536 Hottentots. Nearly all the non-whites were Mohammedans or heathen. Religious house-gatherings being permitted, a missionary of the L.M.S. (London Missionary Society) and several mission friends held regular meetings for non-whites.

Most of the slave-owners sent their slaves to the mosque by preference, because the Moslem faith would keep them from drunkenness.³³

It should be noted that the "mosque" referred to above was more likely to be an Islamic congregation rather than a building of distinctive architectural design. Franzen and Cook³⁴ describe the Palm Tree Mosque as basically a dwelling house with the home of the imam on the ground floor and the upper floor used for congregational worship.

- 2.23 Muslims of Cape Town repaired to the homes of the priests for religious gatherings at the same venues where their children were instructed. (A painting in "Kaffirs Illustrated" by the Australian museum curator, George Angas, in the 1850's gives an impression of such instruction).

- 2.24 With an increasing number of non-white children of the town learning Islam officialdom was bound to become aware of a potentially subversive practice. Lord Caledon, the British governor in 1807, was particularly concerned about this with regard to the newly imported Mozambican slaves as the following statement attests:

The imported slaves are mostly from Mozambique, arriving here in total ignorance, and being permitted to remain in that state, they for the most part embrace the Mahomedan faith.

Anxious to undermine such a doctrine and to afford these unfortunate people the consolation of a purer religion, and judging that it can not be done so effectually as by the propagation of Christian knowledge, I have empowered the clergyman of the Reformed and the clergyman of the Lutheran Church each to appoint an instructor under him for the duty of promulgating the Gospel to the slaves belonging to their respective congregations.³⁵

- 2.25 That which the Dutch authorities of both State and Church had allowed to develop by default, viz. the Islam-orientated school of Cape Town, would thenceforth be countered with instruction in "a purer religion", the Christian faith of the European colonists.

- 2.26 In the British Parliament on July 25, 1822, William Wilberforce referring to the domestication of the Cape's conquered people argued that the children were being adversely affected by the lack of a Christian education, and, therefore, he urged His Majesty's Government "to consider that the communication of Christian instruction to the slaves and Hottentots is a paramount act of duty".³⁶ As a result of this Lord Charles Somerset, Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, issued his Proclamation of March 18, 1823, whereby Christian slave

owners were compelled to send the children of their slaves to schools near their homes. Clause No. 4 of the Proclamation reads as follows:

Christian slave proprietors, residing in Cape Town, and other towns and villages, and their immediate vicinity, where free schools are or may be established, are, after the first day of June next, to send their slave children above three years, and under ten years of age, at least three days in each week to the established free school nearest to their dwelling...³⁷

By prescribing the minimum and maximum ages of the pupils the proclamation would ensure that schooling did not deny the slave-owner the right to the maximal economic advantage of his slaves, even for three days of the seven-day week. But such inducement proved ineffectual because there was no penalty prescribed for defaulters, nor was the machinery for enforcement created. The most important reason why this effort at compulsion was unsuccessful was the lack of funds for its implementation. If these factors were withholding children from the free schools for learning Christianity, what was attracting them to be sent to the other kind of school to learn about Islam?

- 2.27 It would appear that the Islam-oriented schools in the homes of imams (priests) were especially successful in attracting the children of slaves. Behr³⁸ has pointed out that in the 1820's an "imam" (sic) was conducting a school in Cape Town "attended by some 370 slaves".

Citing an Imperial Blue Book of that period, Shell³⁹, proved that in 1825 a "Malay priest" was teaching 491 Free Black and slave children at his home.

- 2.28 We need to compare two fundamental assumptions about slaves and their education at that time in order to appreciate the

preference of one school over another. An imam who testified before the Commissioners of Enquiry on "The State of Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope" which reported in 1830, explained:

To be admitted to the Mohammedan Faith Infants must be brought to the Mosque seven days after their birth, and are named by the Priests; they are afterwards taught the precepts of the Koran, and they learn to read and write Arabic. Many are also sent to the European free schools, where they are taught to read and write the Dutch language, but it does not appear that the instruction which they receive at these schools has any influence upon their Faith. As it is contrary to the precepts of the Koran that a Slave should be a Mohamedan, the Priests endeavour to make the Slaves believe that although their bodies are held in Slavery, yet their souls are free, and they must trust in God to make them free when they die. It is also contrary to the Mohamedan Law that those who follow it should sell their slaves, and if a Mohamedan buys a slave of a Christian, and the Slave becomes a convert to the faith of his new owner, he is entitled to be considered as an equal in his family and cannot afterwards be sold, and at the Master's Death both himself and his Children are enfranchised; at the same time the Slave is allowed to earn the means of redeeming his freedom, or if he wishes to be sold or separated from his Master, he is allowed to find a Purchaser.⁴⁰

In essence this statement shows that colonial Muslims operated in terms of their own norms as far as the constraints of European domination made this possible. But more striking is the egalitarian principle conveyed in the substance of the statement, viz. that the slave is given an unqualified

acceptance by the adherents of Islam even "if their bodies are in slavery". There was also the opportunity for a legitimate freedom as a member of a Muslim slave-owner's family. Islamic Law in respect of the family needs elaboration here:

The family is the only group based on kinship or affinity which traditional Islam recognises in law, and is the bedrock of Islamic society. It is not surprising, therefore, that it should remain the focus and pivot of a Muslim's life. About a third of the Koran is devoted to family matters and relationships....⁴¹

Here is included the recognition by the Islamic culture of the formative role of the family as the primary socialising and educational institution of society. Children attending the schools in the home of the priests were also directly exposed to the life of the teacher's family and to see Islam operating within the family context. Already in the 1830's some eighty houses of Cape Town were designated in the "Almanacs" as the homes of "Malay schoolmasters".⁴²

- 2.29 To account for the apparent advantage that the Islam-oriented school had in the contest of the two cultures of the town in 1835, the Rev. J.W. Saunders posits the following:

(The Muslims) have opened schools for the instruction of coloured children... The black man has no desire to enter into the Christian church whose gates have so long been shut against him; he prefers joining with those who have been his friends in his distress, who invite and encourage him to bring his children to the same school, to attend the same mosque, and to look forward to meeting in the same paradise.⁴³

- 2.29 That the blacks should have preferred another type of schooling could also be seen as a form of resistance to domestication.

An increasing interest by the colonial authorities in Christian mission schools for the children of Free Blacks and slaves was thus a logical consequence. This will become apparent as various features of educational policy are examined. Formal schooling for non-whites of Cape Town became an important part of proselytisation once British rule became consolidated.

This response is understandable if the increase in Muslim educational effort had not been so significant. An English scholar revealed in 1842 that there were two large "Malay schools" in operation while several smaller schools were being conducted in the homes of Malay priests. He estimated that Muslims were in a proportion of 48 to every 100 Christians in the town.⁴⁴

- 2.30 Muslim influence, perceived as potential source of subversion, had not to be countenanced. The religion of the dominant class had for the sake of consensus in the Weberian sense to be promoted instead. Of religion's potent social role Fletcher has observed:

Religion, too, is closely associated with the exercise of power and authority in any society and, in itself, exerts a widespread power over the minds, characters and behaviour of every people. In this, it is one of the most important agencies of education - not only in what its own teachings have to offer, but also in the ways in which it can support, hinder and even forbid the educational efforts and provisions of groups other than itself; sometimes even dictating or blocking the policies of governments.⁴⁵

- 2.31 While Islam could have represented an "alien" culture in the town its salutary social effect was to contribute to the moral tone of non-white community. British officialdom was aware of this as it was explicitly conveyed to their Commission of

Enquiry that reported on the conditions of slavery at the Cape in 1830. A Muslim deponent had outlined his community's educational objectives as follows:

...to look to God for all good, and to fear Him, and that if they do wrong it will be recorded, and when they die they must answer for it, and await either punishment or reward. It is inculcated to them that their duty to God consists in observing the facts prescribed in the Koran, and attending the service of the mosques, and making their wives and children conform to these rites, and in offering their prayers daily to God; and their duty in the world consists in the paying respect for authority, performing the work of their employers; they must not drink wine or spirits, for if they get drunk they will learn to commit other crimes, they will cheat and steal to procure the means of gratifying their vices, and neglect their business.⁴⁶

An educator so committed to the inculcation of personal restraint and obedience could hardly have offended unless certain a priori assumptions about Islam in certain influential quarters minimised his social value.

For his charges the instruction at least contributed to the self-esteem which had no place in a system of chattel slavery.

- 2.32 Christian-oriented free schools conducted by Europeans were ipso facto a type of cultural imposition in which the language of the dominant classes was the medium of instruction. The social and cultural distance between teacher and pupils was thus aggravated by a lexical barrier.

Those schools conducted by the Muslim schoolmasters, in the course of time, used a patois known as "Cape Dutch", lingua

franca of the town and the precursor of modern Afrikaans. Being literate in the Arabic language Muslim teachers, bearers of the alternative culture also attempted to write "humble booklets" in Cape Dutch using the Arabic script. This development constituted a cultural milestone in South Africa that Shell recognises when he observes:

Possibly one of the most impressive achievements of Muslim education in the nineteenth century was the contribution of Muslim clerics to Afrikaans as a written language. For instance, Adrianus Van Selms argues that a Cape Malay imam, not an Afrikaaner, published the first book in Afrikaans in the 1850's.⁴⁷

Such a book was clearly intended for a readership au fait with this peculiar form of communication. The rationale for its production could also have been a greater sophistication made possible by a more sustained schooling than was possible earlier for more of Cape Town's Muslims. Vernacular education was building on the existing cultural base brought to the learning situation rather than have the base supplanted by a foreign language and a new culture specifically as first the Dutch and later the British schoolmasters attempted in the schools functioning at the pleasure of the Bible and School Commission since 1809.⁴⁸

- 2.33 Vernacular education recognised a basic cultural-historical fact: the subordinate non-white population was using a distinct language derived from the assortment of people dwelling in Cape Town. Within the context of the Islam-oriented school, Arabic, the language of the Quran, was being brought into the devotions of a largely illiterate community. Professor Marius Valkhoff asserts that "Creole" was during the 18th century the main language used by slaves at the Cape, and that Lord Charles Somerset (1814) was obliged to publish his proclamations in English, Dutch and Portuguese Creole.⁴⁹

Du Plessis⁵⁰ more accurately refers to "Malay-Portuguese" because of the local flavour that the Indonesian exiles lent to the spoken language of Cape Town's non-white classes. Significant persons in the Free Black community seem to have had command of an Indonesian language (often the Buginese dialect), Arabic and Dutch. Harris furnishes corroboration when he notes:

Many of the wills of Malays that I have examined at the Cape Archives were signed in Arabic. This gives clear evidence to the fact that many Malays were literate and could communicate in Arabic. Most of these imams wrote their sermons and their notes of lessons for their Arabic classes in the Arabic script but in the Dutch language.⁵¹

- 2.34 Notes of lessons and sermons have been preserved in print in some rare instances and literary historians acknowledge their didactic import in Cape Town and South Africa's cultural history. Thus Shell has pointed out:

Van Selms stated that in the humble handbooks for the religious instruction of laymen (of which Arabic-Afrikaans handbooks are examples), bring us much closer to the living Islam of recent and modern times than does the study of the Koran, the classics, the collections of traditions and the writings of the great jurists and theologians.⁵²

A Cape Town newspaper of the mid-Nineteenth century attributes the first local book not written in a European language to a Muslim teacher. It was written in Arabic script but the language was actually Cape Dutch. Called, "Die Betroubare Woord", this book was the literary effort of one, Sheik Achmat.⁵³ This development aroused concern in the Christian missionary fraternity, especially those concerned with work

among the "Cape Malays".

- 2.35 Missionaries such as Thomas Fothergill Lightfoot, seemed not to be making significant strides in the conversion of Cape Town's labouring classes for lack of communication skills. Therefore a certain Mr Henry Solomon earned the gratitude and admiration of Rev. Lightfoot for his ability to speak "Cape Dutch" which did much "in the way of removing prejudices and in preparing the Malay mind for a more full reception of the truth."⁵⁴
- 2.36 Schools conducted as Christian charitable institutions were becoming increasingly prominent in Cape Town of the Nineteenth century. Getting Muslim children to attend or remain at such schools proved extremely difficult. Only those children not involved in domestic chores or a trade or craft could be attracted. In the school provided by the town's Presbyterian congregation in 1841 only some twenty percent of the pupils were Muslims:

The day school provided coloured children with an elementary education. In December 1841, there were 500 on the register and the daily attendance was about 350. Of these, according to the report presented by D.G. Kannemeyer, the teacher appointed by St Andrews to run the school, 80 to 90 were the children of Mohammedans.⁵⁵

The St Andrews Church school was located in Somerset Road near to the Roggebaai fishingboat anchorage and fishmarket. Muslims constituted the majority of the fisherfolk but few seemed to be willing to send their children to the St Andrews school. One British observer of mid-nineteenth century Cape Town regretted this tendency:

Some of the very young children are sent to Dutch and English schools where they excel in intelligence.. At ten years of age and occasionally at a later date, they are removed to their

own Malay schools where they remain until they have attained the age of fifteen.⁵⁶

- 2.37 Social priorities of the time dictated that Muslims were concerned more with the moral dimension of schooling in pre-industrial Cape Town than with literacy and numeracy skills that the church schools offered. Education in that context meant to the Muslims the alienation of their young for Christianisation was a sine qua non of the education process. Malherbe⁵⁷ notes that in 1844 the majority of the pupils in the "Mission Schools" were in the sub-standards, barely learning to read and write. What Mayson calls "Malay schools" were at that time already a well organised facet of the Muslim cultural life. Harris argues that in their social effect the schools of the imams were more lasting than those that the dominant class provided for those not of European descent:

The imams at the Cape of Good Hope had a very comprehensive system of education and also had fairly large enrolments at their schools. However, the system of education introduced by the British governors proved to be a total failure.

Sir Lowry Cole, commenting on the Bible and School Commission, declared that it had ceased to function properly and was a total failure, because it had not lived up to its expectations to provide a system of education for all the inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope.⁵⁸

- 2.38 Economic considerations need also to be taken into account when the failure of the education system in Cape Town is examined. Educational policy was not discriminatory on racial or religious grounds, yet only the dominant classes gained more from its provisions, as Horrell concludes:

In a memorandum issued in 1839 the Government re-stated its non discriminatory policy: 'At all

times every Government seminary will be accessible to every individual of the community'. A certain degree of discrimination did, however, exists in practice, in that school fees had been introduced in 1834. Few coloured parents could afford to pay them.⁵⁹

People living in poverty are more likely to have large families and soon draw older children into family maintenance. Keeping older children at school meant the loss of their contribution as well as the burden of financial support many household budgets could not bear. Mindful of this the Cape Government started a "Grants-in-aid" scheme to assist public education through Mission schools.

- 2.39 Grants from the Colonial Treasury were intended at that time to benefit all classes of the Cape's people, a marked improvement on the dependence for funds that Mission schools had on philanthropic bodies in Britain and Europe. Maurice⁶⁰ places the Grants-in-aid scheme in perspective:

Missionary education of the Hottentots and the slaves had always been wholly a matter of philanthropic charity. But the new government system had started from the assumption that it was the duty of the Government to provide education for all classes of the community...

- 2.39 Despite the apparent altruism of the Grants-in-aid, which effectively minimised the costs of schooling to parents, Muslim children were in the 1840's and 1850's still reluctant to derive the optimal benefit of Mission schools.

Indeed the withdrawal of Muslim children from Christian schools was no arbitrary matter in the view of Shell:

Firstly, the colonial administration subsidised the Christian schools, whereas, according to

Mayson, the fee for attending the unsubsidised Muslim school was steep - three pence per week per pupil. Muslim parents could therefore save some money by sending their children of both sexes to Christian schools for part of their school careers.⁶¹

Quite another assumption seems to have informed this practice, viz., that the Muslim child of the town needed a basic literacy and numeracy for the purposes of economic existence in an increasingly complex society, but also needed a cultural induction into the adulthood of Muslim society.

- 2.40 Schools conducted by Muslim schoolmasters were excluded from official interest and the Grants-in-aid benevolence. This oversight was certainly not originally intended because Muslims had proven their worth as loyal British subjects when they helped defend the Colony in the War of the Axe (1848). Sir Harry Smith, the Governor, as a goodwill gesture summoned the Muslim religious leaders to discuss their community's needs. Intervention by Cape Town's Anglican Archbishop, however, put paid to that initiative. This is revealed by the Bishop himself:

The other day (Harry Smith) told me at a luncheon that he was going to send for the Mahometan Imaums, and promise them schools... I went before he could see them the next day to talk matters over with him, when he told me that if they wished for schools he would do nothing without me. They went in a body to him and nothing is yet done.⁶²

A measure of benign interest and support at that time might have secured for the Muslims de jure recognition as a religious community within the common British citizenry. Their educational endeavours with a Colonial subsidy might have obtained for them fair and equal treatment with the Christian community. That the Archbishop was so influential had less to

do with his esteemed status but more with the inferior social and political status of the people the imams represented.

- 2.41 Notwithstanding the improvements of their civil liberties brought about by Ordinance 50 (1828) and the Master and Servants Ordinance (1841) the non-white Capetonian during Sir Harry Smith's tenure of office had neither legal equality with the dominant class nor was he socially accepted except on utilitarian terms. Where the influence and authority of the white man counted, suggests an historian, the non-white in general was of little consequence:

He remained a proletarian, though a free man and a voter. He was still expected to show deference to white people as social superiors, and do his business at the white man's backdoor rather than in his living room.⁶³

- 2.41 Further demonstration of the political impotence of the non-white Capetonians is conveyed by Christoffel Brand, a prominent Dutch politician when he spoke about the Muslims and the proposed new constitution for the Cape Colony on 4 December 1851:

And gentlemen, why should people of colour not be entitled to the vote? Here, in this municipality they enjoy the same priviledges that we do, and what inconvenience has ever arisen? Do we forget that at one time a Mohammedan priest was elected a municipal commissioner, and who ever thought of objecting? Not a single voice was raised against it, but the individual himself declined to accept office. It was entirely his own act. These people pay their share of the taxes, and why should they not have a voice in the appropriation of their own money? I see some of them here now, and to their credit be it said, in the late anti-convict struggle, they showed a degree of intelligence, and a

and a force of moral character, that did them the greatest honour... Where would you find labouring men, when a meeting was called, and they were told they were injured and suffering, and that work was withheld from them, who laughed at the paltry attempt to excite them to violence and go orderly and quietly to their homes?

Sir, that was the conduct of people of colour of this town - and shall we withhold from them the same liberties we ourselves enjoy?⁶⁴

Brand's argument, vividly illustrated, seemed to prevail for the granting of Representative Government (1854) did not mean the exclusion of people of colour from the electoral process. Among the virtues not mentioned by Brand was the educational system that Muslims had developed and that contributed to the "force of moral character" exhibited at that meeting. It was a type of education of which few white Capetonians knew, but which had been described thus by a mid-Nineteenth century observer:

Lately, another description of schools has become common among them, kept principally by perverts (sic!) from Christianity. In these the instruction in English and Dutch, writing and 'accounts' is perhaps, equal to that of the Christian schools; they are rivals to the mission schools, from which they draw many of the better class of Mahometan children.⁶⁵

Indeed, some of the "better class of Mahometan children" were being sent to Mecca to be educated in the very cradle of Muslim civilisation, the city of pilgrimage and learning.

- 2.42 While testifying before Mr P.E. de Roubaix, a Justice of the Peace, several imams mentioned in 1856 that they had received their education in Mecca. Twenty-seven had signed a memorial addressed to the government.⁶⁶

- 2.43 From among them would be persons of such stature that in another social order could rise to political prominence. But politics was a matter in which they had no abiding interest unless public policy touched on their cultural expression.⁶⁷ This eventuated in Cape Town in 1854, and what initially was a peripheral matter in this study became a central issue in colonial policy vis-a-vis the Muslim community's educational aspirations. They sought a white official's help.⁶⁸
- 2.44 Peterus Emanuel de Roubaix, a colonial civil servant in Cape Town, became involved with the Muslims because of the performance of a religious rite that offended white members of the public.⁶⁹ The following letter refers to their annoyance:

Cape Town 9th January 1856

P.E. de Roubaix, Esq.,
Acting Judge of Police.

Sir,

We have ascertained that a representation has been made to the Government by some Malays about you stopping the Califa in our neighbourhood. As this subject is before the Governor, we beg leave to request, that you will kindly inform His Excellency, of the annoyances and disturbances we suffer from the parties complained of, who amuse themselves with that horrible and disgusting play, one night at least in every week.

You have personally witnessed the way in which the play is carried on, and we therefore trust that you will do us justice, in bringing our grievances to the notice of His Excellency the Governor.

We have, etc.

(Signed) J.H. BAM, A. son,
C. BEHR
A. BREDELL
D. de VILLIERS
J.P. LEEN
S.H. NICHOLLS
And other inhabitants

2.45 A Cape Town magazine of that period referred scathingly to

This annual nuisance, which consisted of dancing, tabourine-playing, and tom-tom beating, added to feasting and drinking, constituted a species of orgy that greatly disturbed the inhabitants of Cape Town. It had no reference to the Mussulman religion, but merely afforded opportunity for excess and riot..⁷¹

Acting as the honest broker between the religious leaders of the Muslims and the civil authorities, de Roubaix was able to bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion for all concerned. As owners of fixed properties in the town Muslims on the voter's rolls were of interest to a public figure such as de Roubaix and he could turn to that quarter when seeking electoral support. Having displayed a benign interest in their welfare he was assured of their votes in the election to the Cape Parliament's Upper House in 1858.

Detractors in the Cape Town's newspapers saw his exertions on behalf of the Muslims as a monstrous offence to his class.⁷² But as a public representative his record could have obtained within the Muslim community a measure of confidence in the new political dispensation that the system of Representative Government presented. He pressed on with seeking redress of their grievances,

and whenever sacred and religious rights were improperly assailed he stepped forward to render his powerful support in every way.⁷³

2.46 One might reasonably infer that the educational needs of his Muslim constituents also occupied his mind as his later exertions in this regard amply demonstrate. A most significant development was the acceptance by the authorities and the public that Muslims were free to pursue their religious practices and teach their creed without restriction.

However, the Muslims of Cape Town had from 1836 a fundamental difference of opinion over the competence and authority of some of their religious leaders.⁷⁴ A noted Muslim person, Hadje Agiet Magedien, alias Medien, who must have been literate and was also "Interpreter (Malay Language) Supreme Court", wrote to de Roubaix seeking his help in getting an Islamic scholar sent to the Cape.⁷⁵ The request proved a challenge to the British Government that requires some reference to Anglo-Ottoman relations.

- 2.47 A climate of friendship and collaboration between the two powers after the Crimean War (1854) made it possible for a man of good will, such as de Roubaix, with impeccable credentials as civil servant and parliamentarian, to bring about a Turkish involvement in Muslim education at the Cape.

Thomas Fothergill Lightfoot looked uncharitably at de Roubaix's endeavours:

A member of the Legislative Council, who it was said, owed his election in great measure to the Malay vote, undertook to apply to the Sultan of Turkey for assistance, in order that the followers of Islam at the Cape might be taught more perfectly the principles and practices of their religion.⁷⁶

Clearly implied in the above observation is the probability of the Malays having voted en bloc for this candidate and thus compromising him thereby to sectarian interests. There is also the suggestion that contemporary Muslim teachers were in some way deficient and would defer to the decision of the Sultan in the matter of education. If it is borne in mind that the Sultan was also the spiritual leader of the world's Muslims, and the sovereign of Arabia where some Muslim teachers had gone to study, then this mandate of de Roubaix is logical.

- 2.48 Whether seen as a conscientious public representative, an

astute politician or as an altruist of purest motive, de Roubaix's exertions, in getting an Islamic scholar from Turkey to teach in Cape Town, redounded to the credit of his Sovereign and the Pax Britannica. To illustrate his influence and authority one might cite the following:

Amongst the large Mohammedan community in this Colony Mr de Roubaix has done much good, by promoting their civilisation and advancement, and encouraging them to become worthy citizens and loyal subjects of the Queen. By this class he is much respected, and his advice is eagerly sought for by the Malays, and as strictly followed.⁷⁷

- 2.49 In order to maintain perspective it is appropriate, at this stage, to digress in order to show what developments in the provision of schooling were by the middle 19th century. By 1839 the Cape Colony created an Education Department to administer the schools. A Superintendent-General of Education was duly appointed. The first incumbent of that post was Sir James Rose-Ines.⁷⁸ When he retired in 1860, the number of mission schools which most non-white children attended, had increased over sixteen years from 21 to 123.⁷⁹ Being largely Church-oriented these schools were regarded with some reservation by the Muslims and few of their children attended or remained there for long.⁸⁰

Schooling opportunities for the Muslims thus occupied the mind of de Roubaix and probably influenced his decision to serve under Mr Justice Watermeyer on the Education Commission of 1861.⁸¹

This commission's findings will come into focus in the ensuing chapter.

- 2.50 According to the evidence thus far, even in this broad overview of schools for Cape Town's Muslims over two centuries, it can be inferred that Muslim exiles not only retained their beliefs,

values and folkways, but increased their number by conversions.

- 2.50 Wilberforce Bird, who described the social conditions of the Cape Colony in 1822, had reason to believe that Cape Town's Muslims were a strong and growing community guided by men of culture and refinement. He was moved to remark:

One of their imams is said to be a learned man, well versed in the Hebrew and Arabic tongues, and in A1 Coran, which he chants with taste and devotion. It must be acknowledged with shame and sorrow that Mohammetanism makes a great progress among the lower orders of the Cape.⁸²

Such great progress among the lower orders had its basis in the fact that they were conducting schools to ensure their cultural reproduction along with the provision of instruction in their forms of worship. Their achievement is noteworthy in that the dominant group, both Dutch and British, had also provided schools for the young, but apparently with less success.

Yet, for as long as their schools were part of domestic routine in the homes and were none too conspicuous an official blind-eye was turned to them. Islamic education, even though promotive of an "alien" culture was contributing to the moral tone of the town along with the religious instruction offered by other religious communities.

In the course of two centuries the settlement had grown into a sizeable town midway on the sea-route from Europe to the East. A religiously more tolerant British rule allowed freedom to Gentile, Jew and Muslim. In 1850 Cape Town had 14 churches and a synagogue,⁸³ as well as three mosques.⁸⁴

- 2.51 Cape Town's Muslims were emerging as a conspicuous part of the townsfolk, and as a cultural minority in an increasingly complex social order with which they differed on many counts. As a subordinate group their differences did not prevent their

integration in the economy of the town, but did define the limits of social contact. By virtue of the following criteria their status within the broad society of 1850 can be described as that of a cultural minority:

- 2.51.1 minorities are subordinate segments of a complex society;
- 2.51.2 minorities have special physical or cultural traits which distinguish them from the majority group, (and often) are seen as undesirable (as well);
- 2.51.3 minorities have a group self-awareness brought about by special traits they share and the special disabilities these traits cause them;
- 2.51.4 membership in a minority is transmitted by rule of descent - one is born in a minority - and this rule of descent is capable if by then the special physical or cultural trait has disappeared;
- 2.51.5 members of a minority, whether by choice or by necessity, tend to practice endogamy - that is, to marry within the group.⁸⁵

Marriage according to Islamic practice was never acknowledged by the Dutch and their British successors treated this form of union as unworthy of recognition.⁸⁶ Muslim families were thus out of favour as well but enjoyed its own legitimacy and sanctity within the Islamic community.

- 2.52 Intermarriage within the Islamic fold made diverse exiles and slaves a homogenised cultural collectivity. All that has been said about the Cape Town Muslims as a cultural minority is affirmed by local social historian, Michael Whisson:

Both Bengal and Batavia (from where slaves and exiles were brought) were largely Moslem areas and their peoples intermarried easily at the Cape. The Ceylonese vanished as an independent group as a result of their small numbers and the 'denationalising' experience of slavery. The Indians and

Batavians, however, maintained their distinctiveness for various reasons, although they blended to form a single self-conscious group, the nucleus of what is today known as the "Cape Malay". There was a large number of them and from fairly early in their residence in South Africa they were treated by their owners as being superior to African slaves. Their shared faith in Islam gave them an identity which transcended slavery, linked them to a powerful international religious tradition, and encouraged endogamy within their faith.⁸⁷

There was a self-contained and spiritually self-supporting community that responded to their exclusion with an alternative cultural statement and another cultural orientation. Such leadership figures that asserted authority among them did so in terms of the knowledge they possessed and shared.

A knowledge that was for the times of bondage and proscription a socially redemptive force. After 1850 when British institutions and economic change affected the social interactions between the dominant and the subordinate cultures new leadership capabilities were needed, and new inadequacies in the explanatory usefulness of conventional knowledge were felt.

Schools and teachers are directly concerned with such perceptions, and they are central considerations in the discussion of the period 1860 to 1900 which is discussed in the ensuing chapter.

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CHAPTER 3SCHOOLING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CAPE TOWN MUSLIMS FROM 1860 TO 1900

3.1 It is generally supposed that Muslims, as part of the Coloured community of Cape Town had no special interest in schooling during the 19th century, because their aspirations and grievances were in no way dissimilar from those of the people not of European descent. That they constituted a significant sub-culture distinct from the mainstream culture of Cape Town has been described in the previous chapter. Books by I.D. Du Plessis and others about "The Cape Malays" and their peculiar folkways substantiate the assumption that only religion and custom distinguished them from others, but the history of schooling for Coloured people applies to their educational endeavours as well.

3.2 Available data and extant historical records, however, suggest that such an assumption is erroneous and simplistic. In what follows I will argue:

- 3.2.1 that in pre-industrial Cape Town, Muslims were largely functioning as an enclosed social collectivity and in terms of its own value system and social structure;
- 3.2.2 that the schooling opportunities for Muslims were intimately related to their socio-political status in the mainstream culture;
- 3.2.3 that as a community enjoying an equal franchise with the settler entities they obtained a special political consideration regarding their perceived educational and religious needs directed towards Anglo-Turkish interests;
- 3.2.4 that their resistance to evangelisation and cultural imposition restricted their social advancement in a social order where Christian and "Western" values and norms were increasingly accentuated;

- 3.2.5 that their calculated exclusion from the benefits of citizenship, of which schooling for the young is a crucial part, compelled them to greater reliance on their own resources.
- 3.3 In this period of four decades (1860 to 1900) a pattern of public school provision was becoming discernable in Cape Town because the Colony had its own Education Department constituted in 1839¹, its first Superintendent-General, Sir James Rose-Innes, handed over his office to his successor, the first Education Commission (1863) had submitted its report, and the Education Act (1865) was being implemented. The schooling process for young Capetonians as citizens of the future was starting in earnest. The fact that Rose-Innes's successor held office for thirty-two years (1860 to 1892) meant that the direction of a single civil servant ensured continuity and the consolidation of the public schoolsystem.
- 3.4 Consolidating the public school system meant more than providing its funds from the public revenue, building its administrative infrastructure, and standardising its procedures.² Consolidating also meant the involvement of diverse church-oriented schools in a single, unified endeavour where there was consensus about what schooling shall consist of and what interests shall be served. The Education Act (1865) was perceived by Dutch-speaking colonists to be the legitimization of British hegemony. Such an imposition aggravated the resentment of the conquered Dutch as an Afrikaner writer illustrates:

Die godsdiensonderwys wat die eerste deur De Mist verwater en deur die Herschel-stelsel verder aan bande gelê is, is dus nou totaal uit die skool verban, terwyl ook Hollands as voertaal verbeurd verklaar, en daarvoor selfs as vak geen positiewe voorsiening gemaak is nie - faktore waardeur die skool alle verband met die huis en die lewe verloor en vir die Afrikaner 'n wesentlike vreemde instelling geword het,

heeltemal in stryd met sy Calvinistiese lewens
en wêreldbeskouing.³

After 1865 education was to have a distinct English orientation and it was feared that in the consequent alienation all that was dear to the spiritual aspect of Afrikaner life would be endangered. It will be shown that Muslims had similar fears of alienation, by the hegemony of British culture and beliefs. They, too, would have been subjected to the stipulation of Paragraph 10 of the Education Act (1865) to which Afrikaners took umbrage and which stated:

The instruction during school hours shall, as far as practicable, be given through the medium of the English language, within twelve months after the establishment of the school.⁴

Thus we need to digress and examine the nature of hegemony to grasp the emotional responses that anglicisation elicited in both these aggrieved communities.

Hegemony refers to a whole range of structures and activities as well as values, attitudes, beliefs and morality that in various ways support the established order and the class interests which dominate it. The concept of hegemony refers to the organising principle or world view which is diffused through agencies of ideological control and socialisation into every area of daily life. it provides the fundamental categories of thought and perception of the social world which binds individuals together in one society. To the extent that it is internalised by ordinary people it becomes part of their "common sense"... Through cultural hegemony "spontaneous" consent is created.⁵

Bound as it was by centuries of tradition to language, convention and belief, to the "Calvinist" world view, the Dutch

community spurned an education removed from the Church control and its cultural context.

3.5 Being the former dominant class of the Cape colony, the Dutch-Afrikaner community were economically enabled and culturally advanced to operate their own alternative schools. In Cape Town affluent Dutch parents could send their sons and daughters to the Netherlands Society's prestigious school in Queen Victoria Street, called, "Tot Nut van 't Algemeen".⁶ Muslims, who were in the main poor people, had nothing similar, except the traditional religious schools that served their needs.

3.6 The Slave Emancipation law of 1834 had turned thousands of them into the town's small traders, artisans, fishermen, labourers and domestic service workers. Collectively, Muslims under the leadership of their various imams managed to acquire land for mosques and burial-ground.⁷ A few were property owners and thus could exercise the vote. Their domicile in the town, says Shirley Judges,⁸ was in 1844 mostly in District 4, Ward 15, where they formed 56% of the house-occupants. Her explanation is

... that as with the rest of Cape Town's population, the Malays' choice of where to live depended on economic rather than racial or cultural considerations.

By implication it is clear that more than half were confined to an area where their incomes permitted rather than because of the proximity of "cultural" facilities as mosques and religious schools might have been ten years after the emancipation. For most people of poor incomes, schooling, if at all available, would be obtained from charitable institutions, invariably Christian.

Being members of a smaller religious community, Muslims tended to conduct their social relations with the mainstream culture much in the manner of a "sect" as defined in the following account:

Sects are insular groups which are largely closed to those who have not gone through the initiation procedures of membership. They institute a strict pattern of behaviour for members to follow and make strong claims on their loyalty. Belonging to a sect is often the dominant factor in a member's life.

The organisation of sects tends to be in terms of small face to face groups, without a hierarchy of paid officials and a bureaucratic structure.⁹

A religious community so constituted would relate to the mainstream culture only in terms of economic requirements, and, if possible, on its own conditions.

3.7 Davids postulates other pressures that reinforced their insularity during the early 19th century and suggests an alternative social organisation wherein there was a measure of security:

Their poverty was, however, compounded by the religious and political prejudice prevalent in their social environment. Politically, they were at best second-class citizens. Their presence in Cape Town was tolerated only because they were an efficient labour force...

Whatever social status they desired, they had to seek among themselves. Their religion provided them with a basis for a social hierarchy, to compensate for the social status attainment denied in the broader social milieu.¹⁰

For as long as Cape Town was in its pre-industrial phase this social arrangement had its own validity and it was for such a society that cultural reproduction was required. Their leaders were drawn from the former "Free Blacks" among whom at the end of the previous century were "many pious good Mussulman, several of whom possessed properties."¹¹

- 3.8 Just as Free Blacks were a small number during the Dutch regime, free to pursue profitable enterprises or be self-employed, so their number during the British rule was also negligible, but their religious affiliation was more with those demeaned persons who shared their faith. These people, the few relatively rich and the many, poor, adherents of Islam, were a conspicuous sub-cultural element of Cape Town's populace after 1860, as has been noted by an English visitor:

A walk through the streets of Capetown (sic) is sufficient to show the stranger that he has reached a place not inhabited by white men, and a very little conversation will show him further that he is not speaking with an English-speaking population.

The gentry are no doubt white and speak English... He will find that everything about him is done by coloured persons of various races, who among themselves speak a language which, I am told, the Dutch in Holland would hardly condescend to recognise as their own.¹²

- 3.9 Like the labouring classes of other colonies they, too, had produced a hybrid language intelligible to a largely illiterate community. The writer, Trollope, was referring to the Malays, "a most valuable race" in rendering their services. Yet, some men of stature, "flaunting about town in turbans and in flowing robes" also caught his eye. These were hardly the naked savages of Africa whose newsworthy conflict with the British had brought the novelist to these shores.

Trollope confirmed an observation that Mayson made twenty years earlier about the privileged few that he described in these words:

Some priests, and all who have achieved a pilgrimage to Mecca, affect an oriental dress: cashmere shawls and turbans, and long robes of wool or of silk.¹³

While men of esteem and sophistication among the Muslims disported themselves in "oriental dress" their co-religionist of the labouring class, was also readily identifiable because

... general Malay costume at the time was a compromise, (between East and West), the most prominent Eastern feature being the toering (tudong), a conical hat.¹⁴

- 3.10 Contact within the diversity of cultures as obtained in Cape Town in 1860 had the effect of reinforcing sub-cultural public identity especially during a period of British political consolidation and ubiquitous cultural imposition.

One could reasonably argue that this social phenomenon in Cape Town was reactive in the climate of change since

The presence of groups that seem peculiar, offensive, or perhaps even threatening causes people to cling even more strongly to their own social worlds. Far from becoming detached and indifferent, urbanites are more likely to become more passionately committed to "their own kind".¹⁵

- 3.11 To appreciate how "peculiar" and "offensive" official attitudes were towards Muslims it should be mentioned that, although they were nominally equal subjects of the British Sovereign, their religious endeavours such as building and maintaining mosques and schools were discounted for purposes of State assistance. As a religious community they did not enjoy the grace and benevolence of the State that are described in the following extract:

From the period when the Colony became a British possession contributions towards the support of the clergy of several denominations were granted by the Government at various times. In 1853 these grants amounted to £16 060 per annum; and by a schedule to the Constitution Ordinance that

sum was set aside to be annually appropriated for the service of "religious worship".¹⁶

Such subsidisation allowed for payment of clergymen who often performed teaching duties and increased the resources of a congregation to be allocated to extending or improving facilities for their growing flocks. Mission schools could be erected and once in operation be additionally subsidised by "Grants-in-aid". Although this gesture secured much good will for the Colonial Government it was economically unsound and morally indefensible to pay only some of the clergy.

3.12 Cape parliamentarian, Saul Solomon, eloquently urged the legislature to adopt the "voluntary principle" whereby such subsidisation would be gradually phased out. As spokesman for the business fraternity in Cape Town of whom some were not Christians, the partiality towards churches was unacceptable. But Solomon also had loyal support at the hustings from prominent Muslims such as Abdol Burns¹⁷ whose community's institutions had no benefit from the scheme, neither did the smaller Christian sects. However, these Government grants necessitated a periodic survey of the number of church adherents. The first survey for the allocation of ecclesiastical grants (1841) produced the following distribution table of Muslims in the Cape Colony:

Cape Town	6 492
Cape District	400
Stellenbosch	268
Worcester	300
George	100
Uitenhage	150
Albany	50
Swellendam	20
Beaufort West	20 ¹⁸

These figures indicate the heaviest concentration of Muslims in Cape Town and environs, to wit, Cape Town, Cape District, Stellenbosch, Worcester, where some 95,64% were located.

3.13 That the Muslims were growing remarkably in number over the period under study is borne out by Shell¹⁹ who attributes their expansion to both natural increase and sustained conversion of other non-whites.

He furnishes these statistics for the period 1875 to 1891:

The 1875 census reported 13 930 Muslims (10 817 Malay) in the Colony, 8 948 Muslims in Cape Town, while the 1891 census reported 15 099 Muslims (13 907 Malay) and 11 287 Muslims in Cape Town.

Ergo, the Muslim population of Cape Town itself increased over a period of fifty years by almost 80%: 6 492 (1841) and 11 287 (1891); a nett gain of 4 995.

However a lack of proper schooling in their own religion's tenets seemed to belie the value of these numbers. Whether they were actually observant of Islam in all its dimensions was seriously questioned by the first foreign teacher sent here to minister to their educational needs. Five mosques serving five distinct congregations in the town²⁰ indicated a degree of disharmony and factionalism. Syncretism had apparently polluted the religious observances and the first teacher of an official school explains the status quo when he assumed his duties in 1863:

I had to try to reform some of their bad habits and practices, which were contrary to the religion of Islam. I experienced difficulty with a minority, who were reluctant to give up their bad habits and foul deeds, but the majority were eager to learn and follow the correct Koran laws and regulations for the proper observance of the Muslim religion.

Some began to realise how the religious disputes they used to have prior to my arrival were futile and unnecessary in the absence of a guiding authority like myself on religious matters.²¹

Significantly he found the majority "eager to learn" which indicates a heightened awareness of the value of a school and a relevant curriculum. The need for an authoritative arbiter in their midst could also point to a degree of inadequacy in their existing leadership to cope with a society of about 8000 people and a growing complexity of social relations that manifested themselves in "religious" terms because of the divisive disputes among them.

What needs to be considered is: Who was this teacher? Why did he come to Cape Town? How successful was his mission?

- 3.14 Abu Bakr Effendi is the most noteworthy figure in the educational development of the Muslims in the 19th century Cape Town. His were the first services of an Islamic scholar sought by the Cape's Government and he was also the last to be so honoured. He came because of the Sultan of Turkey's concern for the welfare of Muslims at the Cape of Good Hope, held his office at the Sultan's pleasure and enjoyed a special legal status because of that association.

An examination of Anglo-Turkish relations at that time will throw some light on the political climate which enabled the Cape's Muslims to be so privileged.

- 3.15 After the Crimean War (1854) relations between Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire were formally defined in a number of bilateral treaties, the most relevant to this study being the Treaty of Paris, signed on 30 March, 1856. It was an agreement between Britain and her Christian allies on the one hand and the Muslim Ottoman Empire on the other, whereby the domains of the Sultan were to be admitted into "the public law and system of Europe".²²

The Ottoman Sultan further indicated his willingness to ameliorate the conditions of his Christian subjects as the following Article conveys:

ARTICLE 1X: His imperial Majesty, the Sultan, having, in his constant solicitude for the welfare of his subjects, issued a firman (decree), which, while ameliorating their condition without distinction of religion or race, records his generous intentions towards the Christian population of his Empire, and wishing to give further proof of his sentiments in that respect, has resolved to communicate to the Contracting Parties the said firman emanating spontaneously from his sovereign will.

The Contracting Parties recognise the high value of this communication. It is clearly understood that it cannot, in any case, give to the said Powers the right to interfere, either collectively or separately, in the relations of His Majesty the Sultan with his subjects, nor in the internal administration of his Empire.

From the above it is clear that the Sultan was committed to a contractual obligation with regard to the interests of his Christian subjects the advancement of which he alone would determine. In a spirit of quid pro quo it is fair to infer that Britain would afford similar consideration for Muslims within its own empire. However, the Treaty of Paris signified an accord between Britain and Turkey that was soon to be given effect at the Cape, a British colony with a Muslim minority in its capital city. That the Ottoman Empire was also being drawn closer to Christian Europe because of its admission to their system of public law, was also the result of an internal political process that had a bearing on the assignment of Abu Bakr Effendi to Cape Town.

3.16 After the Crimean War youthful idealist within the Ottoman

Empire were keen to be closely associated with the technologically advanced states of Western Europe. The accession of the Turkish throne by the young Sultan Abdul Aziz in 1861 seemed to augur well for the protagonists of Westernisation of Turkish society. Politically perceptive young men and their hopes have been described in this way:

They were eager to learn from the West, to import not merely privileged Traders and churchmen, but also political, social and administrative ideas. The (Sultan's) Hatti-Humayoun (pledge of reform), issued in 1856, was their charter. It was nothing less than a proposal to turn the Ottoman lands from a disunited, corrupt, ineffective conglomerate into a modern Western state, with toleration and access to office for everyone (instead of Muslims alone)... For some years the reformers were in control of the country; with Sultan Abdul Aziz, who ascended the throne in 1861, they had one of their own number in supreme authority. The Western powers were impressed by these efforts and not wholly pessimistic.²³

Admitting Western traders and clergymen as well as ideas signified a receptiveness to change and even the acceptance of challenges by the ruling class. Turkish youth was thereafter to be pre-occupied with problems of adaptation and reform, with conflict of fundamentalist and modernists in matters of belief. Perhaps touched by these discussions, in Constantinople, Abu Bakr Effendi was himself to be an agent of adaptation and reform at Cape Town.

- 3.17 Earnest young men in Constantinople around 1860 exhibited a growing awareness of the condition of Muslims in Europe's African and Asian colonies. They tended to emphasise the Islamic basis of the Ottoman state and the distinction of their Sultan as the Khalifa, or the supreme religious authority of the world's Muslims. A request that one of them be

sent to minister to a remote Muslim community was bound to be well received as this observation shows:

It was felt that he (the Ottoman ruler) was not just the sultan and head of the empire, but also caliph and spokesman for Muslims throughout the world. Sultan Abdul Hamid II, who came to the throne in 1876, actively pursued a policy based on this Pan-Islamic ideal, established ties with Muslims in many areas, and attracted leading figures to Istanbul. In areas far beyond the borders of the empire, there were Muslims who looked to the sultan-caliph for help.²⁴

A call for the Sultan's help came from Cape Town in 1861 and we need to examine the reasons for the call and the way in which the Sultan responded.

- 3.18 A document in the Cape Archives, GH 1/2 (1862) relates to this call which Davids clarifies thus:

The coming of Abu Bakr Effendi (the Turkish teacher) to Cape Town was preceded by two events. The one was the continued conflict at the Palm Tree Mosque (in Long Street) in the 1860s; the other was a request by Hadje Medien for a spiritual guide to be sent to Cape Town.²⁵

These disputes could have been expected in a society where old forms of social organisation were becoming inadequate to cope with enlarged membership of the worshippers, and in which leadership figures lacked the authority and charisma that their predecessors might have had. Thus they were perceived to be of questionable competence and doctrinal certainty.

The composition of the Muslim community had become more heterogeneous due to steady conversions to Islam as a census enumerator found at about that time:

Originally of Asiatic origin this small class

has become so leavened with foreign elements as to owe its distinctive existence rather to the bond of a common and uniform faith - Mohommedanism - than to any feeling of race.

Designated by themselves as Muslim (Islaamsche) the national name "Malay" has, to a large number of colonists among whom they live, lost its proper signification and become synonymous with "Mohammedan". It results therefore that a great number of persons of mixed race and many negro proselytes have been included in this class.²⁶

Also, the more heterogeneous the Cape Muslim society became the more fragile the social cohesion that the religious leaders could maintain and the teachers could instil in their charges. Assimilation of diverse elements meant various modifications to conventions and even beliefs were inevitable.

Voll offers this explanation for the modifications as well as the way in which disputes might arise:

Once Islamic symbols and themes were firmly established, even the ulema (theologians) came to accept local practices as part of the broader Islamic picture. The resulting social structures became a part of the community, and conservative Muslims sought to preserve them. However, since some local practices were clearly compromises, fundamentalist movements would sometimes arise to "purify" the religious life of a community.²⁷

Into this situation of tension, which in Hegelian metaphor signifies the conflict of thesis and antithesis, came the teacher-emissary of the Sultan of Turkey to effect the synthesis of theological order.

- 3.19 When P.E. de Roubaix sought this favour from the Sultan he could not have foreseen how the teacher's background, his personal philosophy and his perception of the Cape's Muslims

affected the course of events later. It was not simply a matter of bringing them closer to their Sultan. Firstly, as colonial subjects they had to obtain prior ~~sanction~~ of the settler ruling class. They had to define his status, fix the limits of his authority and describe his mandate.

He was to be treated quite unlike a teacher from Europe in the interest his assignment excited among legislators of a colony who saw the education of non-whites as merely a process of domestication.

- 3.20 According to the Hansard of 1893 (House of Assembly)²⁸ the need for a Muslim teacher was considered by the Cape's Executive Council in 1862, and to which the Votes and Proceedings of that organ refer. The merits of the case took up much time in view of a matter of public nuisance concerning the Muslims' devotional exercise in which sword-play featured prominently.²⁹

A certain Mr Jarvis had reservations about de Roubaix's request because the Malays could become even more troublesome if a foreign Muslim dignitary were to reside among them. No such request had come from that community before so there was no precedent to go by. But prominent Malays were then also enfranchised citizens and the exercise was part of the democratic process with which the Cape was becoming acquainted. As a foreign power was involved, the Governor was obliged to refer the matter to London.

- 3.21 Fears Mr Jarvis voiced in the Cape regarding the Muslim subjects of the Queen were apparently shared in more influential quarters of the Empire as well. Government support for Islamic education was not in the Victorian era as enthusiastically forthcoming as for Christian education.

A Nigerian scholar postulates this view about British imperial concerns:

Education policy pursued in the Muslim countries by the imperialist powers... usually denied any large-scale government support to Islamic

educational institutions, and generally placed obstacles in the way of the expansion of the Islamic school system. This was because it was believed that too much Islamic education might give rise to anti-imperial 'fanaticism', 'Mahdism' and so on. At the same time it encouraged the development of Western education, partly as a counterpoise to Islam, partly to train subordinate administrative personnel for employment in the imperial administration, and partly to develop an influential class of persons in Muslim countries who, though Muslims to the extent of praying and fasting, possessed a Western cultural orientation - language, consumption habits, dress, social morality, ideas about government, economy, class, etc - and therefore a stake in the continuation of the "Western connection".³⁰

The Cape Colony's Muslim community, although a significant subculture in Cape Town in 1862, were a relatively small social collectivity, certainly less of a potential political nuisance factor than the numerically stronger and culturally more sophisticated and developed Dutch-speaking community, whose churches were at that time receiving Cape Government support. (Supra 3.11)

- 3.22 A disinterested foreign support for Muslim education at the Cape would not have been unacceptable nor a bone of contention in local politics if the matter of the request for a teacher was handled with circumspection. Correspondence bearing on the matter was therefore conducted at a high diplomatic level between Britain and the "Sublime Porte", or Government of Turkey. The Turkish Ambassador in London had advised Lord Russel, the Foreign Secretary, that Sultan Abdul Aziz had decided to send one, Abu Bakr Effendi, as his accredited representative and Islamic teacher to Cape Town. His letter, pursuant to the Secretary's request on behalf of the Cape's Executive Council, was dated 15 July, 1862. It said that Abu

Bakr Effendi was appointed "to teach the Moslem youth of Cape Town the principles of Islamism", but there was a proviso that limited the Turkish teacher's involvement to religious matters exclusively. Lord Russel then conveyed this letter to the Duke of Newcastle (Secretary of State for the Colonies), who in turn advised the Cape's Governor, Sir Philip Wodehouse. Newcastle sought the Governor's protection of the Turkish teacher so that his mission could be carried out.³¹

3.23 A number of inferences as to the significance of these developments can be drawn from the above, viz:

3.23.1 the Cape's Muslims as subjects of Great Britain received the attention of Queen Victoria's ministers in a matter concerning their welfare and their due recognition as a religious community in the Cape Colony.

3.23.2 Islam at the Cape was given de jure and de facto recognition as a cultural entity and its adherents having educational needs unlike those of other local religious communities;

3.23.3 the Governments of Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire, signatories to the treaty of Paris (1856), were giving force and effect to the spirit of the treaty;

3.23.4 permission to entertain the appointment of a Turkish teacher among British subjects at the Cape could be construed as a quid pro quo for the Sultan's promise of "generous intentions towards the Christian population of his (the Ottoman) Empire";

3.23.5 a precedent was thus established whereby the Muslim subjects of the British Monarch were deemed the legitimate concern of the Turkish Sultan who was also in international conventions recognised as the spiritual leader of the universal community of Muslims;

3.23.6 clear distinctions were drawn between the political and religious interests of the Cape Muslims in the stipulations of the Turkish teacher's spheres of concern: in that their secular interests as British subjects were distinct from their religious and cultural interests as part of the world community of Muslims.

3.24 Distance from the centre of Muslim political power and influence lent a degree of assurance to those Cape colonists who were sensitive to interference in the pattern of social relationships they had maintained. They were looking at Muslims as ideologically in competition with themselves in the preserve of religion. In fact, the man that the Sultan sent to Cape Town came to seek a modus vivendi between Muslims and the Christian authorities. Thus we need to consider how qualified he was for the task by looking at some biographical details.

3.25 Abu Bakr Effendi hailed from a distinguished family that traced its descent from Islam's founder, the Prophet Muhammad. He was born in Kurdistan - the northern province of modern Iraq - in 1835 in the town of Khasnaw. After an initial schooling according to the traditional Islamic curriculum, his studies proceeded in Baghdad where his knowledge of Arabic was further developed. Thereafter he also studied in Istanbul (Constantinople).³²

Honour was therefore his due by virtue of his noble birth and by dint of his devotion to learning and his serious turn of mind.

3.26 Circumstances in the Turkish provinces throughout the 19th century were indeed wretched for most people and Abu Bakr Effendi's people were not unaffected by conditions described here by an objective British Consul, Sir Alfred Billiott:

It is impossible to give an idea of the state of things. Tyrannised over, robbed, and driven from their lands by Government officials and agas (tribal chiefs), Moslems as well as

Christians shed tears of blood. The aspect of the country is desolate. No care is taken to preserve or restock the forests. The villages are only collections of mud huts in plains devoid of trees, water, gardens, or vegetables. The inhabitants are coarsely fed and coarsely clad. Neither roads nor bridges are in a serviceable state. There hardly remains a single public building whose interior or exterior is not partially in ruins. The nomad population is constantly entering the settled districts.³³

In an area far from the seat of political power and the possibility of the redress of their grievances, a distressed community of Kurds were obliged to send one of their number to the Sultan with a petition for assistance.

- 3.27 It is related by Abu Bakr's son that his father was twenty-six years old when the Sultan's prime minister, Khalil Pasha, and the Aide de Camp, Uthman Pasha, saw the petitioner as an ideal solution to two problems. One said to the other:

behold, Abu Bakr is coming. He wants assistance for his people, but we are not able to do anything for them.

But we have received a letter from Queen Victoria.

Her Muslim subjects in the Cape Colony have great disputes about some points of religion and have begged her to ask the Sultan that he may send a well trained scholar to Africa.

Let us send Abu Bakr.³⁴

An officialdom well versed in the skills of evasion could then make a virtue of necessity by diverting the petitioner into another direction bearing honour and distinction in his sovereign's name.

He was issued with a passport "Au Nom Sa Majesté Imperiale Sultan", dated October 1861, and despatched to London.

- 3.28 Abu Bakr's personal account of the events leading up to the assignment are contained in notes owned by a descendant, Mr R. Emjedi Effendi, whose father compiled them on Saturday, 25 March 1950. In these notes the honorific title, "Mullah", is used as a designation for an Islamic scholar.

The following account probably passed down the generations by oral tradition:

While attending to his affairs in Istanbul and prior to his return to his native land (Kurdi-stan), the appeal of the South African Muslims for an aleem (Islamic theologian) to seek a settlement to the Cape Muslim dispute arrived.

Mullah Abu Bakr was personally requested by the Sultan to act as His Majesty's Commissioner and to seek a settlement to the Cape Muslim dispute.

Mullah Abu Bakr accepted the charge "for the sake of Islam", as the Sultan had put it. He prepared himself for the journey accompanied by his nephew, Sayed Omar.

They left Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1861 (according to the date on the passport) and travelled to South Africa via London.

Once in Cape Town he set about his investigations and submitted a report to his government. This report was considered by the Council of State over which Ali Pasha presided.

He was then requested by the Sultan to remain among the Cape's people and teach there. He would have the titles Sheikh el Ilm, (Professor of Theology) and Mufti (Judge of the Islamic Religious Tribunal). He was advised to follow

the Hanafite school (of thought) and teach the Muslims of the Cape according to that school of thought. The Hanafite school of thought was considered more convenient for the country. His salary would be 30 Turkish pounds per month.³⁵

3.29 No copy of this original report submitted by Abu Bakr Effendi can be traced in Cape Town, but as an item of diplomatic correspondence was probably of privileged status and went from Cape Town via the Turkish Embassy in London. What is noteworthy about this account are the following:

3.29.1 the Sultan's request was phrased in terms that an obedient subject could not refuse, and the dereliction of which would have been out of character for a devout Muslim scholar;

3.29.2 the assignee was accompanied by a kinsman serving as an aide and thus conferring honour on their clan;

3.29.3 further honour was bestowed on the assignee by his elevation to the positions of "professor" and "judge" with the commensurate remuneration;

3.29.4 the Sultan's treasury was thus committed to the advancement of education for the Cape's Muslims and the funding of an Ottoman presence in Cape Town;

3.29.5 a single legal code, viz. the Hannafite school of thought, was to be introduced for the sake of standardisation of religious regulations and the Cape was thus brought into the Sultan's sphere of religious influence.

3.29.5 on balance of costs assigning Abu Bakr to Cape Town as a teacher might have been less a strain on the Imperial Treasury than attending to the redress of Kurdish grievances.

- 3.30 That Abu Bakr also had some command of the English language was a further reason for his suitability to discharge his mission. From the extant records it cannot be established how, when, or where this skill was acquired. However, English fluency allowed him to communicate with colonial officials in Cape Town, who, by virtue of his diplomatic status, had to arrange for his despatches to reach his principals via London.

Van Selms finds the information given by Abu Bakr's son, Omar Jalal ud Din, regarding his sojourn in London as substantially correct, but only a command of English would lend veracity to the account below:

In London he went to the palace, but the Lord Chamberlain told him that the Queen had gone to Scotland on holiday. The Lord Chamberlain showed great interest in Abu Bakr's mission and told him that a steamship was leaving the next day for Cape Town and he would do well to avail himself of the opportunity of going there immediately.³⁶

There could have been little time in which Abu Bakr could develop his fluency in England. However, Davids³⁷ notes that the Turkish teacher had a flair for languages since he was by that time skilled in the use of Turkish, Arabic, Persian, French and English.

- 3.31 In the Turkish Introduction to his book, "Bayanuddin", Abu Bakr confides his realisation that you cannot teach if you cannot reach the people you wish to serve. He had rapidly to develop mastery of the Cape Town patois for the reasons he identifies here:

The majority of the Muslim inhabitants of Cape Town, Delagoa Bay and the neighbouring towns were not conversant with the Arabic language, the exceptions being the very few who were Arab immigrants and those who were of Arab descent. I realised that in order to make myself understood,

I would have to master the language, (Cape Dutch), spoken by the majority and I therefore set myself the task of learning "Cape Dutch" to *enable me to explain them the Koran and the meaning of the Arabic idioms necessary to carry out the basic rules of the religion, to translate the text and teach these people in their own language the true Islamic religion.*³⁷

His educational encounters demanded not only crossing the lexical barrier but adapting the language for the larger register that his curriculum demanded. Those humble booklets produced by earlier Islamic teachers might have provided precedents. Being written in Arabic script they were decipherable and useful to an oriental scholar. His objection as stated above to the Islamic creed as taught in Cape Town prior to his arrival was to stress the "Basic rules", which were perhaps deficient. For that reason he had a basic need for communication.

- 3.32 From evidence led in a Cape Town court in January 1870, we gather that Abu Bakr Effendi was married by Muslim religious rites to one, Rukea Maker, a Cape Town Muslim girl some ten years his junior, on 8 April 1863. The couple seemed to have communicated with some difficulty. She spoke Cape Dutch and some English, and communication was effected with the help of an Arabic-English dictionary.³⁸ Domestic strife resulting in the estrangement probably served as a powerful incentive to clear the ~~semantic~~ hurdles between himself and his charges.

A treatise on the religious duties of Muslims in an early form of Afrikaans was the product of his desire to reach the Cape Muslims.

Not all were attracted to his school in Wale Street³⁹ when it was discovered that he was introducing (on instruction from his principal, the Sultan) a new system of Islamic law to the Capetonians, and by implication was either discrediting their traditional teachers or pointing to their deficiencies.

- 3.33 Traditional teachers at the Cape had taught the Shafee code and this had become firmly rooted in the social organisation of the Cape Town Muslims.

Part of the dynamics of Islam had been the continuous interaction between common themes and diverse interpretations. But both the acclimatised Shafee school and the relatively new to Cape Town Hanafee school are comfortably accommodated within the Islamic orthodoxy, complementary rather than conflicting. Their differences are more of detail than of doctrine and do not imply mutually exclusive sects or denominations. Rather do they emphasise different moods or techniques of law. To a community wary of change Abu Bakr Effendi was a harbinger of both the blessing of uniformity with the Sultan's followers and the curse of local misconception among the conservative elements. Factional strife did not die out but became exacerbated. Clearly, as an arbiter, whatever esteem the Effendi enjoyed was more because of whom he purported to represent than his own skill at arbitration. In the course of time Abu Bakr's signal failure in unifying the Cape Muslims by doctrinal conformity, detracted from his stature as a teacher in the city.

- 3.34 Mia Brandel Syrier,⁴⁰ attempts to place Abu Bakr Effendi in proper cultural historical perspective in this illuminating comment:

For outsiders, the differences between the two schools, (Hanafite and Shafi'i) may seem insignificant measured against the very real unity of Islam and its peculiar all-pervasive and homogeneous climate, but for Muslims of South Africa these differences have become of great importance and have been and are subjects of actual strife and disagreement, even today.

In this, unfortunately, South African Muslims follow the psycho-sociological pattern of other minority civilisations. In a sense, cut off from the mainstream of their culture, and debarred

from creative participation in the prevalent culture of their new homeland, the urgent need to hold on to our own often tends to work destructively within, and to increase sensitivity to minor divergences among people so placed. In this context, Muslims tend to forget that all legal schools are recognised as orthodox in Islam.

Corroboration of this view is to be found in the considered opinion of Davids,⁴¹ whose assessment of Abu Bakr Effendi is conveyed thus:

The tragedy of this whole matter was that neither the British Government, nor de Roubaix, consulted with the local people or ascertained particulars about their sect...

His lack of insight and his failure to realise that he was causing dissent resulted in his remaining unpopular with the majority of Cape Muslims and never being accepted as an authority on Islam by them.

By association with the colonial officialdom, the Turkish teacher was an imposition, for he was in Cape Town on British sufferance. He had come with certain assumptions about Muslims and their leaders that did not always endear him to them. Yet his advent was a milestone in their cultural history. Their faithful adherence to Islam's basic precepts without much knowledge of Arabic could be built upon. Their pioneer teachers had ensured a successful cultural reproduction that withstood the passing of time for two centuries. Therein lay their social cohesion and a public identity that Du Plessis suggests distinguished them from other non-whites of Cape Town:

Ten spyte van afgesonderdheid enrassevermenging
het die Kaapse Maleier die leer van Mohammed in

Thereupon came the celebrated "Zamespraak
tusschen Klaaswaarzegger en Jan Twijfelaar" by
Rev.L.H. Meurant and a book of religious verse by
D.C. Esterhuyse printed in 1861.⁴⁴

Significantly these publications had in common their unique linguistic and semantic character derived from a similar geographic location far from the mainstreams of their cultures. They were the expressions of two significant subcultures functioning in organic isolation yet sharing the same geographic context - the city of Cape Town, where English was asserting itself ideologically to a position of dominance.

Conquered people did not easily acquire the language of the conqueror and nurtured their own forms of expressions within their semantic space.

- 3.36 Islamic scholars in their small house-schools in Cape Town had always taught their charges to write in Arabic, the language of the Quran. Literate Muslims could read Abu Bakr's book printed for them as a charitable act in Istanbul at the expense of the Sultan. An acknowledgement of this gracious gesture features in the Arabic preface of "Bayanuddin":

And when I had finished this book with the help
of our generous Ruler, I called it BAYAN UD-DIN,
(demonstration of religious practice), so that
the name would suit the subject...

Subsequently, I presented a copy of this book to
the prosperous Treasury of the Sunnite Sultanate,
- it is the gift of an ant bending low in its
zeal towards His Excellency Sulaiman, - it is
like a puddle of water from which oozes a drop to
the ocean.

Being the first local Islamic publication under so distinguished a patronage the grandiloquence of the author is not inappropriate if it is noted that the author's benefactor was

also the Khalifa, supreme religious authority of all Muslims.⁴⁶
Hence the invocations of divine favours concludes the preface:

Oh God, my Lord! Perpetuate unto him the glory
and victory and manifest conquest, fortify the
Sultanate, lengthen its existence and make it
endure; perish his enemies and extend to him a
sword to wreak his revenge. Amen.⁴⁷

His preface was also affirmation of his credentials and legal status in a community that needed to be brought into the mainstream of the Islamic culture under the unifying authority of the Turkish Sultan.

3.37 Whatever the local objections might have been to the teachings of Abu Bakr Effendi, he was instrumental in promoting in the Cape Colony recognition of the Turkish Sultan as the supreme authority of Muslims.

But he was also fostering a dual allegiance among Cape adherents of Islam: to the secular authorities and their laws in the mainstream culture as well as to the Sultan in the subculture that Muslims constituted.

Describing the Sultan as "the protector of the Mohammedan Church in South Africa", a Cape Town newspaper spoke highly of the city's Muslims in 1870 when Abu Bakr Effendi's school had been in operation for almost a decade:

That the Malay population are an orderly, thrifty and well disposed people has been sufficiently apparent, and although they have to bear up against many reverses consequent in depression of trade and visitations by epidemics and other causes, yet they have borne these calamities with patience and resignation and have not outraged the laws or been troublesome to society, which is much to their credit when it is found that others, possessing more European advantages, have

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set the laws at defiance by committing incendiary-ism and other degradations when placed in similarly impoverished and desperate circumstances.

All this speaks well for their moral tendencies, and goes far to show that the consideration with which they have been treated has not been abused by them.⁴⁸

All that Victorian England cherished in "the lower orders" of society were being exhibited by the Muslim community whose dual loyalties constituted no public menace, but had much to commend for them, being, inter alia, "orderly, thrifty and well-disposed". They had earned for themselves a place of honour in their exemplary conduct as subjects of the British Queen and the spiritual followers of the Turkish Sultan. Local editors held hopes for the happy coexistence of two diverse cultures:

Considering the close political union and friendly relations between Turkey and England, it must be a source of congratulations for both parties to find a class composing part of the population of a British Colony worthy of favourable consideration of the former as true and strict adherents of its faith, and of the commendation of the latter for their loyalty and attachment to the throne... The one is not antagonistic to the other, although there may be differences in habits and customs...⁴⁹

- 3.38 Sir Philip Wodehouse, the Governor, faced with adverse economic conditions in the Cape Colony, therefore, had the comfort of knowing that while Muslims of his capital were being commended for their admirable "moral tendencies" he could attend to his duties without problems from them, if not the leaders. A school was operating in Cape Town funded without any monetary assistance from the Cape Government, yet apparently contributing to the moral tone of the people. He

arrived at the Cape at the same time as Abu Bakr Effendi, and a historian outlines his onerous task in these words:

He came with the drought and the drought only departed with him; he was faced with a growing deficit; he could not hope to be loved, if only because he had to restore the finances, in other words, to tax.⁵⁰

Dealing with complaints from the Muslim community regarding the Sultan's teacher also came within his large and varied agenda. It appears that local religious leaders were dismayed with Abu Bakr's overt efforts to bring the Muslims of Cape Town into the Hanafite legal system that the Sultan desired. His book fell into disuse and his personal attitudes towards the Cape's Muslim leaders alienated them. A petition seeking his recall to Constantinople and the termination of his services was circulated and forwarded to Sir Philip Wodehouse. Wodehouse wrote to the Colonial Secretary, Lord Newcastle, to urge diplomatic action regarding the Turkish teacher and argued that

The people to whom he was sent do not understand a word of the Turkish language and have a most imperfect knowledge of Arabic, and when to this extreme difficulty of communication is added a jealousy of his interference with their customs and privileges, whether proper or improper, it is but natural that he should make little progress with them.⁵¹

Either the Ottomans were reluctant to oblige the British, or the matter was not vigorously enough pursued, but Abu Bakr Effendi remained at his post for some time yet. It is possible that his own report to his principal was more persuasive.

- 3.39 Until his death in 1880 Abu Bakr Effendi continued to teach the sons of leading Muslim families in Cape Town among whom were persons who later became imams. Girls attended a school conducted by his wife.⁵²

A clergyman who observed this school in action expressed his regrets that it should propagate an "alien" culture at a time when ecclesiastical labours were directed at Christianisation through mission school education:

One important result of the Effendi's sojourn in Cape Town was the establishment of schools for the instruction of Malay boys in the principles of their religion.

To outsiders these scholars appeared chiefly to learn how to chant or recite portions of the Koran in the original Arabic, and how to take part in public worship of the Mosque. A few only appeared to obtain any knowledge of their sacred tongue or to understand the meaning of the words which they had learned to recite.⁵³

The Turkish teacher was presenting his lessons in much the same way as was done by the Malay schoolmasters in their homes. Children had to learn the Quran by recitation for the reasons given by Ruthven:

The memorising and study of the Quran, which occupied a large part of the traditional Muslim education, has always been regarded as the most meritorious of all religious activities. Assimilated and internalised through constant repetition, the sacred book became part of the Muslim's very being, the filter through which he received the world and its mental images.⁵⁴

At a time when Cape Town was still in the pre-industrial stage of development such instruction along with explanations in their own language (Cape-Dutch) of "how to take part in public worship" were essential and basic features of the school's curriculum. For as long as vocational training was largely confined to the family context, and positions of authority and trust were claimed by the settler class by virtue of ethnicity

and religion, the traditional Islamic mode of instruction and conventional curriculum sufficed. It was adequate for the children of the labouring classes. Those specially gifted and promising whose parents had the wherewithal were sent to Mecca for further study in these subjects to return as teachers of the deficient.

- 3.40 Religious knowledge preceded all other knowledge in the local Muslim's scale of values. Desirable conduct was inversely proportional to the amount of Christian schooling that children obtained because of the alienation potential of that schooling. Mission schools did teach literacy and numeracy but to many Cape Town Muslims those subjects were taught in an ideological context. It was not the ideology that they accepted for their schools were oriented towards another. Their preference was incomprehensible to someone of the dominant culture and a pioneer of mission schooling who noted:

And there was no attempt to teach anything in either the English or Dutch languages; reading, writing and arithmetic, as usually understood, were quite outside the work of the Effendi and his associates. The effect of the Effendi's training, it is certain, was to cement the feeling of intimate brotherhood already prevailing among the Malays, and in some respects to isolate them more and more from the rest of the community.⁵⁵

Many working-class children were in the 1860's drawn to the mission schools but did not remain there even if their parents could afford it. An English visitor, Mayson, too was unhappy about this apparent dereliction. He claimed:

Some of the very young children are sent to Dutch and English schools, where they excel in intelligence: the number of these is happily

increasing. At ten years of age, and occasionally at a later date, they are removed to their own Malay schools, where they remain till they have attained the age of fifteen.⁵⁶

Instruction in the Islamic arts and skills was thus also a socialisation process to which the children had to be habituated for the sake of a cohesive community life and a desirable social product.

- 3.41 Even without the significant contribution of the Turkish teacher's efforts Muslims had by the mid-Nineteenth century made some noteworthy strides in Cape Town to organise their own schools that presented a departure from the traditional curriculum. This was possible because they had attracted into their community converts from local Europeans educated enough to teach the local Muslim children the languages of the dominant classes as well as some accountancy. Their system was autonomous, functioning with neither government blessing nor government aid. The following comment about the Muslims and their schools in Cape Town is not without the author's subjective bias:

Lately, another description of schools has become common among them, kept principally by perverts (sic!) from Christianity. In these the instruction in English and Dutch, writing and "accounts" is, perhaps, equal to that of the Christian schools; they are rivals to the Mission schools, from which they draw away many of the better class of Mahometan children.

The aggregate of Mahometan scholars is, probably not more than six or seven hundred, and it must be admitted that the amount of knowledge obtained is miserably small.

The laws, in fact proscribe education properly so called. No returns are made to the government of the number of these children. The usual

weekly school fee is three pence.

The whole educational establishment is under
Imam Moota.⁵⁷

From the above can be inferred that the "better class" of Muslims sent their children to schools teaching the same programme of skills as did the Mission schools, they employed European Muslims, paid the fees. The system was even under the direction of a leading figure in the Muslim community. That "education" as perceived by the writer was "proscribed" is partly true, if one looks at the advantages that their self-initiated schools presented to them.

- 3.42 In their preference of their own Islam-oriented schools their behaviour was no different from that of others elsewhere in Africa who resisted the ideology that Mission schooling entailed. Their disposition has been explained by Edward Blyden:

When the religion (Islam) was first introduced it found the people possessing all the elements and enjoying all the privileges of untrammelled manhood. They received it as giving them additional power to exert an influence in the world. It sent them forth as the guides and instructors to their less favoured neighbours, and endowed them with self-respect which men feel who acknowledge no superior. While it brought them a great deal that was absolutely new, and inspired them with spiritual feelings to which they had been strangers, it strengthened and hastened certain tendencies to independence and self-reliance which were already at work.⁵⁸

For as long as socio-economic conditions allowed them to be a part on their terms during the pre-industrial stage that "untrammelled manhood" and "self-respect" were to be found in

their religious expressions. For that they sent their children to a school where they defined the things worth knowing.

- 3.43 What was worth knowing were the relationship between man and God, and between man and man. Formal religious instruction such as their children received at Abu Bakr Effendi's school aspired to achieve this. But it also brought an assertion of a public identity in modes of dress which amounted to a further statement of differences that was lamented by an observer of the community, (supra, 340). Social historians of Cape Town note that after the advent of Abu Bakr Effendi the fez became more prominent among Muslim men and was worn by boys gathered in the religious schools. In their head-gear they tended increasingly to be like the Sultan's followers in Europe and the Middle East. For centuries the labouring poor of the Muslim community had worn their "toering" (supra 3.9) but it is claimed that the Turkish teachers

... advised the Malays to wear the fez because it allowed them to keep their head covered at prayers and yet touch the ground with their foreheads. Half a century passed before this religious fashion became firmly established in slow-moving Cape Town.⁵⁹

Muslim women were also affected by the change of "religious fashion" because propriety demanded that they conformed to the Turkish style prevailing in the Sultan's realm. An English lady deplored this disservice to femininity when she noted with displeasure:

Unluckily, a few years later two Muslim missionaries were sent from Turkey to enquire into the condition of the souls of the faithful of this remote outpost of Islam. They were scandalised at the uncovered heads of the pretty, graceful Malay girls and... they sailed away leaving every woman's head covered with a 'dook'...⁶⁰

Just as the people of Europe were locally bent on remaking the

would earnestly give to the development of Afrikaans: the recognition that the patois of Cape Town had a didactic potential. Rev. C.I. Hoogenhout was the first of his fraternity to broach the matter of an intelligible Bible for the local people:

... not only for brown people but also for many whites who do not understand half of the Dutch language... the Lord would not tolerate that the Bible would remain unintelligible to many poor people in South Africa.⁶²

It is interesting that this clergyman reveals that his 19th century contemporaries who could be defined as the "poor" were in the main "brown people but also many whites". The brown people were the descendants of slaves and exiles and children of unions between European settlers and indigenes, the marginal people of Cape Town whose salvation was predicated upon improved communication. An Afrikaans Bible, like an Afrikaans Islamic guide, was a sine qua non of fortifying religion's role in the lives of the common people of Cape Town. Abu Bakr Effendi had also anticipated the formulation of a culturally differentiated curriculum and structuring the semantic space in the teaching encounter by means of a book for formal instruction. It was the first time also that a book was published overseas for the use of the Cape Town Muslim community.

3.45 Part of the legacy of Abu Bakr Effendi is that for the entire period of his sojourn he kept records of his expenses of which a Turkish-Arabic version exists among his effects in the custody of a descendant, Mr Hesham Effendi, once a colleague of the writer at Spes Bona Senior Secondary School.

Among the documents preserved by his teacher-descendant is a remittance from the Ottoman Ministry of Education addressed to Hadji Bkir Effendi, En Mission, Au Cap de Bonne Esperance, and dated 10th February, 1880. It states:

Recu de la Banque de Constantinople la somme de
 Vingt six livres, sept. shillings et quatre
 pences,... sur la Bank of Africa (Limited) de
 Cape Town, en date du 10 Fevrier 1880, ca
 versement etant d'ordre et pour compte du
 Gouvernement Ottoman

£26.7.4

A photostat copy of this document appears on the following page and is testimony to the fact that up to the year of his death Abu Bakr Effendi was in the favour of his principal and received his remuneration for services rendered at Cape Town.

3.46 When Abu Bakr Effendi died on 29 June 1880 he was about forty-five years old and had spent half of his life a loyal servant to Sovereign. His impact on South Africa is summed up by Davids:

If one thinks of Abu Bakr Effendi, one ought to think more of his contribution to Cape Muslim society. It was under his influence that the first Muslim school for girls was established in this country and through which Cape Muslim women were made conscious of covering their hair.

One could think too of the inspiration he was to his followers, notable people like Mogamat Dollie, Jongie Siers and Achmat Sedick of Rebecca, who established the Hanafee Mosque in Long Street in 1881 in memory of their teacher.⁶³

His life was brief and in him the flame of learning was brought to brighten a corner of the world where Islam was a young and vigorous religion. He brought a scholarly turn of mind that was to find concrete expression in the establishment of a mosque by those who cherished his memory.

Reçu de la Banque de Constantinople
la somme de Vingt six Livres, Sept Shilling
et quatre Pence, par une Remise à vue
sur la Bank of Africa (Limited) de Cape
Town, en date du 18 Janvier 1880, ce
reçu étant d'ordre et pour compte
du Gouvernement Ottoman

26. 7. 80

Bekir Effendi

ما مودير اميد بر ذمه بوظنه خود مودير افندي

Hadji Bekir Effendi
En Mission
En Mission au Cap de bonne Espérance

ما مودير

REMITTANCE OF FUNDS FROM THE OTTOMAN GOVERNMENT TO
THE SON OF ABU BAKR EFFENDI, AHMED ATA'ALLAH EFFENDI.

وقت غزته سنك مقبوض سندیدر

مجمد به بکرمی غروش

حسابه

غروش

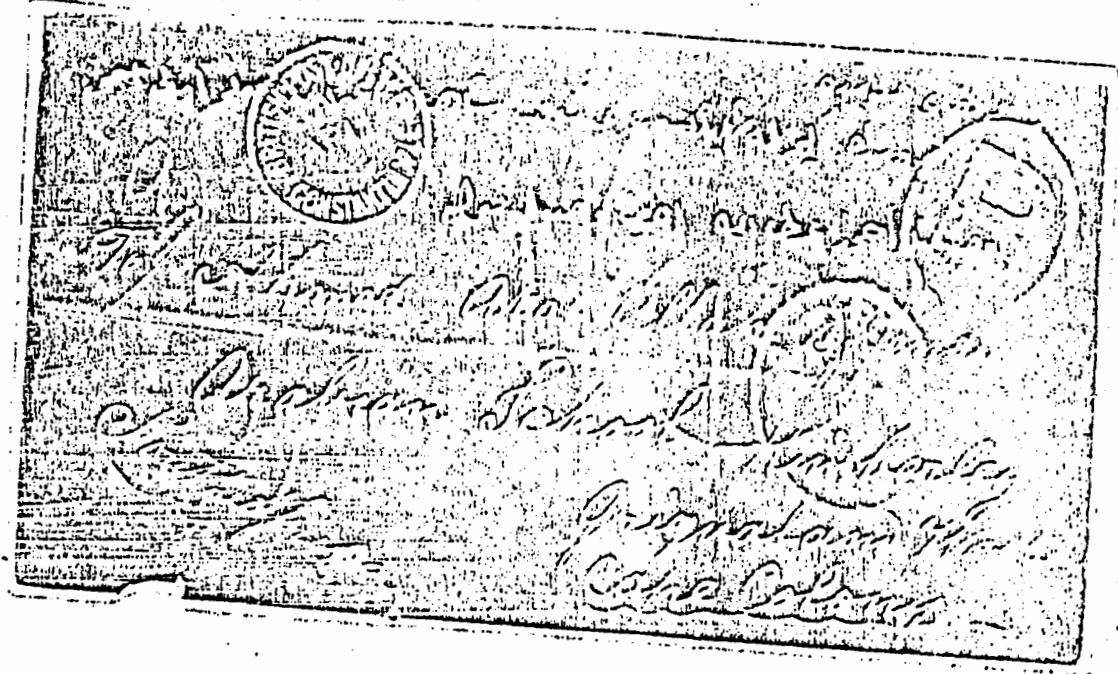
۱۵۰ غزنه بدلی

۸۷ پوسند اجرتی

از قمر
۴۴

برای ابکارن دولت ان الت سندسی رجبه بر صید
قدروقت غزنه سنك بر سنك لشتری ارلان احمد
بانی بولسان ایسی رید او غده رید
غروش اخذ اولم شد
فی ۷۷ هزاره سنك ۱۲۹۵

Reçu pour l'entretien de Mr. Edwin la somme
de deux cent dix sept (20237) pour une
année d'abonnement au journal "Le Petit" à
Paris de 20 Août 1296 au 20 Août 1297 à l'adresse
de Mr. Effendi, Chef, résidant à Cape Town -
Cantonment, 27 juin 1897 (V. J. H. H. H.)



A more comprehensive study of his life using his reports filed with his government in Constantinople (Istanbul) awaits the attention of a scholar. For present purposes the following brief details need reiteration

- 3.46.1 Abu Bakr Effendi was sent as part of the improved relationship between Britain and Turkey to attend Muslim educational needs in a British colony;
- 3.46.2 the conditions of his residence in Cape Town were clearly defined that his presence might be conducive of the social order;
- 3.46.3 he worked for a duality of allegiance among the Cape Muslims which redounded to the credit of the State's sovereign in the temporal and the spiritual dimensions of the life of the community concerned.
- 3.46.4 the school he founded was entirely financed by the Ottoman Government in his entire sojourn at the Cape;
- 3.46.5 although his principal, the Sultan, instructed him to introduce the Hanafee school of thought to ensure uniformity with the dispensation of the Ottoman state, this imposition was a cause for local disaffection;
- 3.46.6 children of the social elite among the Muslims were sent to his school and ipso facto became the future teachers of others;
- 3.46.7 a book on religious guidance was specifically written to overcome the lexical barrier between the teacher and his charges;
- 3.46.8 this book is a milestone in the cultural history of South Africa;
- 3.46.9 an important didactic principle, the differentiated

curriculum, was incorporated in the *raison d'être*, of this book, which could have influenced Dutch clergymen to work on an Afrikaans version of the Bible;

3.46.10 a school for girls was established for the first time in the cultural preparation of the future mothers of the community;

3.46.11 modes of dress changed to resemble more closely those found in the homeland of the teacher.

3.46.12 like the missionaries of the Christian Churches, his schooling offered to Cape Muslims also had its ideological bias in that it sought to reproduce the culture of the mainstream of Muslim society of which the Sultan was the acknowledged leader.

3.47 A growing Muslim population towards the end of the 19th century (supra 3.13) implied a lowering of the average age in demographic terms and by that token a larger school age population. This in turn meant a greater need for schooling which the Muslim community's resources were unable to match as working-class dwellings became more crowded and the house-schools more untenable.

One historian suggests that the popularity of the Muslim school (madressah) was because of ideological resistance:

Muslim education encouraged conversion in many ways: first the madressah system was open to all children, regardless of race or religion thereby drawing hundreds of otherwise excluded children into the Islamic circle; second, imams conducted their lessons in a language - Afrikaans - which appealed to the largest linguistic pool at the Cape, and finally, the Islamic schools offered an alternative education for many people hostile to, or suspicious of, the ruling Christian order.⁶⁴

Working parents, Muslim and non-Muslim, tended to use the traditional schools also for the custodial care of their young and were assured that their children were at least socialised in a context and by an adult promotive of socially approved conduct, distinguished at least between right and wrong, or good and bad action. Many of the workingclass could only manage to send their children to one school known in the local parlance as "die Islaamsche skool" where parents felt they were paying the school fee with more salutary effect in the moral influence on their children.

- 3.48 Prudent and pious Muslims who could afford the expense went on pilgrimage to Mecca often taking their sons there to be taught the Islamic curriculum by renowned tutors as will be shown below. Improved travel facilities were also extending the educational horizons of Cape Town's Muslim élite. Lightfoot noted the effect of improved communications on local Islamic education because

... the opening of steam communication with Zanzibar, which rendered the pilgrimage to Mecca more practicable, and the visits of teachers from Arabia, and other Mohammedan centres."⁶⁵

Links were developed between Mecca and Cape Town as well as Zanzibar, Mauritius and Aden located on the steamship route augmenting the reservoir of traditional teaching skills available to Cape Town Muslims.

- 3.49 In a letter to a Cape Town newspaper in 1903 a correspondent pointed with much satisfaction to the esteemed Muslim teachers of his community's traditional schools who had studied in Mecca in the last decades of the 19th century.⁶⁶
- 3.50 The following story merits complete quotation here because it alludes to the scholastic achievement of a local young man who had excelled in both the secular and religious forms of learning. It will be seen that he had his initial education in the Cape Colony and proceeded thereafter with his father to

Mecca, centre of Islamic learning and devotions. He was tutored by eminent Islamic scholars of that city. (This report is generally correct, except that this young man was not the first to do so.)

MOSLEM INTELLIGENCE

Hadje Mohamed Salie Hendricks is about to arrive on these shores after an absence of 15 years' study in Mecca.

He is the son of the late Emaum Hadje Hendricks, a wellknown and highly respected resident of Swellendam, in which village he lived for over 40 years.

Hadje Mohamed Salie Hendricks was born in Swellendam in the year 1871, receiving his education at Swellendam College (sic.) which he attended for 6 years, leaving at the age of 17, from which he proceeded to Mecca to continue his study in religion in the Mohamedien (sic.) creed. He attained his professorship under the tutorship of the following: Aliem Zaight Abubakar Sata, Aliem Siege Solaman Sata, Aliem Siege Omar Badjonat, and Muftiel Islam Siege Mogamat Said Baab Sale.

This is the first instance of a Colonial born Mohamadien (sic) from these shores attaining such honour. During the first three years of his study in Mecca he was encouraged and supported by his father, and at his father's death his brothers Hadje Barrie Hendricks and Hadje Salam Hendricks, seeing his good qualities continued to encourage and support him in his studies.

His return to these shores after 15 years of study is looked upon as a great event by relatives and friends in Cape Town and the Colony, and there is no doubt that a hearty welcome will be extended to him on his arrival.⁶⁷

The young Mr Hendricks who had acquitted himself in an exemplary manner hailed from an élite Muslim family and seemed to have represented the ideal education accessible to persons in a community constituting a sub-culture excluded from the institutions of the mainstream culture. His distinction confirm the earlier mentioned observation of Mayson (supra 3.40) that promising young pupils were removed from the conventional school for intensive Islam-oriented education. In the main Muslim children of the workingclass were not so fortunate.

- 3.51 If the children of the poor had any schooling at all it was obtained at Mission schools, where often the ascriptions, "poor" and "coloured" coincided. These institutions were conceived as educational charities and directed their efforts at the poor, who in 19th century Cape Town, were mostly "coloured persons of various races" that Trollope encountered. (Supra 3.8)

Nineteenth century schooling and educational opportunity for them has been concisely described in the following words:

In the Cape, although Coloured people were formally free and equal before the colonial law, they occupied from the start a subordinate social status and an inferior economic position equivalent to what their enslaved and dispossessed ancestors had for so long suffered. Coloured people made up the bulk of the colony's labouring class and as such were subject to the disadvantageous legal controls and depressed material conditions.

Although all Government and Government-aided schools were by law open to all inhabitants of the colony, most Coloured parents could afford only the mission schools.⁶⁸

The prospects of schools as agencies of upward social mobility for this class of colonial subjects were bleak and thus child labour was also a common feature of family income in Cape Town.

Muslim families thus ensured upward social mobility within their own social structure if they could afford an extended education for their sons. Hence their preference for an Islam-oriented education even in distant parts. Preferring this type of education was also a reactive response to the assumptions that informed colonial education policies increasingly directed at a social reproduction modelled on Britain's Victorian society.

- 3.52 As Trollope had observed in 1870 (supra 3.8) in Cape Town the gentry was white and the labouring classes were "coloured races" in the main. To reproduce such a social order the education policy of the day had to be tailored accordingly. In general terms the British model imitated here was along

... themes set out in 1861 by the Newcastle Commission on primary education, when it referred to 'the peremptory demands of the labour market', or, a year later, by Robert Lowe, one of the pioneers of reform, who proclaimed, 'we do not profess to give these children an education that will raise them above their station and business in life... but to give them an education that may fit them for that business.'⁶⁹

Colonial education came to serve the same ends in Cape Town where it was assumed that the school as an adjunct of the church had primarily a religious purpose and the curriculum was so conceived and so implemented. Mr Justice E.B. Watermeyer's Education Commission found in the Mission

schools

a great amount of information on Bible history and geography and of knowledge of the text of Holy Scripture is imparted. The exercises of singing and repeating hymns form the chief occupation of the day ... Secular elementary instruction of which the essential subjects are reading, writing, arithmetic is seriously neglected.⁷⁰

Ideology seemed to take precedence over the programme of skills when the interests of the social order and the assumed deficiencies of the constituency were taken into account by those who taught or who sponsored the teaching programme.

Muslim parents of Cape Town felt these schools were expendable and school attendance conformed to the trends in a culture of poverty aggravated by fears of alienation. The second Superintendent-General of Education (S.G.E.) regretted this tendency in Cape Town:

The irregular attendance of children in the Denominational Mission schools, particularly in Cape Town, has always been the subject of complaint on the part of Teachers and Inspectors.

Among the poorer classes of the community, the elder boys are detained to run errands, the elder girls to help in domestic work, washing, etc., or to take care of the house and infant children whilst the parents go out to work.

Many are halftimers, some coming to school only in the morning, others only in the afternoon; so that the daily school attendance does not represent the full number of those who are getting some schooling. Whilst therefore attendance in the Undenominational Public Schools is fairly regular, being 81%, the

general percentage is reduced to 70 by the causes referred to.⁷¹

From the S.G.E.'s observation it is clear that schools without a church association obtained far better parental co-operation in ensuring optimal attendance. it can reasonably be inferred that habitual absentees were not only drawn to their urgent domestic chores but in fact driven from the Denominational schools by unacceptable features of the curriculum, (Supra 70), which seemed not to have an abiding social value to Muslim parents.

- 3.53 Evidence presented to the Watermeyer Education Commission (1863) showed that in rural areas Muslims parents placed their children in the only available schools founded by the Dutch Reformed Church. Being small in number they were obliged to accept the religious component of the curriculum without dissent, or forfeit the opportunity for schooling completely.

In addressing the Commission on 8 November, 1861, the Rev. Dr. Robertson of Swellendam considered the possible reservations of Muslim parents as secondary because these parents had confidence in the teacher's ability and moral character.⁷²

When asked by Dr Langan Dale, the S.G.E., whether these Malays and other children ever objected to religious instruction, the deponent responded:

Never. The Malays and others are equally instructed in the New Testament, and some have made great progress in religious knowledge.

"Progress in religious knowledge" was, unfortunately, not defined or quantified but such progress could have spelled progression at the Swellendam school for Malays and "other" children.

- 3.54 In the suburbs of Wynberg and Claremont where Muslims con-

structed mosques during the 19th century as symbols of their community spirit the Dutch Reformed Mission schools attracted several Muslim children. From the Rev. Dr Philip Faure of the Wynberg D.R.C. the Watermeyer Commission heard that "Mohammedans value education more than other blacks". How much it was appreciated was shown by the fact that some accepted conversion as the price of the opportunity to learn.

Faure was proud to point to the fact that in Claremont 9 Malay children became Christians "with the full consent of their parents".⁷³

The sacrament of baptism was probably administered and the children's names changed for their admission into the congregation, but this was not mentioned to the commissioners.

- 3.55 Schooling as a preparation for membership of a particular Christian denomination was an untenable feature of the Mission school system which the S.G.E. could not countenance nor the public revenue support. Dr Langham Dale states his position quite succinctly in his Report of Inspection of Schools in the Western Districts by the S.G.E., Jan. - June, 1868:

The ministers and people are thus at one in looking at this religious preparation, which consists chiefly in an average ability to read the Bible in their own language and an acquaintance with the facts of Biblical history, and with the Catechism, as the final cause of instruction; whereas the Government looks for other results of a secular and more practical kind.⁷⁴

Without stating it unequivocally, the S.G.E. detected in this conflict of interest between Church and State the fundamental weakness of the contemporary educational arrangements. In this observation Dale was aware of the subservience of the State's interest to that of the Church, something he had earlier intimated in his questions to the D.R.C. clergyman who testified before the Watermeyer Commission. (Supra 3.53).

- 3.56 It was nevertheless presenting a crisis of confidence to religious minorities, such as the Muslims, that generated resistance to the schools. Dale could not easily address this problem which was part of the Rose-Innes legacy: there were no other schools for the children of the poor. The State's involvement was minimal in ensuring an adequate supply of schools, as the following writer postulates:

Net soos gedurende die Rose Innes-regime, was dit ook gedurende die superintendentskap van Dale die geval dat onderwysvoorsiening aan die nie-blankes uitsluitlik in die hande van die Kerk - end sending genootskappe gelaat is.⁷⁵

Yet the formulation of an education policy for the Cape Colony demanded that the State's interest should be the supreme consideration. Its initial objective was that schools should be agencies for domestication and in that task the Church could be an invaluable ally. Many of the people of Cape Town were not even Christians and their incorporation into the mainstream culture was imperative in a Christian social order.

- 3.57 Denominational Mission schools apparently were more desirable than to have the entire burden of school provision borne by the State. A denominational bias in Christian doctrine was less hostile to the State's interests than a non-Christian school for the poor. Maurice submits that a later Education Commission (1873) "did not wish to discourage the noble and charitable efforts of Christian churches and missionary societies to reclaim a portion of the population from heathenism and from corrupt forms of religion".⁷⁶

Islam was the "corrupt forms of religion" that the Commission could have had in mind because Mayson and Lightfoot have posed Christianity as the authentic redeeming creed, (supra 341 and 340 respectively).

- 3.58 Public education was one of political interest that occupied

the minds of the legislators at Cape Town once the Watermeyer Commission delivered its report in 1863. None could seriously question the wisdom of entrusting the schools in the care of the churches when the education of the "lower social orders" had to be addressed. The questions was: If missionaries were to be agents and schools the instruments of government policy, then on what terms, and with what regard for denominational advantage?

In Cape Town the Anglican Church under Bishop Gray had control of a number of mission schools. The St Paul's school was located on the western periphery of the city within the precincts of several mosques and it drew many Muslim children to its classes. Rev. T.F. Lightfoot relates how the St Paul's school and other similar schools came into existence:

In 1859, our number of Catechumens having been greatly increased during and after the terrible small-pox epidemic in 1858, I became a tenant of a large store in Upper Buitengracht. This soon became a school chapel, with regular services on Sunday, and on the evening of each weekday, with day schools for children, and, daily evening classes for enquirers and catechumens. The old taunt that ours was not a Church for the coloured people, soon lost its point, for out of the small beginnings enumerated gradually grew up the considerable work and large coloured congregation of St Paul's to be followed in due course by the excellent mission work of S. Philip's on the opposite side of the town, as well as that of S. Mark's, Capetown, and S. Mary's, Woodstock, both adjoining S. Philip's district.⁷⁷

It should be noted from the above that a clear distinction was drawn "with day schools for children" because the funding of the mission schools was granted by the legislature only if overt evangelisation was separated from the conventional

instructional programme. The Cape Education Act (1865) had an unmistakable intent regarding denominational contests through their various educational efforts among non-Christians, because

Religious instruction was to continue to be provided along the lines laid down (by Rose Innes) in 1839. However, there was to be a significant reduction in the authority previously allowed to denominational clergy, and that no pupils were to be required to attend religious instruction without the consent of their parents or guardians.⁷⁸

No records seem to have been kept, nor do the S.G.E. reports show that they were requested, of the number of exemptions from religious instruction sought by dissenting parents or guardians. It may reasonably be inferred that few of the parents availed themselves of this civil liberty when opportunities for schooling were so few.

Exposure to the formative influences of the Mission school was in most cases so negligible among the poor and those who persisted in adherence to their own religion that Mr Lightfoot voiced his dismay:

It is a great pity that in the case of so many the children are taken from our mission-schools to earn a livelihood at far too young an age, the consequence being that in a few months or years, the great majority have forgotten almost all they have learnt, and the school-life, which might have done so much for them had it been prolonged, has done very little beyond giving them an elementary notion of reading, writing and summing, and some training in habits of cleanliness, neatness and order.⁷⁹ (Supra 352)

3.59 Social conditions of the coloured people militated against the

noblest educational endeavours. From the schools they joined the labouring classes to dwell in conditions of poverty and squalor. Anglican parishes of St Mark's, St Philips and St Mary's had to contend with large numbers of children in their schools because Government funding limited the improvement of facilities. A common assumption articulated above was that the Church had to do more to inculcate "habits of cleanliness, neatness and order" so that the lives of the poor could be enhanced. Upon acquisition of these character traits they would be less disposed to crime and squalor which were so noticeable and offensive as one writer observed:

By the time District Six was 'named' in 1867 - the 6th district of Cape Town - it was already overcrowded. The police chief of the time, John King, referred to Harrington Street and Glynn's Square as a horrid 'pest hole' and a Cape Argus reporter commented that the District contained 'prostitutes and thieves of the worst description'...⁸⁰

Here were concentrated those socially marginal people whom Christian clerics sought to evangelise and Muslim imams held together by means of the Islamic social control mechanisms and the inculcation of attitudes peculiar to deeply rooted subcultures, or sects within the mainstream culture.

The small congregations with a special loyalty to their leader-teacher (the imam) crowded into the room of a house made for a personal intimacy which is an essential feature of Islam among the proletariat.⁸¹

Various rituals allowed for the emotional release and reinforcement of faith needed for coping in adversity. This is vividly illustrated by Gilsenan⁸² in his discussion of Islam among the workingclass of Egypt.

For the socially disadvantaged in a pre-industrialist society

this was a further reason why the Mission schools of District Six had little success in keeping Muslim children in their classrooms. That education had no relevance.

- 3.60 It is generally accepted that even if coloured children wished to attend schools they were not readily accepted at the schools if they were poor. In his report to the Cape Parliament in 1882 the S.G.E. pointed to the undenominational B-schools as institutions without racial bars, but with clear restrictive standards of admission:

Public schools are necessarily open to all who conform to the general rules, pay the fees, are decently clad, and well-behaved...⁸³

In effect such a claim by the S.G.E. was meaningless to the coloured parent who found that his child could not conform to these criteria when seeking admission to publicly-funded non-denominational schools.⁸⁴

Gradually such schools rendered their services exclusively to the white community of Cape Town. This was more by design than default if the S.G.E's education philosophy is taken into account. Patterson cites this unequivocal declaration of Sir Langham Dale, the Cape S.G.E.:

The first duty of the Government has been assumed to be to recognise the position of the European Colonists as holding the paramount influence, social and political, and to see that the sons and daughters of the colonists should have at least such education as their peers in Europe enjoy, with such local modifications as will fit them to maintain their unquestioned superiority and supremacy in this land.⁸⁵

By extension, this argument rationalised the educational dereliction of those not perceived to have "peers in Europe" and who could not be schooled for the status of "paramount influence". Muslims of the city's working-class that attended

Mission schools encountered teachers of the dominant class who could not provide for them "above their station". Children of indigent white families were not long tolerated in the Mission schools, which were not satisfactory for their socialisation. Dale expressed himself disapprovingly about the subversion of what "the Government has assumed" taking place in Mission schools:

... one of the most objectionable features in the working of the system, (is) that these poorer white children, chiefly Dutch-speaking, owing to their poverty are not able to avail themselves to the Higher Public Schools, that white girls, for instance should be brought into daily contact with a very low type of Cape Town coloured boys.⁸⁶

Another assumption that emerges from Dale's displeasure about "the very low type" of children encountered in the Mission schools was that these schools were more suitable for their needs. More had to be done for the Mission societies sponsoring such schools. Visagie claims that as the subsidies for Mission schools increased more such schools arose throughout the Cape Peninsula and larger numbers of non-white children could be accommodated.⁸⁷

Notwithstanding the improvements far too many children of school-going age were still roaming the streets.

- 3.61 Non-whites of Cape Town felt aggrieved because not only did they lack schools, but the formula for State aid made it impossible for those not associated with the major churches to initiate the founding of schools.

In 1870 the S.G.E. was aware of the £ for £ Government aid policy being largely ineffectual since the system

helped those who were more able and willing to help themselves, but those who from ignorance, poverty or indifference, made no efforts to found

schools, and who thus showed more plainly their need for instruction, were left in apathy, unless an external agency other than the Government was set to work

As far as the Muslims of the city were concerned that "outside agency" was the Ottoman Government which to a very limited extent subsidised the teacher sent to the Cape from 1863. Although the death of Abu Bakr Effendi in 1880 did not interrupt the school he had begun, the financial assistance of the Ottoman Government continued. Schools operated by Abu Bakr Effendi's sons at Kimberley and Port Elizabeth continued to be supported.⁸⁹

- 3.62 Unfortunately, Abu Bakr Effendi's Moslem Theological School in Wale Street, Cape Town, came to an end in 1894. In that year the man who was trained as the successor of the Turkish teacher left his post, ostensibly for greener pastures. Some five years later a concerned group addressed the following letter to the Ottoman Education Minister, apparently after it became certain that the teacher had abandoned his position:

To His Excellency
Sayed Ahmed Zohdi Pasha
Minister of Education
Constantinople

Your Excellency

We, the undersigned students of the late Abu Bakr Effendi, and leaders of congregations, do hereby beg Your Excellency that the teacher, appointed by the Imperial Government of . . . the name of Hadji Mahmood, had left this country more than four years ago with the intention of travelling about, and, especially, (according to a speech he made at a meeting in Cape Town previous to his leaving) that he had become sick and was going to Constantinople to apply for big honours which he was sure he would be able to

buy as his letters of introduction will have great effect in Constantinople.

Therefore, we think, according to our Religious Teaching such a man is not competent, or fit, to be trusted in Islam, and also we beg to remind Your Excellency that there is not now, and has not been, any school here since he left, and no one was appointed to take his place on his leaving; and also, according to our belief, Hadji Mahmood has no knowledge of our faith nor is he competent to be a teacher.

Therefore, we appeal to Your Excellency to have him examined in any matter, and if he is proved to be fit and competent in Your Excellency's opinion, we shall be happy to abide by your decision.

As he is at present in Constantinople we submit to your Excellency that it would not be much trouble to have him examined by your Department.

With apologies for troubling Your Excellency in this matter,

We have the honour to remain

Your Excellency's obedient and humble servants.

This letter was sent to Constantinople on 27 September 1899.⁹⁰

- 3.63 In the final decade of the 19th century the Turkish school was in a moribund state at a time when the social problems of the Muslim community dictated a greater community effort at schooling. Increasingly, the demands of the growing port city of Cape Town were for literate and numerate labour in a changing worker-management relationship. Few emerged from the Mission schools at the highest standard of the required

ability. Most of the youth were among the unemployed and underemployed in the more squalid parts of Cape Town.

Befezzed young men were seen participating in street disorders. A lack of schools and limited prospects of gainful employment often resulted in offences against the public order. A Cape Town magazine pointed to the most prominent sub-cultural group as the culprits

Malay outrages are getting fearfully common - far commoner than the mere perusal of Police Court records would lead one to infer. Rowdy Malays haunt the streets in gangs, and use feet, stones and knobkerries in street fights.⁹¹

Such accounts were grist to the mill of English clergymen who rued the lack of schools for the Malays, and saw the answer to these social ills in more extensive proselytising. In the process of "gentling the masses" the parents of the "rowdy Malays" had to be reached, and the evening schools might then contribute their share.

- 3.64 Much heartening work had been done in working among Malay families by Rev. W.U. Watkins from 1887 to 1890, and earned the commendation of Rev. T.F. Lightfoot:

During the time of Mr Watkins' labours, and in the years before and after that period, no opportunity was lost at St Paul's, St. Mark's and other parishes having mission work, of influencing for good all Malay families within reach.⁹²

The Education Act (1865) did allow for evening schools in the larger cities and towns, to meet the needs of children who did not obtain an elementary education.⁹³

St Paul's parish operated an evening school whose growth and viability depended on the confidence of local families. (supra, 3.58). This seemed hardly a panacea.

- 3.65 Early in 1891 the Cape's legislature again appointed an Education Commission under Sir Jacob Barry to look, inter alia, into regular school attendance.

They were most concerned with the unsatisfactory attendance by white children and suggested remedial steps, especially for those in the cities. That non-white children lacked schools was not an urgent matter. Anglican clergymen of Cape Town strongly took exception to this dereliction.

- 3.66 Lightfoot convened a public meeting on 14 March, 1894, to discuss the education crisis of the city's non-whites and to focus the Government's attention on the needs of Capetonians. Sir Langham Dale's successor, Dr Thomas Miur, who served as S.G.E. from 1892 to 1915, had to hear the voices of people who were in political terms becoming second-class citizens. Thousands of enthusiastic parents who lacked adequate schooling attended Lightfoot's meeting. Cape Prime Minister, Rhodes had made literacy a qualification for the franchise.

- 3.67 These parents and concerned persons found the lack of schools exposing coloured children to the deleterious influences that normal city life presents to the idle and vagrant young. Their appeal for official recognition of their plight was nevertheless conciliatory in the face of mounting segregation in the schools in the spirit of Dale's philosophy. (Supra, 3.60)

It was resolved that

This meeting of coloured citizens agrees to approach the Government to claim for them rights as regards citizenship, and demand a higher education for their children than is at present open to them, namely in schools now in existence or if that it is possible Government should then be asked to provide other means for the education of coloured people.⁹⁵

If citizenship was predicated upon literacy and literacy a

precondition of social mobility then schools were among the priorities of citizens. By the same token those lacking schools were diminished in the value of their citizenship. Different classes of schools were effectively expressions of legitimising racism in the future social order. Mission schools were ipso facto reserved for non-white children, and those who progressed through them were arbitrarily excluded from the higher levels of education. No coloured child during the 19th century gained access to Diocesan College, perhaps because of the prohibitive costs. It is significant that this meeting should request "other means for the education of coloured people".

- 3.68 A stern admonition to clergymen of Lightfoot's persuasion who publicised these disabilities of coloured people came from a local newspaper.

Its editor saw the arguments and panacea offered by these benefactors of the coloured people as dangerously simplistic. Their censure of the Government's division of public education along racial lines was apparently spurious and untenable. Within the context of Cape Town society the missionaries were out of touch with the mores if only because

There is not one of the gentlemen that demand a complete mixture of white and coloured people in schools who would admit a coloured man or woman to his family circle upon genuinely equal terms, or would regard a marriage with a person of colour as an ordinary family incident. A perfect separation of the races socially is quite capable of existing side by side with all reasonable respect and good feeling.⁹⁶

Such ad hominem arguments directed at the Anglican clergy often scored political points for those non-English colonists themselves excluded from prestigious English educational institutions. What does emerge from this argument is that schooling is a crucial form of socialisation serving ideolog-

ical ends. An unequal society could not afford to have schools that did not distinguish those who would dominate from those to be dominated. Muslims of Cape Town had been excluded from educational institutions in the past and had developed their own forms of schooling. Mission schools for them as part of the coloured community served the dual purpose of education and Christianisation. If these schools were physically separated from those of whites the cause of social harmony would be well served.

- 3.69 Racial attitudes in Cape Town were historically associated with religion, poverty, squalor and disease, which in turn were associated with deficiency of "civilisation" associated with Christianity.

Only six years prior to the public meeting a journalist expressed his repugnance for the conditions in which the poor of Cape Town lived:

A walk through the slums of Cape Town affords at a glance an instructive insight into the truth of the statement that one half of the world does not know how the other half lives, and a closer look into the daily life of the human beings who inhabit them, cannot but make any ordinary Christian recoil in horror.⁹⁷

In this social climate with two coexistent "worlds" living in mutual ignorance it seemed axiomatic that the advancement of the one could not be impeded at the sacrifice of the privileges of the other. Hence the official steps to regularise racially segregated schools and the emergence of an ideological basis for segregation. Salter and Tapper explain the value of ideology:

... behind all educational ideologies lies an idea of the social order, which the ideology both explains both in terms of the contribution education can make towards it and legitimates

through the propagation of this explanation. The desired society is not always an explicit part of ideology, however, since one of the more useful aspects of educational ideologies has been the claim to be apolitical, to be concerned with the education of the individual and nothing more, thus disguising their legitimating function by a denial that such a wider function could be part of the specialised activity in which they are engaged. But that desired society is always part of a fully developed educational ideology, be it overt or concealed...⁹⁸

A step towards the desired social order in which "civilised" persons were dominant had been taken with the Franchise and Ballot Act (1892)⁹⁹ even if there was no overt racial segregation specifically aimed at coloured people.

- 3.70 It could be argued that the disabilities in school facilities were being over-emphasised. White people of the city who convened meetings to this end were accused of mala fides, and one newspaper suggested that no legal impediments existed to anyone's educational progress. The editor elaborated thus:

No legal enactment can possibly meet the grievance for the airing of which the public meeting of coloured people was held last evening (supra, 3.67) and for this reason that there is no legal obstacle whatever to the admission of coloured children to any public schools, even of the highest class, in this colony.

There is nothing to prevent such children proceeding to University honours, or competing in the Civil Service or other public examinations. That being so it is altogether widely off the mark for coloured citizens to approach the Government in terms of their resolution, and

and claim equal rights as regards citizenship, or to demand higher education for their children than is now open to them.

The only practical portion of the resolution is that, if education be not provided in the schools that already exist, Government should provide other means for the education of coloured children. The difficulty, which, we take leave to say, has been greatly exaggerated by the coloured people who have taken it up, is social and not legal.¹⁰⁰

Social conventions had come to disregard the legal niceties and for all practical purposes this argument was academic. Only one person, Dr Abdullah Abdurahman, had proceeded to higher education in 19th century Cape Town, but that was both because of his social background and his special abilities.

- 3.71 Abdurahman found, upon his return to his native land, that racial attitudes had resulted in no other promising coloured child having access to institutions of higher education. Thomas Muir, the S.G.E., seemed to have neglected the further development of schools in deference to the political expediences of his day. Schools were overtly being differentially developed in terms of white domination. In a speech delivered in 1904 Abdurahman saw the dereliction of the coloured child's education as deliberate ideological strategy:

The present system of education is practically at the same stage at which it was 15 years ago. Little or nothing has been done by the State to improve it; but, on the other hand, opportunities which we had a few years back of reaching a higher standard are now denied to us. Two schools at which I received my education (i.e. Marist Bros. and S.A.C.S.) have closed their doors to other coloured children, and nothing has been substituted to take their place.

Indeed, the tendency has been to discourage higher education for the coloured, to restrict their education more and more, to place obstacles in their way, and to limit their education to Standard 1V, which is, in the vast majority of instances - through the want of adequate grants from the State - beyond our reach ... and while we are clamouring loud for education, we are not asking so much for more infant schools after the present type, but for an improvement in them, so that they may become worthy of the name of schools, and for opportunities to reach a higher standard.¹⁰¹

There seemed to be limitations placed on progression for the sake of more schools providing only basic elementary education. An effect of this was an increasing despair as children not absorbed into the labour market were to swell the army of idlers. By means of fallacious argument, post hoc ergo propter hoc, the idlers could be produced as the reason for an entire class of people being denied equality in educational opportunity. Life of the genteel residents of Cape Town became intolerably inconvenienced, even menaced, by ubiquitous coloured youths growing increasingly brazen in their insolence.

- 3.72 Alienation and resentment were natural consequences of exclusion and denial. But the causes were not sought in the socio-political conditions with which these people could not identify positively, but rather in their inherent vicious disposition. A newspaper referred scathingly to the young "human scum of this city" and mentioned

Idle, ill-looking young ruffians, their dirty drab-coloured faces stamped with the hallmarks of every vice, come shoving along our narrow sidewalks, and, if the opportunity offers, will roughly elbow a lady or young girl aside.¹⁰²

- 3.72 This emotive observation was perhaps symptomatic of the growing racial demarcation developing in Cape Town. The "ruffians" were of a complexion associated with the people conventionally considered socially inferior i.e. "coloured" people. Within this category fell the city's Muslim community and the recent immigrants from Western India, their coreligionists.

Towards the end of the 19th century the social and political lexicon of Cape Town reflected the way in which group social relations were being redefined, particularly in the increasing prominence of the word, "coloured".

- 3.73 There was prior to 1900 no statutory use of the term, but the social convention was acknowledged in the context of school provision and educational opportunity. Indian immigrants were by virtue of their complexions differently regarded than immigrants from Europe, both elements drawn to burgeoning commerce in the port city. The former shared the educational disabilities of people called "coloured", while the latter found every positive aspect of "European" status within their reach, including the best-endowed schools.

Common schools thus allowed for a relatively homogeneous "European" community to develop while those excluded appeared fragmented, atomised, often lacking a common cause. The divide et impera principle came into public education by the strategem of exclusion on the basis of colour. This was to eventuate as a new definition for the denied and excluded as "Coloured" people. A sociologist hypothesises about the origin of the concept:

The emergence of a section of South Africa's people labelled Coloured was principally a social and ideological process rather than a biological one. The term Coloured as originally used by European settlers in Southern Africa referred to all people with more pigmentation than the average colonists.

But by the middle of the 19th century an ideology of Colouredism had begun to develop in terms of which certain people were identified, and identified themselves, as part of a Coloured section of the population distinct from the colonists on the one hand and Bantu-speakers on the other.¹⁰³

As Afrikaans-speakers the words "Bruinmense" (the subordinate) and "Witmense" (the superordinate) gained increasing currency among Capetonians in their social interaction. Religious organisations, the major cultural collectivities, took the lead in this social differentiation:

Although, therefore, a process of political and economic intergration and assimilation was taking place on the one hand, there was at the same time a notable process of sharper social differentiation. The decision of the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in 1857 to separate church facilities for non-whites from that of whites, was but one manifestation of this process.¹⁰⁴

Separation in worship was logically followed by a separation in Church-initiated schools, which was to have an impact on the quality of the Mission schools intended for coloured people and the quality of social and political status or the pace of economic advancement.

- 3.74 Exacerbating what seemed the State's dilatory approach to provision of schools was the growth rate of the coloured population during the latter half of the 19th century. Population growth outstripped the available labour opportunities in Cape Town resulting in unemployment and under-employment.¹⁰⁵

Children who should have been in school or who might have been educated beyond Std. 1V in the Mission schools were thus

a cause of concern for clergymen ministering to Anglican parishes in Cape Town and environs.

An Anglican publication of 1897 spoke forcefully about the neglect of school provision for the growing coloured population. The Synod of the Church declared:

... the legislature of the Cape Colony cannot in reason object to the existence and the work of any institution, nor justly ignore the value of the results it produces simply because of its religious associations; and also a section of the community work to which the State has pledged itself; the State cannot in justice refuse it a proportionate measure of support.¹⁰⁶

What the Anglican Church was doing would ultimately redound to the credit of the State but its endeavours found little appreciation in official quarters. Good citizenship and social order were being done an injustice if the Church were reduced in its influence and effect. It was accepted as axiomatic that there was to be racial segregation in schooling, but schools required a religious orientation. Therefore, it was argued, that schools were best left under the aegis of the Church who could ensure a separate-but-equal delivery of its educational services:

Accepting on equal terms of citizenship as it does, Christian of whatever denomination, Jews and Mohammedans, it should as far as possible in the matter of education, (as in other matters), promote impartially the welfare of each section of the community; it should be careful to maintain the principle of liberty of conscience, and not allow matters of conscience to interfere with its endeavours for the advancement and welfare of the people.¹⁰⁷

Seeing evangelisation as its highest calling and education as

the major area of its realisation among coloured people, the Church voiced its opposition to expanding non-sectarian schooling or the secularisation of education itself. Secularisation could be a covert effort at limiting the conversion of non-Christians in Cape Town especially.

- 3.75 In the judgement of some clergymen the contest between Christianity and Islam in Cape Town was being waged for the hearts and minds of the poor, but the battle was being lost by default. An earlier Church publication had pointed to the fallow fields awaiting the missionary:

Most Moslems in South Africa are comparatively recent converts and we can scarcely wonder they lent a willing ear to Mohammedans, when they remember the shameful treatment the coloured people formerly received from so-called Christians... The notice put up at the doors of the Dutch Church was commonly this:

"No dogs or kaffirs admitted."¹⁰⁸

The need for schools provided an opportunity for this community's accessibility that was not previously easy for mission workers. Trends in the provision of education facilities limited the "modernising" influence that schools exert. The State by its policy was blind to a vital aspect of the Church's work among colonised people.

- 3.76 Homogenising the two cultural entities, English and Dutch, seemed to inform Cape schooling policy. As powerful socialising agencies the value of schools has been outlined by Bowles:

Schools would further lead people to accept the authority of the State and its agents - the teachers - at a young age in part by fostering the illusion of the benevolence of the government in its relations with citizens...

Where pre-capitalist social institutions - particularly the church - remained strong or threatened the capitalist hegemony schools sometimes served as a modernising counter-institution.¹⁰⁹

It is highly probable that these reasons produced the following effect:

there was a "separation of school facilities to the benefit of the Whites and at the expense of the Coloured people". Two different forms of socialisation commensurate with two different social positions were unmistakably evident in this educational dispensation:

The process throughout the Cape tended to be one in which the State established new schools for the White children, while assisting the "mission schools", which became more and more strictly for Coloured children only.¹¹⁰

Here the operative words convey the partiality: White schools were "established" and generously funded, while smaller amounts of money went towards "assisting" schools for Coloured children.

- 3.77 To the dominant class of the Cape Colony the ideology of "secularism" in the white schools served its political ends with regard to the needs of the social and economic order, as well as limiting the restrictive influence that churches might exert. It seems that for this ideological gain the churches had to contend with the coloured schools as a field of missionary endeavours.

It appeared to have been a defensible position in a place like Cape Town where many children were not acquainted with Christianity when they started school.

- 3.78 However, this racial demarcation of the schools was unacceptable to a clergyman who urged the Anglican Church Synod of

1898 to retain those multiracial schools operating under the aegis of the Church, and by extension to resist the State's schooling policy. An editorial rebuke attempted to correct the Synod's social perspective in the Cape colonial context:

a reverend... gentleman rises in his place in the Synod to defend the system of mixed European and coloured schools. We are calmly told that the white and coloured youngsters work together, play together, and afterwards inter-marry, and the latter do not exercise a bad moral or social influence on the former. They do not differ morally, spiritually or intellectually. Now if this is the mission schools, we should like to see them swept away tomorrow, because they are going to work incalculable mischief in the future.¹¹¹

Firstly, the position to which the editor took exception, common schools for a common citizenry, was indefensible. Such schools could not produce the social product that was being envisaged in separate schooling: white schooling was for political domination. More reprehensible was the assumption that skin-colour does not count in the process of schooling because differences of colour could mean that one child's influence could adversely affect the other, morally, spiritually and intellectually. One cannot here escape the inference that the "spiritual" bad influence feared was from children who were not Christians. In the mission school context that allusion was to Muslim children in the main.

- 3.79 Thus far it has been shown that as "coloured" people of Cape Town, Muslims were obliged to send their children to mission schools about which they harboured fears of their children's alienation. Missionaries who established schools did in fact seek to evangelise this component of the coloured community but lamented the lack of funds for the expansion of their facilities. The State had the extension of schooling for whites as its first priority. This presented an impediment to the progress of religious conversion by means of schools as

agencies of socialisation. Muslims lacked the resources and expertise to initiate their own Islam-oriented schools. The only such school functioned under patronage of the Sultan of Turkey and not as an altruistic or impartial exercise. An earlier attempt at operating their own school system under an imam's direction (supra 3.41) was apparently autonomous but could not be sustained out of their own resources. Therefore, the experience of Muslims in Cape Town was little different from that of their coreligionist in other parts of the British Empire as the following writer suggests when discussing the role of Mission schools:

Basically, the missionaries came with full support of the home countries, their people and governments, and worked in the colonies with the willing and unwilling co-operation of the colonial administration. It was common at that time for missionary societies to be organised in Europe and to which people donated generously; young men and women volunteered enthusiastically to go to Africa to preach. Assured of this kind of backing... in time education and medicine would become the monopoly of the Christian missions. In quite a few cases, admission to these mission schools was conditional upon conversion. In any case, the fear was always there. So Muslims overwhelmingly kept away from them. Their efforts to run a parallel education system of their own suffered due to their poverty and the absence of government support... During this period Muslim efforts were confined to defending their existence and to retaining Islam,¹¹²

- 3.80 The imams of Cape Town and various pious persons presented the traditional Islamic curriculum to their charges. Changing social and economic conditions demanded that the skills of language and computation for use in the mainstream culture had

to be mastered. Thus the traditional religious education, while useful for worship and civilised behaviour, was increasingly found wanting in an economy of growing complexity. Ideologically, the teaching of the imams was not at variance with political requirements of the State for when loyalty and patriotism had to be proved they did so with alacrity. The proceedings report of a meeting of imams on support for Britain against the Boers is noteworthy:

Imam Gamza... was much pleased (with the resolution) and remarked that he was an old man - almost a veteran soldier - although he had only kept guard for about two hours at the barracks on the occasion of the Kaffir War in 1846, at Malmesbury, when Moslems were called upon to defend the land, and 800 of them from the Cape responded to the call... all Moslems of this country should offer their services to their beloved Queen to defend their rights and country, and from the heart he seconded the resolution proposed.

He might mention that in 1846, when the Moslems responded to the call of duty, some of them stayed here to protect the Barracks, Castle, Treasury and magazine, and others went to the front, even at that time when it was only a Kaffir rising, and they as Moslems responded so well for England.

Should they not now when the whole country was invaded by the Boers (who would make slaves of all they could) rise up as a united body and offer their services to the Queen?¹¹³

At the end of the 19th century the Cape Colony faced a war and in the above the sentiments expressed by leading figures of the Muslim community showed clearly that being British subjects with freedom of exercising their religion they considered the safety of ~~their~~ persons and beliefs as insepar-

able from the security of the Colony.

- 3.81 Few similar sentiments were reciprocated by the white colonies who tended to regard Islam as an aberration of religion to be mentioned last and least as in the publication of statistics concerning religious groupings in the Cape:

The congregations of the different religious denominations in the Colony (exclusive of the Transkeian Territories) number as far as ascertained 383 765 members, 232 046 being classified as whites and 150 719 as coloured.

Of these the Dutch Reformed Church numbers 162 739; Wesleyans, 68 814; Church of England 57 895; Congregationalists, Independents and London Missionary Society, 33 065; the Moravian or United Brethren, 10 053; the Rhenish Mission, 10 011; Roman Catholics, 9 694; Presbyterian (Free Church of Scotland), 8 646; and besides there are Baptists, Lutherans, French Reformed Church, Free Protestant and Hebrew, and Mahomedan Congregations.¹¹⁴

According to the 1875 census just 10 years prior to the compilation of the above figures there were some 11 287 Muslims in Cape Town alone and the 1892 census recorded 15 099 Muslims in the Colony. (supra 3.13)

In the light of their numerical significance in Cape Town their relegation to an almost incidental mention in the official statistics of religious groups could only be explained as a consequence of prejudice, the ideological disposition and their socially marginal position to that of the mainstream culture.

- 3.82 Church and State, in reality the instruments of power, seemed to have reached an accommodation with regard to the schools for the children of colonists as the sphere of the latter. Mission schools became the preserve of the Churches representing various denominations and drawing their clientele from a

group called "coloured". In Cape Town that meant that the Muslim children as a component of the coloured group could only obtain schooling aided by the State if they attended Mission schools. With only one exception during the 19th century, Abdurahman, no coloured child proceeded to higher education. While the contest of policies between the Church and State found occasional expression in the Cape Town press, the State's commitment to white domination remained obdurate. A consistently high birth-rate among the coloured people aggravated the imbalance between procreation and sustenance. Schooling supply could never match the demand. Large numbers of coloured children went without schooling. Some of the fortunate ones received only a basic education. Trapped within the culture of poverty and destined for no more than menial occupations, trades and small business, many Muslim children received only the traditional religious training given by imams in mosques and house-schools. Islam's alternative education system in Cape Town, disregarded in official quarters as deserving of State aid, continued in the face of increased missionary efforts to gain converts for the churches.

3.38 Within the city's Islamic fold Indian immigrants were gradually growing in numbers and influence. Economically more enterprising, and politically more perceptive, they could not be assimilated. A modus vivendi between the domestic Muslim community and the immigrants had to be reached. Provision of Islam-oriented schools was to become the single objective for the two communities to pool their resources.

3.84 A fragmented and insular community was awaiting politicisation and a forceful personality that would show them a commonality of interests with other aggrieved people without the sacrifice of their cultural interests.

The man who rose to the occasion was Dr Abdullah Abdurahman who addressed their social malaise by establishing Muslim mission schools.

In our next chapter, which might quite aptly be called, the Age of Abdurahman, the educational progress of Cape Town and

environs will be brought into sharper focus.

- 3.85 In the ensuing years the legacy of the 19th century had to be challenged as its implications became painfully apparent: Church schools for whites were singularly privileged at the expense of the Mission schools for the non-whites. But this reconstruction of Cape Town society in a colour-caste division was only one aspect of the hegemonic thrust in public life. A "Brown South African" notes about the late 19th century:

In 1894 a regulation was introduced making provision for the establishment of white mission schools aided by the State, with grants on a higher scale than that applying to mixed schools as were at the time usual.

This attractive innovation led to almost complete segregation of white and coloured pupils in the mission schools; and segregation elsewhere received an impetus the full force of which was not realised at the time.¹¹⁵

It came almost imperceptibly, if not cunningly, to pass that the distribution of funds and the ostensibly administrative classification in terms of "Church Schools" and "Mission Schools" had the effect of enforcing a legitimate form of discrimination without the formal sanction of the law.

Another non-white writer corroborates:

Volgens wet was daar nog geen onderwysapartheid nie en kon 'n Kleurkingkind enige onderwysinrigting van die staat besoek, mits hy aan die minimum toelatingsvereistes voldoen, maar in die praktyk het daar weinig van terreggekom.¹¹⁶

Schooling became the single and most visible form of injustice that the politicised leadership element in the Coloured community, Christian and Muslim, could address, the galvanising public concern that was to draw them to a crucial cause.

A leadership bridging the religious divide and transcending traditional, narrow parochial interests was imperative. A role was awaiting an actor, a social drama of resistance and assertion of wills was about to be enacted.

- 3.86 A man who had in his educational background the instruction of Cape Town's two cultures, Christian and Muslim, had a fair chance of assuming that role and to assert that will. Abdurahman was eminently qualified to do so.

As a public figure who dazzled his audiences with facts he could have pointed to the Cape Town Directory to illustrate the paucity of schools for the growing number of non-white children:

Coloured Schools -

St Paul's School Buitengracht Street

St Philip's Mission School, Rogers Street

Wesleyan Mission School, Albertus Street.¹¹⁷

At the end of his eventful life the number of schools would be dramatically increased. By his own volition and influence he caused the Muslim community to establish three such "Mission schools". Hence the focus on his endeavours in the next historical phase of this study.

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CHAPTER 4MUSLIM EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS AND THE FIRST MUSLIM PRIMARY SCHOOLS - 1900 TO 1920

- 4.1 According to Laidler,¹ the Twentieth century opened for Capetonians with the Anglo-Boer War unfinished and bubonic plague sending the death-rate soaring in squalid sections of the city and its environs.

Cape Town, the harbour city, was in the eye of the storm of war which was sucking diverse people from Britain's far-flung Empire into the vortex. Aliens, armed forces and anxieties about containment of the disease needed the attention of the legislators and administrators. Concerned community leaders addressed social evils. Schools were relegated to a lower position on the State's list of priorities.

Education of children from the socially inferior elements of the population exhibited every sign of dereliction and financial starvation. Yet, children were being born in the city's non-white communities destined to join the increasing numbers going without schooling. The social implications were daunting.

The legacy of the 19th century's education policy was candidly described by the highest Cape civil servant charged with the provision of schools when he declared:

... very little was done with reference to education generally, and still less was done for the education of the Coloured man.²

In a time of accelerated change the inadequacies of educational policy was being keenly felt and its social consequences were becoming increasingly pronounced.

- 4.2 The architectural landscape of the city centre reflected the economic, political and social order that evidenced the trend to "modernisation" a process that leaves none unaffected. Its impact was felt on historical, political and sociological processes.

These were the years of the passing of Cape Town's old houses

Hurry, scurry and economy replaced time, thought and design...

Everywhere church steeples are being overshadowed by tall blocks of many storeys, and people obtained a slant on religion (and commerce) as never before.³

Considerations of religion and the expansion of commerce presented a crisis of faith, as the increasing social and structural differentiation drove home the need for a re-evaluation of the State's role in school provision.

Religion tended to be the driving force in the education facilities for the coloured segment of the population of Cape Town, while the advancement of commerce dictated a greater secularisation of those for white children making religion less a dominant feature of the choice of schools.

- 4.3 Sociologically considered, the favourable interest of the State in a white child's education was consonant with the educational philosophy of the Cape's Superintendent-General of Education (1860 to 1892) as well as his successor. If white children were to be purposefully educated for dominant positions the secular schools could provide for the political socialisation.

About political socialisation Greenstein postulates this:

Narrowly conceived, political socialisation is the deliberate inculcation of political information, values and practices by instructional agents who have been formally charged with this responsibility. A broader conception would encompass all political learning, formal and informal, deliberate and unplanned, at every stage of the life cycle, including, but not explicitly, political learning that affects political behaviour, such as the learning of politically relevant social attitudes and the

acquisition of politically relevant personality characteristics.⁴

Such a process designed to produce a desired social product needed the State's lavish attention in the provision of resources so that the State might contribute effectively to the general upward social mobility of the class of people concerned.

- 4.4 Social convention in Cape Town determined that the coloured community, of which the Muslims were a segment, would by this policy be in schools less well-endowed, with prospects of progression through the standards less favourable.

A description of the city's Muslims written in the mid-century was as accurate and valid at the beginning of the Twentieth:

The Cape Malays do not merely form a community on the periphery of the White community. They are also a community within a community. By traditional policy they are relegated to an inferior position in society, but they are asked to share that position with other groups from whom they differ markedly in tradition, religion and custom. They have to face up to an aggressive economic system not of their own making, a system which ignores their way of life and in many ways cannot be reconciled with it. The European with facility divorces his economic system from his religion, but the Muslim finds it exceedingly difficult to do so.⁵

We have thus located the Muslim community within the stratified society of Cape Town, vis-a-vis the superior whites and others with whom they shared a status of social inferiority. For purposes of providing State-aided schooling in facilities provided by the churches, a certain homogeneity about all coloured children was assumed. The ideological implications of this assumption with regard to the envisioned social product of Mission schooling cannot be disregarded in this context.

- 4.5 Muslim parents were generally obliged to accept the status quo as they were in the main indigent, and compared to whites, socially disadvantaged. Their means to Western literacy and gaining eventually the qualifications of the franchise was by way of the Mission schools.

Consensus and conformity within the given political order brought many an ambitious parent before the invidious dilemma of having their children succeed within the prescribed school system or resisting by allowing only education in the Islamic traditional schools.

- 4.6 This dilemma is also symptomatic of ideological conflict between the dominant and subjugated cultures anywhere. The capacity of any group to initiate change in the educational structures or the desired social order depends on the scope of its ideology. Here the Muslims of Cape Town as part of the urban poor were clearly at a distinct disadvantage if it is borne in mind that their religious education was geared to reproduction of their lifestyle and beliefs.

As a cultural minority their education was geared to reproducing their own social order within the larger social order and the mainstream culture. But that larger social order was geared to a more rigid colour-caste structure and an increasingly refined hegemony of the dominant class over the rest. The following explanatory note would be apposite:

It is nevertheless true that some educational ideologies are more complex and more sophisticated than others and therefore better able to legitimate the interests of their groups. The lower level ideologies focus almost exclusively on the educational structure and processes and are consequently unable, and perhaps do not aspire, to promote their group beyond the educational system.⁶

In the course of their social history Cape Town's Muslims were

reaching a decisive stage in which their reservations about the available schools were being questioned. While unable to marshall their own resources towards establishing similar schools to those of the churches Muslims had to make use of the Mission Schools as a compromise rather than risk a further deterioration of their social condition.

4.7 In order to understand the ideological position in which Muslims found themselves we shall in this chapter focus on the following educational initiatives:

- 4.7.1 the first Muslim organisation founded to advance their socic -cultural interests in a plural society;
- 4.7.2 the demographic profile of the Cape Town Muslim community;
- 4.7.3 Mission schools in the socio-political context;
- 4.7.4 Abdurahman's role in the establishment of the first Muslim Mission primary school;
- 4.7.5 the failure of other educational efforts;
- 4.7.6 the Muslim mission school as a statement of communal initiative in Cape Town and Salt River.

Adhering to the above subdivision of historical data will allow for an analysis of educational ideology operating in the provision of schooling because

it should begin with the identification of the desired society in conjunction with the type(s) of individual preferably produced by education, then consider the conception of human nature constraining both these ideological goals, and, subsequently, the educational means of achieving them.⁷

4.8 In 1903 an attempt was made to launch a comprehensive South African Moslem Association to bring the immigrant and indigenous Muslims into a single cultural organisation and redefine their relationship with the mainstream culture.

An economy of increasing complexity due to the expansion of industry was imposing new demandson the labour pool of the city.

A community lacking the basic literacy and numeracy skills that industrial expansion demanded was growing keenly conscious of its deficiencies. Thus educational opportunity would feature prominently among the public issues that had to be addressed. At a meeting held in the Mechanics' Hall in Claremont on 19 June 1903, the chairman argued the merits of secular education and pointed to the danger of outmoded attitudes:

They (the Muslims) were being ousted from many departments of work by foreigners and undesirables simply because they lacked education. He thought all parents - Moslems or not - should rather send their children to school than to work. There the children earned a little money, but look at what habits they had acquired? Their sole desire became to dress better than their neighbours... Their bodies were beautifully clothed but their minds were blank. (Muslim parents) must not run away with the foolish saying, "Oh, what was good enough for me is good enough for my children". It was not; times had altered.⁸

Here was reflected the concern for increasing competition in terms of new, economically relevant criteria with which the Muslims could not comply. There was also an appeal to their sense of fairplay; as naturalised and indigenous citizens they could not permit to foreigners the advantage by default.

As a community of proven worth they had more claim to sharing in the economic opportunities than others lured here by less laudable considerations. Since his audience were largely poor people he urged deferred gratification for the sake of greater advantage to themselves.

While these sentiments were timely and important the speaker evaded the question: where were the schools for their children? (Supra 4.1.)

- 4.9 Social disadvantage originating in limited schooling opportunities was bound to produce in Cape Town the dynamic for the emergence of social movements that would make public education the battlefield of the city's superordinate and sub-ordinate cultures, between the politically powerful and the powerless.

By 1902 an ideology of the powerless was gradually assuming organisational shape in Cape Town with the establishment of the African Political Organisation (APO) with which Abdurahman and many property-owning Muslims readily associated.⁹ These people were no longer prepared to be "a mere adjunct of European society, a sort of poor relation incapable of standing on their own feet politically".¹⁰ Educational advancement was to be an important objective of this organisation.¹¹ A greater State, rather than Church, commitment to the provision of schooling was sought. But many Muslims did not see an immediate prospect of the State's serious involvement. They had to contend with the immediate reality of the Mission schools and the perceived bias of the Church in such enterprises. Some joined the South African Moslem Association persuaded that their communal interests are best furthered by themselves.

- 4.10 As a non-Christian segment of the coloured community they could not be oblivious of the missionary zeal associated with the provision of schools. Motivation for educational provision at the time has been critically assessed as follows:

This was an age that saw the Empire reach unprecedented chauvinistic heights, and the uncritical nationalism associated with such power not only subsumed the English-speaking churches in South Africa, but was appropriated and promoted by such churches.

Mission education, evangelism and Christian character-building assumed the values and assumptions of the Victorian era, and not many missionaries doubted that the impartation of such values were to the inherent benefit of the proselytised.¹²

Mission schools, aided by the State, were thus bringing about the desired synthesis of God, Church and the British Empire. In the city of seething poor, appalling sanitary conditions, visited by frequent contagion, the working-class was generally "people of colour". They were perceived by their benefactors to be decadent in behaviour and unable to raise children in a socially acceptable manner. Educational administrators and commissions of inquiry were persuaded to the view that none but church-oriented institutions could reasonably give the State its money's worth in educating coloured people. If only the churches could erect more schools the State's funds would be forthcoming. Education policy was inseparably linked to the churches for the following reasons:

The early Victorian obsession with education of the poor is best understood as a concern about authority, about power, about the assertion (or reassertion?) of control. This concern was expressed in the enormously ambitious attempt to determine through the capture of educational means, the patterns of thought, sentiment and behaviour of the working class.¹³

Part of capturing the sentiment of the working class was to involve it in raising the funds for the erection of school-buildings. Sensitive Muslims could not escape the conclusion that in their quest for schooling they were contributing to the assets of churches. In a community conditioned to hostility from that quarter towards their beliefs, contributions were obtained with some difficulty.

- 4.11 Inspired workers for proselytisation were by 1900 augmented by German and Black American missionaries. Manuel mentions that almost all the churches represented in District Six established schools. Larger numbers of coloured children were thereby assured a modicum of schooling, and in a few cases up to Std. IV.

A fortunate few could proceed to the English Church's teacher training facilities at the Zonnebloem College which had the

social ends of mission education clearly declared in its motto:
 Ut Filii Lucis Ambulate - Walk Ye as Sons of Light.¹⁴

- 4.12 Accommodation of coloured children in the charitable schools, rather than in the State schools was accepted by the missionaries from Britain as the natural order of things. This has earned the English churches the rather harsh judgement of a Church historian who comments thus on contemporary values:

The political deference of the English missionaries at times became capitulation, and at other times co-operation, influenced no doubt by a variety of motives: paternalism, good intent, altruism, self-interest and imperialist fervour.

What is clear is that the struggle waged by the English missionaries for human rights and African interests never reached the point of opposing imperialist designs, but then the church has only rarely done this in its long history.¹⁵

When certain a priori assumptions about non-Christians (vide 4.10) prevailed in education circles then the rationale of separation in terms of colour was especially attractive to reasonable people.

- 4.13 School principals who held office at the pleasure of parish priests generally admitted only coloured children to the Mission schools of Cape Town. By virtue of this practice their schools became the institutional structures whereby the ideology of the dominant culture helped to produce the human products for the social order. Lucrative employment in the service of the State or commerce was therefore inaccessible to children educated in Mission schools. This fact was grist to the mill of every political formation that arose in coloured ranks at the beginning of the twentieth century. For this Molteno postulates several reasons:

The financial resources available to mission

schools were severely restricted by a rate of subsidation much lower than that applied to other Government-aided schools, by lower fees and by acceptance of students whose parents were unable to afford any fees at all. The mission schools offered an elementary academic education administered with a heavy dose of religious instruction. Few students learnt enough of anything to turn it to individual advantage. Having been born into the labouring class they were generally trapped by a life of labour.¹⁶

A heavy dose of religious instruction could hardly have been avoided if the school building was perceived as a physical extension of the church who claimed for it the State's assistance ostensibly because of its academic services to the poor.

- 4.14 The triad of Mission school, economic disadvantage and race discrimination justified the social distance that in previous centuries was deemed axiomatic between coloniser and colonised. Coloured people could be excluded from the institutions of political expression because they were generally less educated, poor and not white.

How this assists the political hegemony of one group over another is demonstrated in this assertion:

Discrimination is concerned with maintaining and enforcing status relationships between individuals and groups. It is a form of non-violent coercion and is the means whereby the members of a society possessing superior social, economic or political status assert their influence and power over those whom they consider inferior, in order to perpetuate the status differences.¹⁷

In the course of time Church and State had identical interests and Muslims came to associate the Mission school with educational exclusion and denial.

- 4.15 Children of Muslim craftsmen and small traders could, as in the previous centuries in Cape Town, learn their occupational skills in the father-to-son tradition and be withdrawn from the Mission school according to the family's labour needs. However, rapid economic change was making skill training within the family context increasingly inappropriate.¹⁸

Losing the family's economic autonomy meant that children needed preparation for absorption in the economy of the dominant culture. This stratum of the coloured social formation in the city preferred a higher education for their children and in a few instances sent their promising sons overseas. Most of these parents encountered race barriers in seeking higher education for their children.

Considered as non-whites their exclusion was administratively effected by school principals of higher education institutions. George Manuel describes the enforced limitations placed on this community:

Kostelose primêre onderwys het nog nie bestaan nie en behalwe in die geval van die "arm" kerkskole en sendingskole, moes 'n mens betaal on jou kind op die skool to hou.

Sekondêre onderwys was duur, en die prys van hoë onderwys bo die vermoë van verreweg die meeste Kleurlinge. Bywoning van staatsinrigtings deur Kleurlingkinders is buitendien, om dit maar sag te stel, nie deur plaaslike owerhede aangemoedig nie.¹⁹

The local authorities (plaaslike owerhede) to whom this writer could refer were the principals of Government schools who had to exercise de facto, though not de jure, selection of only white children for admission. They were the "gatekeepers" serving the social order's educational ideology and preserving the status quo.

- 4.16 Resentment was soon engendered among parents whose children

were turned away from the Government schools. We read in his testament how Mr Sulaiman Shah Mohamed, benefactor of the South African Museum and the University of Cape Town, coped with this humiliation. His solocitor recorded:

The Appearer stated that although a taxpayer to the extent of at least one pound sterling for each working day in the year and a British subject by birth and a resident for close on thirty years in South Africa where his wife was born and where he had reared his children, he had found it impracticable to have his son prepared for Matriculation at a school in South Africa, and had consequently been compelled to send him to England.²⁰

Had it not been a matter of race discrimination and religious prejudice this promising young man might have had his higher education of a similar standard within walking distance of his home in Bree Street, Cape Town.

Less wealthy Muslim parents looked to political organisations to redress this grievance.

- 4.17 Cape Town's Muslim community, for reasons of education among others, had to redefine their cultural identity in South Africa's segmentary society and match their ideological defences with the pressures of change in the social and political spheres. Their traditional religious leadership, personified by the intellectuals of their subculture, the imams, wished to maintain the paternalist relationship of the pre-capitalist era. From time to time the English press of the city reminded them of their community's dependence on and indebtedness to the White dominant group. Therefore, when a South African Moslem Association convened a meeting a correspondent warned of the danger to racial and religious relations:

My reasons for opposing such meetings is to call the attention of my fellow Moslem brethren to

the danger which they are allowing themselves to be dragged into - namely, political. I find it impossible to work in opposition to the white race, and am sure that which I find impossible must also be to my fellow Moslem brethren. I also have found hitherto that there is no Moslem in this Colony qualified to fill such a high position as a representative in any House of legislators.²¹

A clear and unequivocal demarcation was preferred between the religious and the secular by this writer. Moslems as a religious minority were vulnerable to sanctions from those in authority.

- 4.18 For as long as their religious interests were not conceived as impinging upon the spheres of legislators they could even expect active good will from that quarter. In a letter to a newspaper a Muslim Capetonian referred to their (the Whites') generosity at an earlier time when correct social relationships were observed:

We built the Long Street mosque, and we received many subscriptions from Europeans, among them being Sir Gordon Sprigg, Sir Thomas Upington, and our Chief Justice of the Colony.²²

Even among the people discriminated against in the vital area of public education there were the conservative elements unwilling and fearful to lose such good will, and to whom the prevalent social distance which education policy legitimated was the natural order of things. They would therefore withhold their endorsement of overt "political" initiatives.

- 4.19 In a city facing an influx of immigrants competing for the available employment there were fears for the security of Muslims in 1903 when the Cape Parliament was considering a law "to establish locations for Asiatics and other coloured people" as a panacea for controlling "undesirables".²³ Once more the

lack of schools as the agencies of social preparation and advancement was topical. Neamatollah Effendi, son of the Turkish teacher Abu Bakr, emerged as the forthright spokesman for the South African Moslem Association (Supra 4.8). He argued at public meetings for a greater interest in education:

There was a greater charm in discussing social problems than listening to and making political harangues. They (his audience) as Moslems must endeavour to make their lives happier and nobler. He could not too strongly urge education upon them...education was not only power but it enabled all who sought it to lead happier and better lives. But those who were educated should not hold themselves aloof from their less fortunate fellows and treat them with contempt or derision. On the contrary, they should go amongst them and guide them on the road to true progress.²⁴

Firstly, the speaker wished to mollify those who feared "political" action which might cause displeasure to persons in authority. Hence his location of his problem, the lack of educational opportunity, within the field of "social" issues.

Parents had to see the possibilities that education held for their children and not to fear their children's alienation from them in the process.

- 4.20 These were the deterrent factors to schooling among the working-class generally and the Muslim segment of the coloured population had to overcome their exaggerated fears. On another occasion the chairman of the Association was more specific about what he had in mind, but he included a most unfortunate value judgement about the Muslim community in general when he said:

What the Moslems wanted was compulsory, free education. Not only did the Moslems want it, so did all sensible people... He had received an

education, and had himself been a teacher, and he could tell his fellow Moslems what was the simple truth, that they were lamentably backward.²⁵

They could hardly have been anything but "lamentably backward" given the poverty in which most were living. Although himself a Moslem, Neamatollah Effendi did not share their afflictions for he "had received an education". His audience, on the other hand, had a locally oriented culture, which four decades earlier had dismayed the speaker's father when he came from Turkey. Little had happened by way of public schooling to modify that behaviour or dissuade them from using and integrating into a workable life the remnants of beliefs and customs of diverse origins.²⁶ Education for them had a narrow vocational base if not directed at religious observances.

- 4.21 In a society that legislatively linked formal education with the franchise it was inevitable that to address the problem of a lack of education the Association should want the force and the majesty of the law to dignify secular education by making it compulsory for the Muslim community. Education as a civil liberty and the State's obligation to the citizenry was being impressed upon the Muslims. Such a notion was entirely novel in their lifestyles and their thinking where schooling was associated with churches and white foreigners.

Seeking legal force for the provision of educational opportunity moved the South African Moslem Association into the political arena, because

Education tends to be thought of as a preparation for special skills, qualifications, opportunities and careers with various levels of status. Similarly, there tends to be competitive concern for "justice" in education; for "equality of opportunity" and the exclusion of arbitrary privilege".²⁷

To make a demand for compulsory education for non-white people long inured to the relationship of master and slave, or conqueror and conquered, was indeed audacious in 1903; it was

in fact a political statement that urged the impracticable. Poorer people in the community were content to have such matters addressed by the imams, the leaders of mosque congregations in the city. They would be apprehensive of an organisation arrogating to itself the mandate of speaking in the interests of Muslims. Some imams might have sensed the self-evident danger to their own authority even recognised by the white people within their community's hierarchy of power. It could adversely affect inter-community and intra-community relations. Only declassé persons would indiscriminately rally the poor, and then only for the sake of questionable motives suggested a "Respectable Moslem" who aired his views in the press:

I for one do hereby disapprove of such meetings being held, as I think it better that any disputes should be settled amongst us to the satisfaction of the entire members of the community as was always our custom in years gone by, without framing all sorts of unnecessary rules, and also without giving the slightest offence to the Government under whom we are ruled, and to our respectable class of Moslems.²⁸

Implicit in this statement was the division between the religious and the secular which was a very satisfactory arrangement of the social concerns of the day and consonant with the paternalist style of government in the colonies.

- 4.22 Education of the children was, nevertheless, one crucial area of public life where contemporary social policy touched the religious and civil liberties of the community. The "respectable class of Moslems" with independent sources of income and autonomous in the means of its income had the means to ensure a satisfactory education for their sons overseas in Mecca, Cairo or London. Although social convention and political practice identified a "coloured" section in the population this was no homogeneous social and economic aggregation. All that they had in common was their exclusion from facilities for the whites in the political sense. Among the Muslim segment of the coloured

people the economic and social diversities were de-emphasised in a religion that stressed the brotherhood of believers. "Politics" tended to reverse the de-emphasis. This clash of the narrowly defined "political" and "religious" spheres would long polarise the Muslim community's intelligentsia and could have contributed to the delay in establishing their own "Denominational Mission schools", at least on a greater scale than was actually accomplished.

- 4.23 At the South African Moslem Assiation's inaugural meeting Neamatollah Effendi commented sardonically about fellow Muslims intimidated by their imams:

We shall have much opposition from many of the Moslems, who as a section, will not understand what progress is. Their policy is to live and die by the same custom and principles to which they had been born and brought up.²⁹

That he represented the privileged class among the Muslims of Cape Town is demonstrated by his political strategy: to offer the votes of his followers to those white political parties most sympathetic to their cause. With such leverage even the objective of compulsory education for the coloureds might be attained. He would not expect much appreciation or comprehension. "Such matters will take a long time for illiterate people to understand".

- 4.24 Besides the educational grievances this Association would also assert itself for the Muslim Indian immigrants whose continued domicile as British subjects in a British colony was at risk. There was the a priori belief that all Muslims would ipso facto submerge their differences of language, culture and class outside the religious context. As a united body they might defend their cultural interests and advance their educational opportunities in the secular sphere.

Events were to prove this judgement simplistic and the ideal too ambitious. The immigrant minority were often unlike the indigenous majority and attempts at assimilation too inadequate.

At that time it was noted that:

The majority of the Moslems may be said to be descendants of Malays. Their language used to be the Malay language. They have lost it now. They are a Dutch-speaking community of different nationalities and races - Asiatics, Africans as well as Europeans.³⁰

Such an ethnic diversity, predominantly Dutch-speaking in 1900, yet bound into a functioning social conglomerate by creed and custom presented a unique social entity the likes of which was not to be found elsewhere; it could only have been brought into existence by the historical forces that shaped the demographic profile of Cape Town. It represented a peculiar synthesis of people drawn into a structure of similar beliefs, values and folkways.

- 4.25 At that time too the recently established African Political Organisation with Abdurahman as president drew to its fold the English-speaking Muslims and Christian coloured people in the main. It, too, aspired to advance the cause of education for the disadvantaged. We shall have to compare and contrast the fortunes of these organisations within the parameters of the present enquiry.

By the time the first quarterly meeting of the S.A. Moslem Association was held, some 150 members had registered.³¹ Branches in the suburbs of Cape Town were contemplated. But in the ideological contest between this social movement and the traditional structures for the commitment of the Muslim community, old habits persisted. Disagreement seemed to prevail between the president who sought to involve the broad Muslim community, and the vice-president who expressed a narrow sectarianism. Perhaps with the "location" bill in mind he hinted that Indian Muslims might have different priorities. Accordingly, he opined that

the best thing they (Cape Muslims) could do would be to conduct themselves and keep their

houses and all they had in such a state of good order and cleanliness as would give no excuse whatever for sending them to locations. They must show that no complaint whatever could be made against them. They were most emphatically not Asiatics. They earned their money in South Africa, and did not send it away to other lands.

In that they were quite different from the Indians and lots of others.³²

Confrontation was not to be the strategy of the Association but rather to establish their desirability as part of the population. However, the bona fides of the Indian Muslim was found wanting. Abdurahman, the consummate pragmatist, tended to cultivate the co-operation of this community in his educational initiatives for the Muslims.

- 4.26 Whatever promise the S.A. Moslem Association might have held for championing the cause of more schools for non-whites, public confidence seemed to have been undermined by the president's lack of organisational skill and communicative tact, as well as his mistaken assumptions about the commonalities of interest in the community he sought to lead. Davids argues that this organisation was short-lived and made no impact on the Cape Muslims, because

Their failure could be attributed to at least two factors. Firstly, they did not enjoy the support of the Muslim clergy, a precondition for any kind of Muslim organisation which hoped for a reasonable degree of survival in Cape Town. The immediate mistake of Neamatollah Effendi was to blame the problems which the community endured on "the ignorance of many so-called leaders".³³

Congregations of mosques organised around their imam as the central figure were the major social units beyond the kinship aggregations. If the trust and confidence and endorsement of

the imams were obtained the enterprise might well have had its religious merit too. It was a secular concept designed to attract people from religious associations. In that contradiction lay its most serious ideological flaw. One could appreciate this lamentable default if the historical position of the imams vis-a-vis the broad Muslim public is analysed as has been done by Harris who asserts:

In spite of the fact that the Islam faith has no organised priesthood the imams developed as a kind of aristocracy among the Malays. They were not only religious leaders, but also the social leaders of this community. Their religious position gave them a very high standing, because of their training and educational background, in a community where the masses did not share the same educational background. This also gave them a sense of pride and earned them considerable respect. Whenever the government wanted to adopt any measures or needed community support, they would be the first people consulted.³⁴

The imams presented their congregations with an education the social value of which was beyond question, and would not urge an education in Mission schools where conversion was part of the hidden curriculum.

- 4.27 Viewed in the context of the political power structure of the city, the imams and the colonial ruling class functioned in terms of a code of conduct typical of the time. A clear understanding existed about where the sphere of influence of the one ended and that of the other began, between the temporal and spiritual. Though this relationship was never formalised as with indigenous tribal chiefs, it was nevertheless legitimated by custom and has persisted into recent times. As teachers of their flocks civil authorities viewed them as positive influences on the moral tone of the city. Increase in their number tended, however to limit the imams as salutary forces over their followers. Members of the white

community were not oblivious to the change in the tenor of public conduct that resulted. Some twenty years before an editor noted the effects of such change and hinted at a re-evaluation of the special relationship:

The Malays of this town, carefully reading our newspapers, educated in our schools, watching the process of political agitation elsewhere, and often appealed to for assistance to them here, have been growing year by year more confident themselves, and have not appreciated the consideration which had been shown them because they are a well-behaved people in so far as they did not interfere with the public peace, or crowd our jails with criminals.³⁵

There is a curious link between reading newspapers, schools, and response to political agitation elsewhere. Some imams may have echoed these sentiments and sensed the manner in which the "consideration" was endangered.

4.28 Perhaps contemporaneously, or soon after the South African Moslem Association became defunct a Mr Arshud Gamiet founded "The Malay Association" also with the educational and social advancement of Cape Town's Muslims in mind. Although a representative of the same social class as Neamatollah Effendi, Gamiet's rationale for the need of this organisation could have been informed by these considerations which evidence presented later will corroborate:

4.28.1 Abdurahman's A.P.O. was overtly a "political" movement and ipso facto, personae non grata with the conservative Muslims of the city:

4.28.2 the Muslims were largely a Dutch-speaking community whereas Abdurahman preferred to conduct the A.P.O. as an organisation of English-speaking people;

4.28.3 Muslims had urgent educational and social grievances that could not receive their due attention in a multi-religious or secular context;

4.28.4 politically, Muslims as pioneers of the city and

environs, needed to reassert those rights such as conducting their own schools which they had long enjoyed.

- 4.29 It could reasonably be argued that Gamiet represented a fundamentalist response to the political dispensation of his day, especially as manifested in the sphere of public education. His was nevertheless a pragmatic, reformist approach to obtain for his community an accommodation that the parameters of State policy in school provision would permit.

Gamiet seemed motivated by these pertinent realities of his time: the general poverty of the Muslims in Cape Town relative to the economic position of the whites.

The changing economic order - expanding commerce and industrialisation - compelled Muslims to integrate the required skills for economic advancement into the curriculum of the traditional religious schools. If the Mission schools could not accommodate all those seeking admission, then a Muslim school on similar lines would relieve the pressure on the existing schools.

Vast numbers of children were on the streets for lack of schools.

- 4.30 As Muslims increased in numbers the complexity of their social problems became more pronounced. According to the 1906 census there were 22 575 Mohammedans in the Cape Colony.³⁶ In the light of previous population surveys the Muslim population of Cape Town and environs constituted some 80% of this number. Therefore the Muslim population of Cape Town proper could have been in excess of 18 000. To illustrate the lack of schools in terms of numbers we have to refer to a speech by Abdurahman after the Cape School Board Act (1905) was passed:

Today (1905) the number of European children (at school) is 64 000 and that of coloured 98 000.

In other words, there are 34 000 more coloured than European children at school. The increase

per cent gives an idea of the rate of increase of European and coloured children... Since 1891 the European population increased by 53 per cent., and the coloured by 58 per cent, and Europeans still formed about 24 per cent of the total population, so that out of every four children born in the Colony one was European and three were coloured. Consequently, if Europeans added 23 000 children to the schools between 1891 and 1904, the coloured should have added 69 000 instead of 58 000 as was stated by Sir Lewis Michell.³⁷

With Cape Town being the Colony's largest urban centre it stands to reason that many of the 9000 children of school age to whom Abdurahman referred were on the streets of this city exposed to a multitude of harmful influences.

- 4.31 White children were not so vulnerable in Cape Town because school accommodation for them had improved to such an extent that compulsory schooling became feasible with the passing of the School Board Act. At the same time racial segregation in the schools became enshrined in law. Dr. T. Muir, the Cape's Superintendent-General of Education thus formalised in law the position of privilege that his predecessor, Dale, had envisaged for the children of the colonists considered to be "European". Revenues gathered from the public at large would finance this educational advantage.

By creating School Boards "it may be said that the education of European children is the chief duty of the School Boards, and the schooling of Non-Europeans is chiefly attended to by missionary churches on a voluntary basis".³⁸ Significantly, Muir's nomenclature, "education" in the case of Europeans and "schooling" in that of Non-Europeans conveyed with brutal candour that the end-product of the two processes would be dissimilar.

Therefore, in terms of Gamiet's rationale (4.28.4) Muslims should rather attend to their own needs in terms of their own

desired society.

- 4.32 With the enactment of the School Board Act (1905) the prospect of a common school system disappeared for those who cherished hopes of schools being the qualisers of the social order in which merit would be the paramount qualification for social advancement.

A comforting thought to Gamiet and associates was that Muslim religious schools were operating in the city at various community-sponsored venues. With State aid these might be modified in curriculum and administration into Muslim mission schools. These could be a means of getting "better education for the children". Time was to prove that Gamiet had the political acumen to gain the imams as his allies in his organisation. His was also a greater popular support than Neamatollah Effendi ever commanded. But he lacked Abdurahman's gifts to bring about the establishment of a Muslim mission school.

- 4.33 In 1910 the Fremantle Education Commission was appointed to enquire into the educational progress of the Cape Province and much time was expended in ascertaining the educational problems of the coloured community. Apropos of this Rev. G. Robinson of the Cape School Board testified to the Commission:

There are hundreds of coloured children in our streets who have no education and have nothing to learn but vice.³⁹

Not only were these children going without schooling but they were also living in squalid surroundings where vice had its own brutalising effects.

Soon after him Mr M.A. Gamiet testified before this Commission on 5 April, 1910. As he was himself a teacher at a religious school since 1902 he was painfully aware how Muslim children were being disadvantaged. For our purposes Gamiet's testimony warrants careful study.

- 4.34 Responding to Fremantle's questions, Gamiet declared that the Malays realised "the need for education", even if it was largely under the aegis of the churches. But Malays were also conducting their own schools and would welcome the State's aid, (presumably on the same basis as the churches were being aided).

He claimed that his charges at the Malay school were being instructed in Arabic and English, but "it was the desire of our people to have the children taught in Dutch as well". This was a crucial point of difference with Abdurahman who, as we shall see later, much preferred English.

Unfortunately, the financial resources of his community did not allow for the employment of teachers qualified to teach the Dutch language. Most Malay children spoke only Dutch as did their working-class parents. In fact, it was the language by which the precepts of Islam were made known to Mosque congregations.

Thus Gamiet was asking for Mother tongue education which the English Mission schools did not provide. The implications of the lexical barrier were probably appreciated but not spelled out. English, a foreign language, perhaps had an intimidating and restrictive effect.

- 4.35 Pointing to the importance of education, Gamiet mentioned that wherever large concentrations of Malays existed they established their own schools: the Peninsula, Port Elizabeth, Kimberley and Johannesburg.

More children in his community attended their religious schools than they did the Mission schools. Some were even withdrawn from the Mission schools for reasons of conscience:

The reason is... that in many cases Malay children are compelled - I really should not say compelled, but I am told this is so - to say they prayers which Christian children say, and that, Malay parents do not like.⁴⁰

(Discrimination and retribution against Muslim children in Mission schools was implicit in the official report of an Inspector of schools in 1922:

Children have been turned away and have been denied the right of education. The school managements at various places have felt it their duty to provide first of all for the children of members of their own denomination, and children of other denominations have been ejected to make room for them.

It is very much to be regretted that the question of religious denomination should intrude into the domain of education.⁴¹⁾

4,36 Fremantle reminded Gamiet of the protection offered by the "conscience clause" in the 1865 Education Act whereby a school child could not be compelled to attend a class for religious instruction. To an indigent parent obliged for lack of alternatives to send his child to the Mission school this civil liberty was meaningless.

Gamiet showed how vulnerable the Muslim child was to expulsion from school (which the State did not compel non-white children to attend) where he was admitted on sufferance and could on any pretext be expelled. Resistance would be unwise

for no sooner does the parent object than the child is dismissed from school, or the child is not taken much notice of by the teacher in future. This has occurred more than once.⁴²⁾

In theory Muslim parents were not obliged in the first instance to send their children to the Mission school of the churches. On the contrary, the School Board Act (1905) made provision for Non-white communities to establish their own non-denominational schools where compulsory school attendance might be implemented

Met die aanname van die Skoolraadwet in 1905 is

'n mylpaal in die geskiedenis van die nie-blanke onderwys bereik: vir die eerste keer kon nie-blankes, wat 'n openbare skool bo 'n sending-skool verkies het nou hul eie onsektariese openbare skole stig. Verder het die Skoolraad-wet selfs neergelê dat die verpligte skoolbesoek vir nie-blankes ingestel word.⁴³

What the law actually declared as a right to compulsory schooling was predicated on the principle of segregation in in schools, the organising capacity of communities and the resources available to build such non-sectarian schools.

In effect this was a meaningless and empty gesture on the part of the legislators.

- 4.37 Given the generally low level of education among parents and the low incomes of most it would take many years, if not generations, before such purposeful organisation and resources would be possible. Churches and religious organisation were still as in the 19th century the primary instruments of collective action for social advancement. It was the place and occasion that mattered in most collective actions. One could even argue that an education divorced from the religious context (non-sectarian) was as yet inconceivable.

In a rigidly divided social order of Whites and Non-whites the church was to the socially disadvantaged the only place where skills of leadership and organising ability of the socially privileged whites were available for purposes of school construction. Here Christian Non-whites were perhaps more fortunate in having expatriate clergymen to lead them, organise their resources and represent them vis-a-vis the authorities. Muslims had to await the emergence of this type of leader to break the lance for them and act in concert with them. A non-sectarian leader for a non-sectarian school construction project was in a climate of strong religious partisanship equally inconceivable.

- 4.38 It was soon evident to the Commission that Gamiet was not

pleading for the type of non-sectarian school that the School Board Act envisaged. Muslim children and their education were to have a moral orientation as well.

Ergo, just as Bible-reading was indispensable to Christian devotions and the conduct of human affairs to be informed by Christian ethics, so Gamiet insisted on Arabic and Islamic instruction in the curriculum of the school he had in mind. Transmission of Islamic culture and values would be the primary motivation for Muslims establishing and maintaining their own schools.

Arabic, the language of the Quran, was the sine qua non of Islamic cultural transmission, and as a curricular component.

When questioned by Commissioner, Rev. Kettlewell, Gamiet maintained that in their schools Malay teachers used Arabic and Dutch as the language media.

- 4.39 Mindful of the anglicisation of all spheres of colonial life, Gamiet made this modest request: if it were possible, the Malays would welcome the appointment of a paid teacher of Dutch in their schools. He displayed a remarkable perspicacity in what in 1910 could have been judged a political prophecy:

Yes, they recognise that Dutch will be an essential thing in this Colony in the future, and therefore, they desire that their children should not only learn English and Arabic but Dutch as well.⁴⁴

Perhaps the rising Afrikaner unity on the eve of the establishment of the Union of the four colonies was proving an object lesson to Gamiet. Of the Afrikaner at that time it was said,

Dominating two colonies and preponderant in a third, the Afrikaner looked upon closer association as a means of obtaining full control of the country.⁴⁵

4.40 All social classes among the Muslim community of Cape Town were affected by the economic and social changes manifested in the city and the lives of the people during the first decade. The place that the dominant class had given to schools and schooling in public life did not escape them. For the "lower social orders" it meant competition with larger numbers of job applicants for work opportunities, and for the affluent it meant preservation of their social status and assets was linked to schooling opportunity. (supra 4.4 and 4.8) A common awareness emerged among the long established community that relative to others they had been too complacent.

While Neamatollah Effendi had lauded education's merits in generalised terms (supra 4.8) and was prominently reported in the city's press in 1903, in 1910 Gamiet was asking through the correct and proper channels, the Education Commission, that the needs of the Muslims be considered. Some promising young Muslims, such as Salie Berdien, had commenced training as teachers.

Berdien, trained at the Cape Town Training College, was to become a close associate of M.A. Gamiet in the Cape Malay Association.

More such teachers would emerge from the Dutch Reformed Church's Battswood Training College and that of the Anglican Church at Zonnebloem.

Jobs had to be created for these teachers. A Muslim teacher's chances of being appointed by the manager-priest at a church school, albeit functioning with the State's aid, were at that time remote. Teacher-training was in fact the only form of higher education locally accessible to non-whites. Practising the profession confronted the Muslim teacher with formidable barriers, because

School managers, who were mostly priests, were largely responsible for the appointment of teachers... the applicant's religion, rather than his education qualifications were taken

into consideration. What tended to count most was the denomination to which he belonged and his willingness to be a Sunday school teacher, catechist, evangelist, organist and to do other church-oriented work.⁴⁶

To offer the Muslim teachers positions in Muslim schools at a competitive rate of remuneration or even at a higher rate meant that the State's aid in any prospective Muslim school as envisaged by Gamiet was essential.

- 4.41 If the Cape's education authorities went by precedent they would have had no other option but to treat Muslims equally in benefitting from the State's disbursement of aid. The principle was already established in 1864. Kollisch refers to the role of P.E. de Roubaix in establishing that Muslims were to be taken into account in the treatment of religious groups:

In the local Legislature the claims are well looked after and cared for, Mr de Roubaix being one of the members of the Upper House. Only as recent as last Session, when the new Education Bill came under consideration it was moved that the clause under which it was provided that instruction in the Christian religion may be given in State aided schools, after the regular school hours, be altered by omitting the word Christian, on the ground that it was an indignity to say that Mohammedans should be precluded from giving instruction in religion. It was argued that if the Parliament taxed Mohammedans they had as much claim upon the revenue as any other class of people.⁴⁷

The word "Christian" was thus expunged from the law by a majority of 15 votes. Thanks to the probity of the legislators the possibility of a Muslim teacher being employed in a Christian Mission school was thereby also established. However, the subjective criteria used by managers were used to circumvent the law that did not prescribe religious affiliation

of teachers as a factor in State funding. Little could be accomplished for raising the levels of education of Muslims by way of the Mission schools, whether to enrol more of them as pupils or to motivate them in academic achievement by obtaining employment there.

4.42 Education as a facet of public revenue disbursement and ipso facto as expression of State policy was central to Gamiet's testimony. It was his first appearance as a public figure and thereafter he was to feature prominently in public life. As was the case with Neamatollah Effendi, Gamiet also seized on the educational needs of the Cape Town Muslims as an expedient for developing an ideology of political reform. Schools such as he aspired to could become the institutional structures to nurture a new generation of Muslims who might in alliance with the other Dutch-speakers, the Afrikaner nationalist, advance their interests as citizens of their country. One might even detect in Gamiet's plea for State-funded teachers of the Dutch language a nascent nationalism inspired by his Afrikaner compatriots. Indeed, prior to Union (1910) the Afrikaner Bond had many sympathisers among the imams of the city who loyally delivered the votes of their enfranchised congregants.⁴⁸ Such protest votes could by Gamiet's reasoning possibly advance the cause of Muslim children's education.

4.43 Steeped as he was in the religious tradition of Cape Muslims, and being himself a teacher in a religious school, Gamiet could not easily deviate politically from the conformity that the imams preferred. Their disposition, understandable but in the political climate not desirable, should be seen in the light of the following observation about Muslims and the civil order:

In all Sunni communities the only social unit recognised by (religious) authority is the family, and a believer is discouraged from forming loyalties to any other group including the tribe. In strict Islamic terms the only other body to which a Muslim belongs is the

brotherhood of the believers - in other words, the Islamic nation. In this important respect Islam has from its inception been not simply a religion, but also a state, and by definition has always had an inherent awareness of the political process. Furthermore, the Islamic state has within it everything required for life, its own assessment of what is important and what is not. The relationship between economic relationships and political power was recognised by Mohammed from the very beginning; he was not only Islam's founder and Prophet, but its very first lawyer and statesman.

But the intellectual void left in society between family and state means that for historical and cultural as well as religious reasons a Muslim will not organise or associate with political parties as readily as his counterpart in Europe.⁴⁹

Perceptive Muslims in Cape Town anxious to raise the level of participation of their community in education needed to rationalise their relations with the mainstream culture. There was no other way to accomplish that than by preparing their children in their own schools. What was required was a transitional agency of socialisation between the home and the secularised social order.

A primary school presenting the conventional curriculum but with an Islamic ethos was such an agency. Whisson contends that whites have moved towards a secular society faster than non-whites because of their greater access to education and economic wealth as well as values that tend towards greater materialism.⁵⁰ This reality had to be faced in any effort at rationalising the relations between the dominant and the subordinate groups. In the latter case the initiative of the "Western" educated and the economically more advanced acting in concert held some promise of success.

- 4.44 It was in populous District Six that the first step was taken towards bringing about the first primary school initiated by the Muslim community.

In the first meeting of the Moslem Education League some businessmen and two young doctors became associated in the provision of a school that would combine the religious and the secular in its curriculum.

The meeting held in January, 1912, elected Dr. A. Abdurahman as the chairman and Dr. A.H. Gool to serve on its management committee.

Abdurahman lived in District Six and represented its voters on the Cape Town City Council. Dr Gool, practising in Hanover Street, District Six, had his residence near to Abdurahman's surgery on the western side of Cape Town.⁵¹ Gool had obtained his education in Egypt and Britain and was fluent in Arabic which was to be a component of the proposed school's curriculum.

Both doctors personified to those who elected them the synthesis of the two cultural entities that comprised the city's Muslim community. They were from respected Malay and Indian families. Abdurahman owed his electoral success to public office to the endorsement he received from the property-owners of both elements. As the driving force behind the success of the enterprise we need to account for the reasons why he was so honoured; why he was so exceptional among his Muslim contemporaries.

- 4.45 Abdurahman hailed from an esteemed Cape Town family. His paternal grandfather, Abdul Jamalee, had been a slave who by dint of exemplary conduct and prudence managed to purchase his freedom, and soon afterwards bought the freedom of his wife, Betsy, as well. Evidently as a thriving greengrocer who traded on the corner of Hope and Roeland Streets, he had in 1862 amassed assets well in excess of £5 000.⁵²

In all probability his funds were partly invested in fixed property thus qualifying him for the municipal and parliamentary

voter's roll at that time. Such stature in the community could well have helped him to obtain for his son an education in Cape Town that other Muslim parents could not afford.

- 4.46 In 1857 Abdul Jamalee sent his son, Abdul Rachman, to study Islam abroad; first for four years in Mecca and then at Cairo's Al Azhar University that he might be trained in Shafi'i religious code of Islam, the dominant code of Cape Muslims. (He must have been followed by others because in 1875 Lady Duff Gordon, then residing in Cairo, invited eight Capetonian students to a dinner). Dorothea Fairbridge relates: "In his turn Abdul Rachman sent his son overseas for his education, but to Scotland instead of Cairo - he is the learned Malay physician, Dr Abdurahman."⁵³

Abdul Rachman was related to the imam of the Main Road mosque in Claremont and prior to his son's departure for England a special religious service was conducted there for the lad's success and wellbeing.⁵⁴ Abdurahman was to show his appreciation years later when he helped to establish a school there.

Of Abdurahman's formal education Venter states blandly:

Dr Abdurahman was born in Wellington in 1872. He received his early education at the Pauw Gedenkskool. In Cape Town he entered the old South African College and was later sent to Glasgow to study medicine.⁵⁵

Abdurahman himself mentions that part of his schooling was at Marist Brothers, a Roman Catholic school. Quite remarkably he was the first and the last Muslim or coloured child to be admitted to these schools. His father could afford the required fees and his dress and demeanour probably matched those of his fellows. His father's influence and religious education could have been powerful formative factors in his life too. Above all, he was spurred by a tremendous drive to learn. A respected old hadji, a friend of Dorothea Fairbridge observed of Abdurahman:

A very clever boy. He knew how to get the wisdom of the Malays and the Christians.⁵⁶

- 4.47 In a magazine profile of Abdurahman his talent and tenacity as a student is recognised by this brief curriculum vitae:

His parents spared no pains to educate him. He attended Marist Brothers College, where he completed his secondary education after which he was admitted to the South African College (now University of Cape Town). Soon thereafter Abdurahman was admitted to Glasgow University. He took the medical degree (M.B.C.M.) in 1893.⁵⁷

While in Scotland Abdurahman was attracted to the daughter of John Cummings James, a solicitor of Glasgow, who was a renowned champion of free and compulsory education for Scottish children.

One can surmise that the work of this man made a lasting impact on the young Abdurahman who returned to Cape Town with a passionate interest in formal education.

He married James's daughter, Helen, who remained a Christian,⁵⁸ but shared his interest in the advancement of education, especially in the establishment of the first primary school for Muslim children.

- 4.48 Upon the formative influences of his life in Cape Town were thus added the impact of a zealous Scottish educational reformer and his equally resolute daughter.

Van der Ross elaborates:

Family influences and education, then, were combined with the enterprise of the East, the broad humanitarian principles of the religion of Islam, and the scientific knowledge of the West.

Added to this were the personal qualities of his mother, a great beauty, and of his Scots wife, Nellie, who had both charm and force of character.⁵⁹

His medical practice at 99 Loop Street, Cape Town,⁶⁰ drew upon a cosmopolitan clientèle, but especially the Cape Muslims and Indian families resident around the many mosques of the BoKaap.

He was soon aware of their many social and political disabilities derived from a lack of schools in the area and would later exert himself to provide one there.

- 4.49 Apropos of the political disabilities he was soon involved in the redress of their grievances by his endorsement of the struggle of Ahmed Effendi, the Turkish teacher's eldest son, to gain a seat in the Cape Parliament.⁶¹

Effendi's quest failed, but Abdurahman's political career had only just begun. It was clear to him - and his detractors! - that the political grievances of the Muslim community could only be addressed by organising them along with other similarly disadvantaged. This was also the contention of Ahmed Effendi who did not confine his appeal for support to Muslims alone.⁶²

- 4.50 When Abdurahman became president of the APO he served also as the editor of its mouthpiece and represented his constituency of District Six voters ably and forcefully in the Cape Town City Council to which he was first elected in 1904. His was not a typical colonial deference of the Non-white towards the privileged whites, as Van der Ross notes with some asperity:

In addition to Abdurahman's overseas education, his marriage to a Scotswoman and his constant contact with White persons in local government and in other affairs in Cape Town gave him an acquaintance among, and easy friendship with, White people. He had as well a readiness - even an eagerness! - to attack White persons who publicly supported discrimination, which few Coloured persons of the time possessed, but which many admired and applauded.⁶³

Basic to his personality traits were a supreme self-confidence,

disarming courtesy and articulateness informed by wide reading and discussion with kindred spirits.

- 4.51 His wife found herself "at the centre of academic and social life" in the city where Abdurahman cultivated the friendship of scholars and writers.

His home in District Six, a stone's throw from Cape Town's historic Castle, was the locale of many fervent discussions.

One group which met there was the Twenty Club. The members met regularly on an informal basis to discuss political and social matters of mutual interest. Dr Louis Herman, the author, remembers meeting at Abdurahman's house on many occasions, along with such people as Professor Eric Walker and Professor Raeburn.⁶⁴

- 4.52 In matters of education he held regular discussions with those teachers such as Harold Cressy whom he inspired to form a teachers' organisation.

Even the chairman of the 1910 Education Commission could have been a guest whose friendship brought Abdurahman into contact with powerful parliamentarians of his day. John Merriman, Cape Prime Minister from February, 1908 to May, 1910, met the urbane medical practitioner in 1906 and became a friend from then onwards.

Merriman met him at the home of a mutual friend, the English-born scholar, Professor Fremantle. Dr Abdurahman touched Merriman with his account of life as an educated Coloured man and described the social prejudices as having worsened, as indeed they had, since the growth of the poor white question had increased economic competition.

In addition racist theories were a current Western aberration; and though Merriman was ashamed of "distaste for colour" (which he

thought a moral failing) he feared miscegenation and saw his revulsion as merely conventional morality.

To him Abdurahman was pathetic, a marginal figure "with European culture and the fatal bar". (Abdurahman was a coloured man).⁶⁵

That they became friends with a mutually high regard was because Merriman was charmed by Abdurahman and persuaded to a favourable disposition less by the colour of his skin than the colour of his mind.

In the last phase of his career Merriman was a tireless champion of the voteless, the neglected, the poor and oppressed... Sometimes he shamed the ministers or the officials into action or retraction and obtained some redress for his clients.

John Dube and Dr Abdurahman were frequent visitors: Merriman certainly compensated, by his courtesy and many acts of intervention, for his earlier prejudice against the doctor.⁶⁶

Friendship was more than just a reciprocation of affection and regard for a fellow man. To Abdurahman it had its utilitarian value as well.

This furthering of self-interest was of immense value to him in the way he defined his relationship with Merriman, especially when his school was launched.

Merriman would, in spite of his strong Christian upbringing, become, under Abdurahman's influence, the patron-in-chief, in all but name of the first Muslim primary school. An association of the name of Merriman with Abdurahman's educational initiative in the interest of his community might well serve as leverage in moving a ponderous bureaucracy or eliciting from a benevolent business and professional community in Cape Town a donation in cash or kind.

An ambitious educational project such as the building of a school required such skills and the abilities "to influence friends and make - money!"⁶⁷

- 4.53 Before Abdurahman no non-white Capetonian raised the voice in protest against the status quo on the strength of the fact that he held an elected office in a statutory body, was esteemed in his community among all classes and creeds, related confidently with officialdom and persons of stature and commanded the attention of the local press. All that he was and represented seemed to be the rewards of his own education and ability to rise up from a demeaned state. Thus Van der Ross contends that Abdurahman personified to the non-whites the most persuasive argument that education was desirable:

Abdurahman came upon the scene just when the glimmerings of education were beginning to take effect, when people were beginning to realise that education could really elevate them and do more for them than basic literacy, as was true in the pre-1900s. Abdurahman himself, as a qualified doctor born of non-white parents in this country, was living proof to the people of the validity of their belief in education.⁶⁸

That Abdurahman came from the Muslim community with its potent conservatism within the main stream culture and its association of schooling with overt evangelisation made his impact all the more remarkable. If he was going to build a school for them they needed to share his hopes and vision of what that school might accomplish. He was moving the education process from the traditional jurisdiction of the imams into the secular sphere of social existence, from a state of living within the religious community to the cultural plurality that Cape Town then represented.

- 4.54 When he addressed the first meeting of the Moslem Education League in District Six his largely middle-class audience must have heard a very businesslike speech that sought to persuade by the logic of necessity rather than one inspired by Quranic

precepts or the Prophetic Traditions which are replete with exhortations to the faithful to seek education.

Curiously, his great gifts of rhetoric never allowed him to disregard the Muslim convention that only the imams as leaders of the community were by training and temperament qualified to quote the Quran. Nor would the thrust of his speeches blur the demarcation of the religious and profane in public affairs. Abdurahman's civic persona would prevail despite his wearing of the black fez that linked him symbollically to the Muslim community.

Van der Ross describes Abdurahman's public-speaking skills as follows:

There was the love of the well-turned phrase, the resounding rhetoric, the quotations, often lines of verse, and the recourse to Biblical sources. It is noticeable that where Abdurahman made a religious reference, it was always from the Bible, never the Koran, which could be because his appeal was addressed so largely to Whites.⁶⁹

A man who dealt professionally with the afflictions of the human body could ipso facto apply the diagnostic skills to the social ills too; if only at its crudist level to look for cause and effect patterns. Among the causes for the afflictions of non-white society were certainly the alienation mechanisms of prejudice, stigmatisation and stereotyping. A Bible-quoting Muslim and university-trained non-white had his unsettling effects in the corridors of power and on the conscience of Merriman in particular.

- 4.55 He could interpret the aspirations of the Muslim community to the dominant White community - and on occasion demystify the theological hierarchy of the Muslims to a curious man of the cloth anxious for information to convey to his class at Abdurahman's alma mater. A teacher at Marist Brothers, Mr Vermeerset, had written to Abdurahman for clarification of the

terms, "Marabout", "Mouliwee (or Moulvi), and "Mullah". Abdurahman replied succinctly:

With regard to your query re a Marabout and a Mouliwee, the former is an African term signifying local preacher generally, a native of Africa, and is usually a man of little intellectual training.

The latter is an Indian term applied to a priest who is competent to expound the Muslim religion.

As a rule he is regarded as a higher authority than a marabout.

A Mullah is a corruption of a Mouliwee and is a term which, as in the case of the mad Mullah, is applied to one who regards himself as a spiritual and temporal leader at the same time.⁷⁰

This letter is cited to illustrate that Abdurahman was mindful of the social convention that Muslim theologians (Moulvis) are trained to speak on matters concerning Islam. Even if he had committed himself to the establishment of a Muslim primary school he would defer to the recognised religious authorities of the Muslims in matters of doctrine. Clearly, Abdurahman could not conceive himself as both spiritual and a temporal spokesman or leader without risking the derision reserved for a "mad Mullah". The imams could in Cape Town interpret Islam to the faithful, he would attend to their social ills in the broad social order. For that he felt himself equipped. Unlike Neamatollah Effendi, Abdurahman did not have insulting innuendos for the traditional leaders of Cape Town's Muslims.

- 4.56 No evidence can be found that he overtly sought the endorsement of the imams in his educational initiative; he was, nevertheless persona grata with them and in District Six could count on their electoral support in his quest for public office. In return his official status and clout could secure for influential Muslim constituents a trading license or tenancy, a waiver of a summons or reduction in rates.

A civic leader so inestimably valuable could not have encountered serious opposition in an educational project that would ostensibly redound to the credit of the Muslim community in his constituency. Abdurahman's modus operandi as a city councillor is described by one writer with disapproval as to the ethical propriety:

Although there can be no denying that Dr Abdurahman did much to uplift the status of the non-whites, and that he possessed phenomenal energy when executing his civic duties - he served on 14 Council committees at one stage - there is little doubt that he was not as Christlike as most of his admirers would believe.

In fact, he seems to have been an important figure in some behind-the-scenes deals to do with Council affairs. He wielded terrific influence on a number of important sub-committees and used to push through favours for unknown persons.⁷¹

To the property-owning and trading middle-class of Cape Town this power was respected and earned for Abdurahman much individual gratitude, valuable municipal votes and even financial support in building a school. He could raise from all colours and creeds the financial support which personal charm and persuasive rhetoric could not alone deliver.

- 4.57 Acquiring land for the erection of a school in District Six in 1912 could have presented problems of cost and location to persons less fortuitously placed in the affairs of the City than Dr Abdurahman.

His special provinces in local government were public health and streets and drainage.⁷² Both these committees allowed councillors access to privileged information regarding the prospects of property purchases in the municipality; especially when dwellings were no longer habitable or maintained to

conform to sanitary standards, or even when streets were to be laid in unpaved and unserviced areas. Perhaps by this means Abdurahman came to know of the Council's intention to sell Lot Q in District Six.

- 4.58 Where he wielded influence and power Abdurahman could effect major administrative reforms. It was under his direction that the municipal departments of health as well as streets and drainage had their infrastructure developed.⁷³

Undoubtedly the British models gave Abdurahman many precedents to adopt or adapt in Cape Town. It is generally conceded that he insisted on merit rather than colour in the senior posts, but he saw the opportunities for jobs for his constituency as well. All he had learned in the municipal power structure could have coloured his judgement of the education for coloured people in various ways. As editor of the APO Journal he had earlier hardly concealed his disdain for the mission school system operated by the churches of the city. His editorial anger was directed at the manifest injustice that the churches were perpetrating against the mission school teachers and their charges:

The pay of our mission school teachers is indeed a disgrace, and it is difficult to see how a civilised government can tolerate such a state of affairs in its schools.

How ministers of religion can have the audacity to ask publicly for the services of any individual at such wages, and at the same time preach happiness, contentment and honesty is difficult to understand.⁷⁴

The ministers of religion were the managers of these schools and were especially vulnerable to Abdurahman's censure because they were white and ostensibly promoting the advancement of an underprivileged community.

But the dominant force of the APO who wrote this in 1911 would two years later himself establish a mission school and serve as

its manager.

- 4.59 Three years after the inaugural meeting of the Moslem Education League the Cape Town property known as Lot Q of the Zonnebloem Estate was transferred by the Deed of Transfer No. 923/1915 in favour of the League.

Dr A. Abdurahman was acknowledged as:

- 4.59.1 Trustee for the time being of the Moslem Education League and the property registered in his name;
- 4.59.2 Chairman of the Committee of management who shall preside at all meetings, and in his absence an acting chairman shall be nominated;
- 4.59.3 Convenor of meetings when he may deem them necessary or expedient.⁷⁵

- 4.59 That such extraordinary powers were vested in the person of Abdurahman might have been explained if the proceedings of the founders' meetings were available.

- 4.60 In 1953 Mr Justice J. Steyn found that there was no record of when the Moslem Education League officially came into existence, who its members were or whether it had a properly adopted constitution. It was also unknown to the judge how or when the Educational Committee of Management mentioned in the deed of transfer was originally appointed or elected. There was no trace of a book of minutes which could have been kept by such a committee, nor was there any record of any general meetings of the Moslem Education League having been held at any time.⁷⁶

What is especially significant is the fact that the proposed school was evidently not intended as an Islamic religious trust property governed by the laws that pertain to this category of possession. Property purchased to serve a religious function or to be identified with the Muslim community was traditionally transferred "in trust for the Mohamedan Community of Cape Town".⁷⁷

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Therefore the inference of Abdurahman's paternalism in this instance cannot be avoided. He alone could preside at meetings and convene them.

- 4.61 The Committee's trust and confidence in Abdurahman could have been informed by his unassailable credentials as a public figure and medical practitioner. By mid 1912 Abdurahman claimed that the building fund stood at an impressive £300 which suggests that the League, under his direction, had succeeded in its purpose. On 16 July, 1912 he addressed a letter to Secretary of the Graaf Trust, South African News Building, to demonstrate its success:

Six months ago, a few Moslems of Cape Town met with the object of starting a school for the Moslem children of Cape Town. The City Council has given them the option of purchase over a building situated in Aspeling Street for the sum of £200. Alterations necessary to convert the building into a school are estimated to cost £200, and the furniture will amount to another £100. In all £500 are required. The Moslems have already collected among themselves £130. We have received from seven European friends the sum of £170 in the form of donations. The total sum collected are almost completed and it is hoped that the school will be opened next term. My committee will therefore be grateful if the Graaf Trust will give us a little financial assistance.⁷⁸

From the contents of this letter of appeal we see that the Moslem League was not a grassroots type of organisation but consisted rather of "a few Moslems" who with their "seven European friends" managed to amass the initial capital to purchase the property. It was therefore essentially a bourgeois effort, the refined upper crust of the District Six Muslim community whose business or professional association with well-disposed Europeans accelerated the collection of the property's price.

This fact and Abdurahman's association inspired further positive responses from philanthropic people who might have disregarded an appeal from less respectable or prominent people. Abdurahman thus received from the Graaf Trust the handsome donation of £5.5.0 which he acknowledged on 1 August, 1912.

- 4.62 Abdurahman's consummate skill as diplomat and fund-raiser found much success among the White Capetonians who exhibited no chauvinism but tended to cherish the Cape liberal tradition of a common humanity, common rights and therefore a caring relationship with the less developed segments of the city.

These people, prominent in commerce and civic life, acknowledged that the prosperity of the city was predicated upon the contributions of diverse elements. In local politics they were aware of Abdurahman, the city father, who served the civic interests regardless of personal gain except to ensure his re-election. He held an influential position within the coloured segment of the community which allowed him to deliver the votes of those politically associated with him, or at least to urge patience and restraint while using the correct channels for redress of their grievances. White politicians appreciated his value at a time when their own power positions required consolidation. Abdurahman befriended them and entertained them at his home.⁷⁹ In gathering funds for his school, Abdurahman would put the principle of quid pro quo to good use.

To illustrate his political adroitness the following is noteworthy:

Political parties sued for his support in elections and rewarded him well! The nature and extent of the rewards can be understood by the following illustration:

At one of the many election campaigns he helped fight for other people in his long career, Abdurahman spoke against a rich white philanthropist, who was standing on the other side. At one

of the election meetings the rich philanthropist heckled loudly: "Last year I gave Abdurahman a big new car for a birthday present and look what he does to me". It was an embarrassing moment for Abdurahman - but it was never reported in the daily press.⁸⁰

He could indeed play the power game and exploit political naivité when it suited him, but thereafter his actions and disposition in the Cape Town City Council redeemed him in the eyes of political foes.

Once his fellow councillors discovered what a useful, able, energetic, cheerful councillor the Doctor was, their prejudice went the way of all prejudice, when knowledge and appreciation come to rule in its stead, and no one became better liked and appreciated than the Doctor.⁸¹

His capacity for being "useful, able, energetic" had its impact on party politicians who owed their creditability in the Coloured community to him.

- 4.63 Given this talent in the power structure of Cape Town and the Union of South Africa Abdurahman had some affluent resources to tap when he needed funds to help education in a substantial manner. One such source was Dr Leander Starr Jameson, Progressive Party Prime Minister of the Cape Colony (1904 - 1908).⁸² An appeal to help the proposed school was addressed to "Sir Starr L. Jameson". Abdurahman was making Jameson the offer of becoming the chief patron and benefactor of an institution that might bear witness to Jameson's altruism and regard for a loyal section of the population long after his political role had expired. Because of the ingratiating and suave tenor of the letter it is cited verbatim:

28th August 1912.

Dear Dr. Jameson,

Mr Hennessy when handing to me your generous contribution of £100 towards the Moslem school, intimated that you would be glad to hear what progress we were making.

The building will probably be completed in a fortnight's time and will provide accommodation for at least two hundred children. The total cost will be approximately £500, excluding school furniture which will amount to another £150.

The Education Department will contribute half of the cost of the furniture, so that we have to find £575.

Up to the present, we have collected £450 leaving a balance still to be raised of £125. I am writing to Mr Hennessy to inspect the school and he will doubtless report to you.

The property as you know still belongs to the City Council and though they intend to charge us a nominal rent, yet one never knows what change might come about in the Council especially when the unification of the several municipalities is an accomplished fact. The Council has consented to sell the property for £175 provided that we take transfer at once.

Now the school will probably be opened in early October and as we intend to make education free for at least twelve months, any money which we will raise among Cape Town Moslems after that date, will go towards paying the teachers' salaries and the general upkeep of the school.

Furthermore I have approached all the Europeans who were likely to assist us. There is therefore little likelihood of our being able to purchase the property, unless we do so prior to opening the school.

Now Doctor, you very generously contributed £100 for which, needless to say, the Moslems are very thankful. I think you should buy the property for us by giving us another £75, this together with your previous donation will be the full purchase price of the property. It will be inserted in the Deed of transfer that you purchased the property for the Moslem children of Cape Town. It would be a lasting monument to your name and Moslems throughout the whole of South Africa will remember you with gratitude as long as there are children to be educated; and human nature being what it is, the political deeds of most men living today will long be forgotten when Moslem children will still be attending the school. Should we require money for any extension afterwards, I shall appeal to Moslems outside Cape Town as well as South Africa. But in the mean time, I can only look to you for help.

As I have said the school will probably open in October, so there will hardly be any time to receive a reply from you before that date, but as I am sending Mr Hennessy a copy of this letter, he would quite understand what you mean if you cable to him the words "purchase school". I hope you will pardon me troubling you so much but I have endeavoured to raise the required amount here in Cape Town and while I am compelled in the end to appeal to you, I do so with the conviction that you will not refuse our request.

With kind regards and trusting that your health is improving,

I remain,

Yours very faithfully 83

4.64 If it is noted that Abdurahman had originally estimated the total cost of the school as £500 (supra 4.61) then Jameson's contribution that came via Mr Hennessy constituted 20% of the required sum. A substantial contribution indeed. In July he had written to the Graaf Trust that the Council wanted £200 for the property, but in August he mentions the sum of £150 and the amount collected as £450. Many contributions came from "Europeans who were likely to assist" and that could account for the increase of £150 above the amount mentioned in July. Despite these inconsistencies of the property's cost, the cogent argument, the persuasive tone and subtlety that is courteous but not quite sycophantic, speak volumes for Abdurahman, the scholar and the gentleman. Jameson was to him a prosperous political ally whose endorsement of the school project was axiomatic and who could be relied on to do what was his manifest duty.

Such a flourish of philanthropy whereby Jameson would meet the outstanding costs would have been wildly optimistic and saved Abdurahman much time-consuming fund-raising effort. He was disappointed that the cable "purchase school" never reached Mr Hennessy. In Cape Town other benefactors had to be found.

4.65 Prominent commercial firms and fellow city councillors responded to Abdurahman's appeal. Neither Jew nor Gentile escaped Abdurahman's exhortations in aid of the school for Moslem children as the following list of donors indicates:

Councillor Hyman Liberman	£5	
Councillor Pentz	£2.2s	
Sir Frederick Smith	£10	
C.H. Van Zyl	£10	
Mr Chiapinni	£10	
Messrs Hepworths	£5	
" Stuttafords	£10	
" United Tobacco Co.	£10	
" Cuthberts	£5	
" J. Hill & Son	£5	84

There was much good will towards Abdurahman that could be demonstrated by way of donations and the above sample of donors shows that his "European friends" in Cape Town found merit in his appeal. His esteem among them also carried weight.

4.66 Within the Muslim community itself Abdurahman spared no effort to obtain the required funds. He would not trust human nature "being what it is" by simply relying on the impact of his appeal. A Mr Bean was engaged as his official collector and sent as far afield as Paarl for a promised donation, each of which was faithfully acknowledged. As the election campaign manager would send out his agents to bring the voters to the polling station, so did Abdurahman construe every donation as a vote of confidence in his candidature in philanthropy. Moneys pledged to him could be paid in instalments, from Dr A.H. Gool's £10 to the single shilling he obtained from a struggling Mr Azhar Ali for an agreed number of months.⁸⁵

Every personal acknowledgement must have endeared the Doctor to his supporters and generated even greater endorsement for his project.

4.67 Having a shrewd grasp of folkways that could be crucial to commercially successful endeavours, Abdurahman knew the opportune times for Mr Bean to call at businesses or homes for optimal results. As businessmen mindful of the Islamic injunction to donate to charity as a cardinal principle of faith, especially after the Friday congregational prayers, the devout Indian donors were approached on Friday afternoons. A meritorious religious act prior to the rush of the weekend shoppers might well have tipped the scale of fortune for the anxious shop-keeper or vendor in a highly competitive trading area like District Six.

Abdurahman's school project would benefit from this disposition.

A medical practitioner with long experience among the working-class of the city knew that the promptness of account settlement was directly related to the close coincidence of claims and the receipt of remuneration. Thoughtfully, Mr Bean was instructed to claim the instalment as soon as the weekly food supply had been bought.

In a letter to a Mr Noordien serving on the school's Committee of Management Abdurahman conveyed details of his collection

drive but intimated that it was the relatively more prosperous Indians, the independent traders, that interested him most as donors:

I am also taking the liberty of forwarding you one list for the names of people willing to contribute 1/- (one shilling) per month. The first contribution comes due this week. We intend to send a collector round to Indians on the first Friday of the month and to Malays on the first Sunday. I trust you will be able to give us a nice long list of Indians who are willing to give us 1/- per month.⁸⁶

Although he aimed at the Muslim community in this fund-raising effort, Abdurahman was realist enough to know that responses to charitable appeals are class specific. It would have been erroneous to assume that the Indians and Malays were Muslims and ipso facto responsive to his appeal in equal measure. Thanks to his position in the city's power hierarchy the Indian traders were exhibiting enlightened self-interest in donating.

- 4.68 After sending out hundreds of letters of appeal and acknowledgements of money received Abdurahman personally supervised the alteration of the buildings. He secured from the Cape School Board Secretary, Mr A. Elliot, school furniture from a defunct school for white children in Constitution Street.⁸⁷

He could then turn his attention to the ceremonial opening which had to be a memorable occasion. Someone who had done white politicians several important favours needed to have his help reciprocated.⁸⁸ The last Prime Minister of the Cape Colony as the main speaker would convey to all the importance of the occasion, the political clout of Abdurahman and, by way of association, facilitate future fund-raising.

- 4.69 John X Merriman, the most important English statesman in the Cape Colony before Union in 1910, was invited per letter dated 23 January, 1913 to be the distinguished speaker at the formal opening.

Abdurahman with an eye on the politician's barometer forecast a fair weather event: "I feel sure that the Moslem people will appreciate very much your action should you consent to perform the ceremony".⁸⁹

Only an acclaimed politician like Abdurahman could take such a liberty in the name of the "Moslem people". This was a significant departure from the Cape social convention that the imams had this prerogative, and a watershed event in that education for Muslim children was moving into the sphere of secular affairs. A white politician, but the son of a distinguished Anglican missionary nonetheless, would inaugurate the new era where education could be the means to the synthesis of "the wisdom of the Malays and the Christians" which Abdurahman personified, and which, he and Merriman, would that day symbolise. (supra 4.46)

- 4.70 Merriman's acceptance of the invitation was major coup for publicity-conscious Abdurahman that had to be made known in all of Cape Town and beyond.

Accordingly a letter dated 24 January was despatched to the editor of the "South African News" asking that the mouthpiece of Merriman's party publish the following promptly:

The Hon. John X Merriman has consented to open on Monday, the 27th inst. at 4.15 p.m. at 117 Aspeling Street, a new school for Moslem children. It is the first school of its kind in South Africa to come under the direct supervision of the Government Education Department.⁹⁰

The chairman of the Moslem Education League had much to be proud of for the distinction that his school had in the history of education in South Africa. He had obtained de jure recognition of Islam as a religious and cultural force in the community and had simultaneously made a significant political statement: education for coloured children need not be in the Christian context only, and by extension the products of his

school would demonstrate that Christian and Western were mutually exclusive concepts.

His school would be a modern educational institution worthy of being supervised, as were the other schools of the Cape, by the publicly-funded education authority. But no record could be traced of the school's registration and/or addition to the list of Government -aided schools.

- 4.71 Curiously, this event is not mentioned in Merriman's biography but it is clear that Abdurahman had not previously made a request that he address a gathering of Muslims and their wellwishers. As a segment of the coloured community his contact with them was at most cursory. In 1906 Merriman had vented his spleen on the Doctor and coloured people when he confided to Smuts:

May I, without offence, advise you to be cautious with Dr Abdurahman. He is himself a pathetic figure with European culture and the fatal bar of colour but the men whom he represents never appeal to me much.⁹¹

- 4.71 Seven years later Abdurahman had redeemed himself in the estimation of Merriman and some acknowledgement was certainly his due. The opening ceremony would be an auspicious occasion because, "He enjoyed his Coloured meetings and learned a great deal from them, as a man and as a politician".⁹²

He was not to sever his links with the school thereafter, for in December 1913 Mrs Nellie Abdurahman, secretary of the Ladies Committee of the school, presented him with a progress report in a letter and asked him "for a little fruit, no matter how little" to be sold at the school's bazaar.⁹³ Abdurahman assumed his benefactor's sustained interest in the innovative school.

- 4.72 Arabic was going to be a curriculum component of this school because Abdurahman wished to make the language intelligible to Moslem children rather than one learned by rote for ritual

devotions. In another context and on another occasion Merriman had expressed similar sentiments when school language medium was debated in the Cape Parliament:

Nothing is more vicious in our system than to teach the (young) child - whether English, Afrikaner or African - like a parrot in a language that conveys nothing to his mind.⁹⁴

English was what Abdurahman preferred for the school's language medium, but he could not tolerate that Moslem children learned Arabic without more than a ritual use for it. Educationists generally regard rote learning as characteristic of conservative societies, more so if that society was being exposed to a process of rapid urbanisation.⁹⁵ Rote learning by Muslim children in Cape Town could also be expected because their religious education was intended for ritual worship. Abdurahman clearly wished to modernise religious teaching to allow for the easier assimilation of the school's children into the main stream culture without sacrifice of their own values and beliefs.

This ideal was reflected in the manner in which Abdurahman constituted the school's first teaching staff.

4.73 With the expertise of Dr A.H. Gool, who had studied Arabic in Cairo, at his disposal he made every effort to secure the services of a competent Arabic teacher to be the first principal of the first school with an Arabic name in Cape Town. It was to be known as the Rahmaniyyeh Institute. (The significance of his choice of name will be considered later).

After the first Inspection Report of the school was submitted to Abdurahman, the manager of the school, he was constrained to write to the Cape Education department. Arabic instruction was in the manager's opinion not an area on which the inspector was competent to pass judgement:

I have carefully read yours of 22 March, P.S./

241/13 with reference to Arabic instruction in the Rahmaniyeh school. If we were at present to discontinue giving Arabic instruction to those in sub-standard A, I feel sure that irreparable harm will be done to the school.

It takes a considerable time for the child to be able even to read Arabic, and for that reason it is perhaps well to begin as early as possible so as not to interfere much with the ordinary school subjects afterwards. The Arabic instruction in a Government-aided school like Rahmaniyeh Institute is new in South Africa, and naturally requires a good deal of explanation.⁹⁶

- 4.74 In the same letter Abdurahman mentioned that he had arranged an appointment with the Superintendent-General of Education when their discussion was interrupted by an apparently unscheduled visit by the former Primer Minister, John X Merriman. Abdurahman gives no date for this event in the letter but it seems highly likely that the occasion was when the granting of Government-aid was being considered before the school was formally opened. Merriman's arrival seems very fortuitous and his familiarity with Abdurahman in the presence of the Superintendent-general of Education was certainly not lost on the latter. Abdurahman suggested that he would have outlined the Arabic course structure then but another appointment was needed for himself and the Arabic teacher to remove all uncertainty:

I shall consider it a very great favour if the Superintendent-General would grant myself and the Arabic teacher an interview before my committee meets next week, so that we might discuss the whole matter with a view to meeting the wishes of the Superintendent-general before we report to our committee. It is impossible for me to explain in a letter everything with reference to the Arabic instruction.⁹⁷

It can be appreciated that Abdurahman had thoroughly done his

homework with regard to Arabic language instruction and could state unambiguously that unless given the freedom to proceed along his own lines, "I feel sure that irreparable harm will be done to the school". Indeed the uniqueness of the school would be sacrificed. Circumstantial evidence can be produced to show that Abdurahman's certainty of his case rested on his acquaintance with the work of a foremost scholar in the field of Arabic language instruction.

- 4.75 A photograph reproduced here on the following page shows Abdurahman in the company of Maulana Muhammed Ali and his brother, Maulana Shaukat Ali of India. Mahatma Ghandi, for whom Abdurahman had a great admiration, was acquainted with these Islamic scholars, and could have recommended Muhammed Ali's book while staying with the Abdurahman family.⁹⁸ In a profile about Mohammed Ali as an educationist it is noted:

As a good educationist he had formulated a comprehensive education scheme which he got published in the form of a brochure entitled "A scheme of Studies For National Muslim Educational Institutions in India".⁹⁹

Abdurahman's need for a blue-print was thus provided. Accordingly he insisted on an early acquisition of reading skills (supra 4.73) which, in the light of the following makes sense:

He (Maulana Mohammed Ali) made the reading of Quran compulsory for all students and also understanding it through translation of the Arabic text, in Urdu or any other vernacular, printed between the Arabic lines in the holy book.

Later on the students had to learn speaking and writing Arabic as well as through the modern method of Direct Teaching in which gestures, teaching aids and the language itself are used without excessive use of the mother-tongue. This would enable the Muslim students to understand and practise their faith and make



With the Compliments of Dr. A. ABDURAHMAN, M.P.C., 119 Loop Street, Cape Town

LEFT TO RIGHT :

MAULANA SHAUHAT ALI

Councillor Dr. A. ABDURAHMAN, M.P.C.

MAULANA MOHAMED ALI

them morally perfect so that they could become missionaries of Islam.¹⁰⁰

- 4.76 India and its problems of modernisation had a strange fascination for Abdurahman, perhaps because it was part of the British Empire, but especially because of the similarity of some of its problems with those in South Africa. Muslims in both countries had to come to terms with the demands of economic and social change, and in both instances had to define their relationship as part of a plural society in which they were a cultural minority.

An Arabic language instruction system designed for such a situation offered exciting possibilities in Cape Town.

Therefore, the school's need was for an Arabic teacher with a command of English.

- 4.77 Evaluation of the effectiveness of instruction or the competence of the Arabic teacher, was in Abdurahman's opinion, hardly a matter about which the educational bureaucracy of Cape Town could confidently proceed. His choice of the teacher was, under the circumstances, justified.

With his characteristic meticulous care Abdurahman satisfied himself that his appointee measured up to the task and argued persuasively that the Education Department should endorse his decision:

With regard to Mr A.T. Gamieldien, the Arabic teacher, I may say that he received his preliminary education at Zonnebloem College.

He then went to the Nasriah Public school, Cairo, for five years. This is a modern school and the very best in Egypt. Dr Gool, who was also educated there, passed his London matric a few months after his arrival in London.

Mr Gamieldien passed his fourth year at the Nasriah school, which Dr Gool tells me is equal to standard six. For four years afterwards he

devoted all his time to the study of the Arabic language at the Al Azhar (University) and received further private tuition in Arabic.

He is one of the best Arabic scholars at present in South Africa, besides having received a good general education including English.¹⁰¹

Subsequently the appointment was confirmed but for purposes of professional recognition in terms of the existing code of evaluating qualifications, Mr Gamieldien's Arabic training received no credit. His salary had to be paid by the Moslem Education League.

- 4.78 On 29 January, 1913, Abdurahman advised the Education department that the school's staff had been constituted as follows:

Herewith I am forwarding forms notifying that Mr Ahmed Gamieldien and Miss Rukea Dollie have been appointed principal and assistant respectively to the Moslem School at 117 Aspeling Street.

The committee have also appointed Mr Abdullah Taha Gamieldien Arabic instructor at the salary of £6 per month for the first six months and after that at the rate of £7 per month.

As the Arabic teacher will devote his full time purely to Arabic instruction my committee hope that the Department will pay at least half of his salary.

The religious instructions are given outside school hours altogether.¹⁰²

In response to Circular 38 of the Cape Education Department, Abdurahman furnished information about the school's staff on 5 December, 1913:

STATEMENT

SCHOOL	TEACHER	GOVERNMENT GRANT p.a.	LOCAL CONTRIBUTION
Rahmaniyeh Institute	A.Gamieldien (Headmaster)	£64	£32
	Mrs Salida	£40	£20
	Miss Dollie	£33.6.8	£16.13.4
	Miss Wesley	£36	£18
	A.Gamieldien (Arabic Teacher) ¹⁰³	-	£72

An administrative precedent would have been set if the Education Department were to have paid for a religious teacher whose duties did not involve any routine educational tasks nor were they subject to departmental supervision.

Therefore the above table shows the entire cost of employment was borne by the resources of the management committee, partly derived from school fees.

4.79 Costs were proving so onerous that each month an extra £5 had to be found to meet the salaries account. "To keep the school going", said the manager, "we require a good deal of assistance. The Cape Moslems have supported the school very well, but they are poor and we are now compelled to look for assistance outside".¹⁰⁴

According to the school's first financial statement submitted for the period January, 1913 to 30 June, 1913, the income was £122.17.3½, while its expenses amounted to £218.10.5. To Abdurahman the shortfall of £95.13.1½ was most disconcerting given the lack of accommodation and the great demand for a place in the school.¹⁰⁵ The greatest expense was the salary of the Arabic teacher.

4.80 Arabic instruction the most important curricular aspect engaging the manager and which he felt a special need for his interest. Primers or graded books like English readers were not locally available. An innovative and thrifty Abdurahman charged the teacher with producing his own; "for that purpose we have bought a 'Roneo Duplicator'", he announced to the

Arabic books whatever.

I shall be glad, therefore, if you could put me in communication with some firm either in England or Egypt who would supply us with the book.

Under separate cover I am sending you several copies of the A.P.O. of which I am the editor and I shall be glad if you will kindly put me on your exchange list if it is possible.¹⁰⁷

Only someone with a clear insight into the problem of teaching could have been so precise as to the nature of the tool he lacked. Even if such books were to be imported - an exercise quite beyond the school's resources- Abdurahman wanted them to bring his school's Arabic instruction to the level of efficiency he insisted upon.

- 4.82 Another interview was soon arranged between Dr Abdurahman and the Superintendent-General of Education for a grant-in-aid in respect of the Arabic teacher's post. As no minutes of the encounter between them is known to exist, we could reasonably infer that a "gentleman's agreement", a special dispensation, was reached and a precedent set.

M.A. Gamiet's appeal to the Fremantle Commission (supra 4.38) in 1910 seemed to have been realised because:

- 4.82.1 the formal recognition of a Mission school for Muslim children was granted to the Rahmaniyyeh Institute as Cape Provincial Administration Class B School from 1 January, 1913;
- 4.82.2 Arabic joined the official languages of English and Dutch as curricular components;
- 4.82.3 State-aid was granted on conditions comparable to those for the Christian Mission schools.¹⁰⁸

At Abdurahman's school English would be the only medium of instruction. Gamiet had wished for Dutch, the language spoken by most Malays of Cape Town, to be the medium of instruction as was always the case in the traditional school. Abdurahman

education authorities. Abdurahman, the editor of the APO journal, was au fait with printing techniques. RahmaniyeH Institute was therefore the first school for coloured children to use this educational aid. Conscious of the historical significance of the event he submitted with much satisfaction a few sheets to the department as proof "that he (the Arabic teacher) is quite competent for his work". Official prescriptions regarding the amount of time allocated for Islamic religious instruction would be scrupulously followed, never at the expense of the regular academic programme. The plea for a grant towards the Arabic teacher's salary was reiterated.¹⁰⁶

- 4.81 Nothing but the best was required for RahmaniyeH's Arabic classes and that would be part of the leverage Abdurahman intended to sway the education authorities to a favourable response to his plea for a grant.

To that end he despatched letters to the Secretary, Al Hilal Library, Faggleh Street, Cairo, enquiring after a catalogue of Arabic primers "especially for infants". A similar request sent to a Mr Duse Mohamed of 158 Fleet Street, London, provided more specifications of his needs, but added a little gift as well. The Savour-faire of Abdurahman as a diplomat shines through the following letter:

Although a perfect stranger to you, I trust you will not for that reason refuse to grant us the assistance that I am asking herein.

At present we have a small school for the Moslem children of Cape Town, the only school in the Cape Colony (sic) under the Government.

Practically the whole of the instruction is given in English, but half an hour is allocated for Arabic instruction.

We are desirous of obtaining a little book, one suitable for children just beginning to read Arabic. It must contain a small vocabulary so as to enable the pupils to do some simple translation from Arabic into English.

We have no such books here. Indeed, we have no

Arabic books whatever.

I shall be glad, therefore, if you could put me in communication with some firm either in England or Egypt who would supply us with the book.

Under separate cover I am sending you several copies of the A.P.O. of which I am the editor and I shall be glad if you will kindly put me on your exchange list if it is possible.¹⁰⁷

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perceived of Dutch having some unfortunate associations of inferiority in the social context of Cape Town.

- 4.83 In his insistence upon English as the medium of instruction Abdurahman was showing more than a preference for the language of international trade and science: he was making a political statement that the school's products must be prepared for the language spoken by the dominant class of the city.

It was also an ideological statement revealing a penchant for British culture that the English language would promote in the school.

An explanation for Abdurahman's language preference is offered by Van der Ross:

... Abdurahman was influential as a public speaker in that he always spoke English, his command of Afrikaans being slight, as was his respect for that language.¹⁰⁹

Much of Abdurahman's anti-Dutch sentiment derived from his political campaign as president of the APO against the franchise policies of the former Boer republics and his fears that this ascendant section of the White population would extend their pernicious influence into the Cape as well.¹¹⁰

- 4.84 Rahmaniyyeh's successful launching evoked greater admiration for Abdurahman throughout South Africa where Muslims were resident: they also sought the modernisation of their traditional schools. In March 1913 a Mr M.S. Amoes of Kimberley sought Abdurahman's advice on establishing a similar school there.

His letter elicited this response:

If I may be allowed to express an opinion it is that in the forward step which you contemplate taking, I trust you will not omit to give the children an English education as well as religious training. In daily life it is

becoming more and more essential for a boy to be able to read and write, and I hope that your committee will not lose sight of that aspect of the child's education.¹¹¹

Here Abdurahman modestly propounds pragmatism as a relevant education for the changing socio-economic conditions in which "English education" is more desirable. Implicit in the advice is acceptance of Abdurahman's own political realism whereby an "English education" makes for an enhanced social effectiveness in a social order of British political hegemony. Language is, after all, culture specific.

Embourgeoisement through an "English education" was indeed Abdurahman's personal culture experience. It could reasonably be inferred that his command of English drew him inexorably to the Christian coloured middle-class found in the APO as well as the Indian traders and professional persons who cherished their links with British India. Within the context of Cape Town society Dutch, or more precisely, its peculiar Cape patois, had some unfortunate connotations and colour-caste associations.

4.85 For Abdurahman Dutch also had too much of an association with the period of slavery and the slave mentality that subsequently he too had to contend with as a political figure in Cape Town. An "English education" was a strategy for counteracting the following aspects of racism that socially ambitious coloured people encountered when they wished to "pass for White":

The process of passing for White is made feasible, in the first place, by the fact that the cultures of White and Coloured peoples are very similar, though there are differences, such as the Mohammedan religion of the minority, are obvious. Also obvious is the use of Afrikaans as a home language. The pass-White will often adopt English as his first language, but if he does not he will expunge from his vocabulary words and phrases which can be identified as belonging specifically to the Coloured argot.

Equally obvious is the relative poverty of the Coloured people, and with it the rumbustious way of life which seems to be associated with low-status groups the world over. This the aspirant must relinquish.¹¹²

In a rigidly stratified social order in which power and social status are crucial ascriptive criteria reinforced by a segregated education system those physically resembling the dominant group move more easily upwards if they command the language of dominating group. This had facilitated the assimilation of immigrants from Europe no matter how swarthy in appearance.

Covertly, Abdurahman, in fostering an English education, was probably seeing a means thereby to social acceptance and assimilation, to a rejection of subservience and fatalism. This was possibly a motivation, albeit secondary, in the establishment of the school by Abdurahman and his associates.

Apropos of his letter to Mr Amoes, Abdurahman also mentioned the growing need for literacy which he could not divorce, given the above rationale, from "English education". His order of educational priorities as a "forward step" places "religious training" lower than "English education".

- 4.86 To make the school an exemplary educational facility Abdurahman sought the expert counsel of Prof. F. Clarke of the South African College, and wrote to him on 12 May, 1913:

I have been very anxious to meet you at the school so that, if possible, we may put into practice with the beginning of next quarter suggestions that you offer.

I know that you are extremely busy judging from the interesting articles that are appearing in the press; nevertheless, I hope you will be able to visit our school before this session closes.¹¹³

(The articles to which Abdurahman refers here were later compiled in a book entitled, "Essays in the Politics of Education").

A politician passionately involved in education as Abdurahman was might have read these articles avidly. That he found them "interesting" suggests a sustained interest in the hope of applying their contents within the context of his own school, its ethos and its relation to the broader society.

As president of the APO education was indeed his forte when he inveighed against the many injustices that the contemporary education system for coloured people as citizens and tax-payers perpetrated.

- 4.87 Making speeches of resounding eloquence at the APO conferences on contemporary education was aimed at the long terms objectives of his idealism, but in the short term, the school in District Six was concrete proof of his political bona fides. Some dearly held notions of what a good education should consist in could be implemented there. Abdurahman had worked indefatigably from the time the Moslem Education League was inaugurated in January 1912 to the opening of the school as a Government-aided Class B school in 1 January, 1913.

Political friends in the white community remembered political favours with singular generosity. An inventive fund-raiser, Abdurahman used every legal tactic, every politician's trick to meet his financial commitments from the business community's philanthropy. His letter of appeal and the employment of a paid full-time collector testify to his determination to obtain the funds required. He was 43 years old when the school opened; driven by a great fund of enthusiasm and vigour, he was the major fund-raiser, public relations officer, building-construction supervisor and negotiator with various echelons of officialdom. An apparently overawed committee seemed to rubber stamp his decisions or to condone every initiative. Abdurahman was demonstrating his conception of what a school manager was. Hundreds of collecting lists were circulated to gather the thin stream of shillings from the working-class on Sundays, and the

Indian traders were bound to their pledges that the Moslem children might have a school where the tender subjects of the King might get "an English education" and the required "religious training" for a balanced citizenry. Humbler folk offered their labour to work as masons and plasterers.¹¹⁴

- 4.88 A community leader who could involve such a diversity of social elements in bringing into existence a school but who did not confide his thoughts of that experience to a biographer or a diary compels the researcher to make certain deductions about his actions. One significant action upon the completion of the school was the choice of its name. The lack of administrative records noted by the judge in 1953 when the legitimacy of its management was contested in court, does not allow confirmation of a relevant discussion on this topic. We learn by way of a letter to the education authorities:

The school, I am directed to say, will in future be known as the Rahmaniye Institute.¹¹⁵

Every Muslim Mission school founded by Abdurahman was termed by him an "institute" which the dictionary describes as "an organisation founded to promote some cause such as education" and "the buildings used by such an organisation".¹¹⁶

In District Six this was indeed a grandiose name for a school but it was the realisation of a great ambition to its first manager whose ideas about education were beyond the utilitarian contemporary conceptions of mission school education with which the coloured community had to contend.

"Rahmaniye" could have been derived from the Arabic description of God, viz., Al Rahman, the Merciful and Beneficent Creator.¹¹⁷

- 4.89 The school could even have been named because it was to be for a long suffering class of people, the toilers of Cape Town for whom Abdurahman often raised his voice when he perceived their interest to be threatened.

It is a rather unusual form of spelling to render the school's

as Rahmaniye, but this was probably inspired by the Egyptian tradition of using the French spelling form in the Latin script. Dr Gool's influence herein cannot be discounted.

- 4.90 Rahmaniye Institute was clearly intended by Abdurahman to be a modern and modernising establishment where Cape Town's Muslim children would benefit from the formative influences of Islam and English culture. Of that the manager himself and Dr Gool a co-founder were living examples.

Yet, the school might have been conceived as Abdurahman's personal memorial, bearing a name derived from his own. Islamic custom is to name a child according to a Quranic attribute of God. Thus God is, inter alia, Al Rahman, and a servant of the Merciful Creator is named Abdu Rahman:

The teachings of Mohammed greatly influenced the names given to his followers. (Mohammed advised) "The best names given in the sight of God are, Abd'Allah (servant of God), Abdu'r-Rahman (the servant of the Merciful One)"¹¹⁸

Mindful of the above Prophetic tradition, Abdurahman's grandfather, the Cape slave, named his scholarly son, Abdul Raghman, and he in turn named his eldest son by "the best names": Abdullah Abdurahman. Cape Town's Muslim doctor-cum-educationist would perpetuate his memory by the association of his name with the city's first Muslim primary school - Rahmaniye.

- 4.91 Although driven by his ideal to establish this school to the point of badgering everyone he encountered in his political or professional life for donations, Abdurahman could display a moving compassion to the indigent.

Rahmaniye was to be first and foremost a school rather than a profitable enterprise, even to a manager who husbanded its resources with the same care as an accountant. An unemployed parent, Mr Ismail Jackson, of 63 Commercial Street, Cape Town received this reassurance regarding his child's fees:

With regard to your son, Gazant, I am sorry to hear that you are not able to send him to school at present.

But if you will send him with this letter to the teacher on Monday, he will be able to attend the school without paying any fees for the next three months until you have work.¹¹⁹

The above corroborates Abdurahman's known concern for the poor in his ward, the unemployed and the malnourished. Van der Ross cites an occasion when an insensitive city council wished to vote money for municipal concerts to be staged in District Six that the culturally deprived might be exposed to the benefits of European music. In incensed Abdurahman declaimed against such appalling civic ignorance: "District Six did not want music; it wanted food".¹²⁰

4.92 No fools, even the city fathers, were suffered gladly. Much of what Abdurahman learned in governing a city went into his management style in governing the Rahmaniye Institute. To get the job done with the least cost or delay caused him to offend persons who did not share his sense of urgency or seriousness. His detractors in public life accused him of being an autocrat.¹²¹

Constitutionally, the manager of Rahmaniye was granted autocratic powers (supra 4.59) as the chief executive officer. His drive and competence, his political influence and his ability to dominate were considerable to those he would lead. Although involved in an educational project for "poor Moslem children" Abdurahman never deferred to the imams of Cape Town - he did not need them.

They might have been pointedly excluded for the nature of school management was hardly within their repertoire of skills.

Officially Rahmaniye was a Mission school and traditionally such schools were administered by the priests, the most educated men of the coloured parishes. Often they were the target of Abdurahman's strongest censure because they were assumed to be men of principle and stature. Having a different motivation in providing a school and a different constituency to serve, he

was going to have a different management style, autocratic and patriarchal. Even in this context the following observation has a poignant relevance:

Yet, while Abdurahman kept to his principles, he remained a realist. He remained convinced to the end, that if he was to serve his people who so desperately needed to be uplifted, he had to be in a position of influence.¹²¹

To be sure, he sought such positions of influence or had them thrust upon him, whether in the Cape Town City Council, the African Political Organisation or on the periphery of the White power structure where "Throughout his political career he was the S.A.Ps (South African Party's) special shadow man on the 'Coloured Problems'".¹²²

- 4.93 In the same year that he founded the Rahmaniye Institute and faced the burdens of management, he was also instrumental in establishing Cape Town's first high school for coloured children as a State school.¹²³

This was another persona of Abdurahman in action (in the Jungian sense). He was the leader of a deputation of "coloured parents", non-sectarian and public-spirited.¹²⁴ Lest he be said to foster Muslim interests to the detriment of others, he was also concerned about the broader community, especially the middle-classes of all religious persuasions whose educational aspirations he was committed to advance.

- 4.94 No hard evidence exists that he urged ambitious Muslim youths to avail themselves of the teacher training facilities at comparatively lower cost than university education. There is circumstantial evidence that his own relatives who were teachers were assured of posts at schools where he served as manager. The first teaching assistant at Rahmaniye was related to him, she was a cousin on his mother's side. Later he was to find teaching posts for his nephews as well:

In 1931, Mr A. Abdurahman, a nephew of Dr A.

Abdurahman, and a brother of "Sonny" Abdurahman principal of Talfalah Institute in Claremont, was appointed the principal at the age of 23.¹²⁵

4.95 A perceptive Dr Abdurahman, familiar in the corridors of political power, could not have been unaware that the growing coloured population was going to create a great demand for schools. Schools would in a sense themselves constitute a growth industry for skilled labour and an avenue for employment consonant with the aspirations of the growing middle class among the coloured people of the city. Therefore it can be appreciated that Abdurahman would have been perturbed to learn that Dr T. Muir, the Superintendent-General of Education, had decided that coloured teachers would after 1913 be refused admission to the Cape Town Training College in Queen Victoria Street. A letter was despatched to the S.G.E. asking for an appointment that Abdurahman could protest against such a retrograde step.¹²⁶ Another hope of social integration on the basis of a common education was dashed. Separate facilities, to Abdurahman, meant church facilities. The Dutch Reformed Church had a training college at Wynberg (Battswood) and the Anglican Church had theirs in District Six (Zonnebloem). To a public figure who sought optimal educational opportunity and maximal State commitment this was utterly unacceptable.

4.96 When Rahmaniyeh was launched in 1913 Abdurahman wrote to a former mayor of Cape Town, Sir Lionel Phillips, to describe the official dereliction of schooling for coloured people:

I may say that the School Boards, except perhaps in Kimberley, are doing nothing for the education of coloured children in the Cape Province. The coloured schools are all controlled by the churches, and no assistance whatsoever is given towards the erection of those school buildings. The school for which I am soliciting assistance is rated as a mission school, and neither the School Board nor the Government is enabled to make any contribution towards the building. Even in the matter of school furniture, I

appealed to the Administrator to make us an extra allowance but he refused, and were it not that one of the schools under the Cape School Board in District Six was transferred to a new building and some furniture was thus transferred to us, we would not have been in a position to pay for our furniture which is a heavy item of expenditure.¹²⁷

Perhaps the School Board at Kimberley was displaying a greater degree of enlightened self-interest in its provision of schools for coloured children because it was dealing with a comparatively small community as recently settled there as the White people attracted to the diamond mines. But in Cape Town and environs where the bulk of this class was resident the official indifference or helplessness was unpardonable to a pragmatic public figure like Abdurahman. Because the churches were regarded as the most desirable agencies to deliver education services for coloured people the neglect thereof was based on exaggerated assumptions about their capacities, i.e. of both the churches and their clientèle, in this instance. Statutory bodies seemed hamstrung by obsolete legislation slavishly followed and both the School Board (the executive organ) and the Government (the keeper of the public purse) were rendered ineffective.

The most senior public servant concerned with education in Cape Town, the Administrator, was not forthcoming in helping provide new school furniture for a new school.

4.97 Proceedings in the Cape School Board suggest that a voice was indeed raised in that quarter by a Mr Runciman when he presented this cogent argument apropos of the dereliction in public education:

De politiek van het Goevernement scheen te zijn om de zending gemeenten de last van de opvoeding der gekleurde kinderen te doen dragen, en die zaak dus maar op een liefdadigheidsbasis te laten. In 1904 word op een *f* voor *f* beginsel aan zendingscholen door het Goevernement bijgedragen,

alles in begrepen, doch nu slechts twee derde tot de onderwijzersalarissen.

Het blanke kind koste de Staat £2.9s.73 in het jaar tegenover 10s tot 17s7d voor het gekleurd kind.

De standaard van de kleurlingscholen behoorde verhoogd te worden. Het salaris van de onderwijzers was schandalig. Het getal gekleurde kinders jaarliks uit school was 5 000 die zonder toezicht controle of opvoeding rondliepen en tot booswichte gevormd worden.¹²⁸

Mr Runciman was making the following categorical statements:

- 4.97.1 It was political policy of the State to burden the churches with the education of coloured children;
- 4.97.2 schooling for coloured children was thus seen as a charitable act (in contrast with schooling for white children seen as a State responsibility);
- 4.97.3 by extension, the coloured child was less entitled to the State's funds than the white, and thus statistically obtained a third of the allocated education expenditure at most;
- 4.97.4 the standard of coloured schools therefore needed to be raised (by the injection of more funds);
- 4.97.5 teachers' salaries subsidised with such parsimony were scandalous;
- 4.97.6 some 5 000 school-age children were without schools, supervision, control and education, walking idly about and exposed to evil influences.

4.98 All the above facts were painfully obvious to Dr Abdurahman and informed his decision to do something about them by establishing the Rahmaniye Institute. Ever the cautious constitutionalist he was only to confront the powers-that-be with the consequence of their immoral attitudes and actions, and schooling opportunity presented him with that. If he could not obtain the State's funds by way of State schools then he would obtain his community's advantage by way of a Moslem Mission school funded by the existing method. He thus obtained all his needs that the system

would allow but school furniture was to be obtained by a charitable act. Effects written off when the white school was transferred (presumably to more pleasant and commodious buildings elsewhere) became the furniture of the new Mission school for Muslim children, invariably from working-class homes.

Given parental attitudes of the time such children would rather have been kept from school than sent to the schools of the churches in District Six. For this reason Abdurahman accepted used school furniture.

- 4.99 The churches were not readily persuaded that education for Non-whites was the exclusive responsibility of the State to be funded and developed by way of the school boards. Mission schools represented enclaves of ecclesiastical influence, power and authority that the State appreciated.

Ideologically, home and school were at variance where Muslim children attended Christian Mission schools. Hardly a satisfactory situation conducive of optimal collaboration that school boards purported to promote in non-sectarian schools, and which the School Board Act (1905) envisaged.

The white dominant classes, bent on extending participatory democracy in this manner believed that coloured people had to be prepared, preferably by the churches prior to their inclusion into the social order. Contemporary assumption about "human nature" and that of Non-whites especially, were such that the education linked to the missionary endeavours was most appropriate:

The Coloured population will be guilty of base ingratitude if it denies or repudiates its great obligation to the churches. Before the public conscience had been awakened and when it was useless to look to the state for help, the Christian churches founded and maintained schools at their own expense.

They gave freely of their substance and their ministers spent themselves in the service of the schools. They initiated the system of teacher

training and they created, sustained and stimulated the desire for education in a people who were often indifferent to it. No friend of the Coloured people can be entirely satisfied with the position as it is today, but it would have been infinitely worse for the intervention of the churches in this service.¹²⁹

Abdurahman and his co-religionist of the middle-class who formed their Moslem Education League did not unreservedly accept that the churches were entirely neutral and disinterested in their intervention. While many Church high schools of high standard were available for the whites, including immigrants from Europe, the children of élite Muslim families were pointedly excluded. Church strategy in school provision was aimed at the younger children of the poor. Therefore a Muslim parent saw the church in its associational context.

Education as a missionary action was less concerned with increasing political participation or economic effectiveness. These were peripheral considerations. The central focus was perceived in these terms:

Education is worthy of its name only when it deliberately sets before itself as its purpose, however it may be hampered in realising it, that its office is not merely to sharpen wits or impart information or cultivate faculties, but to ensure as far as possible, that when children pass into me they shall recognise their Eternal Father; they shall know who died to save them; they shall tell from whose hand they came and what they were made for; their eyes shall be opened to the high calling of duty now, to that unspeakable future of holiness and love and rest which is the goal of our running.¹³⁰

Noble, but in Abdurahman's estimation, probably misguided sentiments. He was judging the mission schools that he found in District Six and would not send his own children there.

Although he had been educated in Scotland, Dr Abdurahman was determined that his daughters (with his Scottish wife) should not be educated abroad. When the question of education arose, Dr Abdurahman said that they were South Africans and would be educated in South Africa.¹³¹

4.100 His daughters would obtain an education equal to that of their peers in Europe and consonant with their social status. But Abdurahman encountered only rejection and denial when he approached the local prestigious Church schools. His newspaper attributed this exclusion to colour prejudice.¹³² Therefore, his daughters were taught by a governess until they could attend the high school their father had caused to be established.¹³³

While this might have been a solution for the Abdurahman family it was at best a short term one for the coloured élite. Therefore, the APO newspaper made insistent demands for greater State expenditure by way of non-sectarian schools. In church circles this was not too kindly taken: if the mission schools were to be made redundant by non-sectarian schools for coloured children, a cherished civil liberty, the freedom of religion, was endangered, but it would also suggest that the churches had not discharged their trust and responsibility to the satisfaction of all.¹³⁴

That the churches were indeed doing the greatest good for the greatest number was endorsed in official quarters at the time since

The Education department and the provincial Council greatly supported the missions' point of view. In their public utterances or in reply to the requests of deputations, (often led by Dr Abdurahman) the S.G.E., Dr Thomas Muir, harped on the great debt the coloureds owed the missions, the good work that the missions were doing and the salutary effects of Mission

education.

The set-up suited the Education department admirably because it got coloured education on the cheap and the system structurally helped to ensure the perpetuation of white supremacy in virtually all aspects of life.¹³⁵

Therefore what Abdurahman meant by having his school named a Moslem Mission school, was merely his way of tapping a local source of the public revenue in this way, and definitely not as the dominant class intended that revenue to be spent.

4.101 Traditional evangelists sensed a danger in this development and were especially apprehensive that the Quran should be sponsored in this manner from the public revenue. Obligated to seek more funds for mission work among the Muslims of the city, an Anglican Church pamphleteer argued:

The vast majority of Moslems in the Cape who are not absolutely ignorant owe all their education to the Christian mission schools which they attended alongside Christian Coloured boys and girls up to Standard 1V or even higher. Now, however, they have several schools of their own, helped, as the Church schools are, by the government, but teaching the Quran instead of the Bible... The extra money required will provide for several extra evangelists at once, and open the way for others to be carefully instructed in the future.¹³⁶

Those schools with Abdurahman as manager were quite different to the school that operated in Cape Town in the previous century on the periphery of the State school system. It received its funding from the Ottoman treasury and its teacher-manager was content to function without much inconvenience to the State. As a traditional Islamic school its influence was confined to the religious sphere. The new schools were encroaching on the secular as well.

4.102 Islamic educational tradition at the Cape had much to teach Abdurahman before he plunged into the fray of making it change to the needs and demands of his time. We need to review key aspects of his role as the founder of the Rahmaniyyeh Institute to assess the measure of success that he accomplished.

- 4.102.1 Abdurahman's father was educated in Egypt in the Islamic disciplines but was not unaffected by the strains and tensions of that society to realise that his son should have the education of the Europeans as well; accordingly he ensured that his son obtained the best education that Cape Town in the 1880s had to offer;
- 4.102.2 he was the first and only Muslim lad to obtain this privileged education both because of his social status (his father could afford the costs) and his own above-average intelligence;
- 4.102.3 while studying medicine in Scotland he was acquainted with a man passionately concerned about the poor and the rôle education could play in social uplift;
- 4.102.4 his tremendous curiosity and drive enabled him to read widely and avidly about all matters that interested him;
- 4.102.5 although a committed Muslim, he showed an amazing personal fortitude in being married to a white lady who remained a Christian;
- 4.102.6 his domestic life as an upper middle-class professional man with a variety of academic and political associations caused him to inhabit social and cultural universes different to the Muslims on whose behalf he established a school;
- 4.102.7 Abdurahman's command of English and his own acculturation in English education allowed him a relatively easy access to powerful and influential persons of Cape Town's English "Establishment" for funds or favours;
- 4.102.8 much of his success as the founder-manager of the Rahmaniyyeh Institute was because of his identification of kindred spirits within the elite of the Muslim community who were well disposed to him personally and

to his managerial style;

- 4.102.9 as a consummate pragmatist time was of the essence to him and within a year he amassed the funds and the official sanction to relieve the problem of schooling in District Six in his own way, on his own terms and within the constraints of the administrative limitations of the education system;
- 4.102.10 that his involvement, and commitment to the school, was total and unqualified, is born out by the clear vision and direction he exhibited vis-a-vis the officialdom regarding the place of Arabic in the school's curriculum;
- 4.102.11 by establishing the school Abdurahman was also creating teaching posts for Muslim teachers whose absorption into the Christian-oriented Mission school was difficult, if not impossible at that time;
- 4.102.12 lest it be said that he was sectarian, Abdurahman appointed Muslims and Christians to the staff of Rahmaniye, and also exerted great efforts to establish the city's first high school for coloured children.

When Rahmaniye opened its doors to the children of District Six, Abdurahman was thereby making a personal statement of what education for Muslim children should be: he was the harbinger of modernity to the educational traditions of the Muslims in Cape Town. His help was needed by others elsewhere in the Peninsula and he rose to the occasion in Claremont where hopes had been raised and dashed.

- 4.103 Less successful in establishing a recognised school for the advancement of education among the Muslim community was a contemporary of Dr Abdurahman - Hajee Sullaiman Shahmahomed. This public-spirited immigrant from India cherished his own dreams of creating a school for Muslim children and he by dint of hard work managed to amass the funds towards that end.

He differed from Abdurahman in that he did not reach out to the rich white community for any monetary contribution, nor

did he have the skills to relate effectively with the community he sought to serve or the urbanity and articulateness, the dominating drive and vision of the city councillor, Abdurahman.

4.104 Hajee Sullaiman Shamahomed's last will and testament provides much detail of his eventful life, from birth in India's Kathiawar District (Bombay) to the time he dictated his testamentary directives to the solicitor in 1910. When he started his life in Cape Town there is a strong possibility that he felt inspired to counter the resentment of local Muslims that traders from India were indifferent to the lack of education facilities, or that they were bent on sending their money to impoverished kinsfolk in India. (Supra 4.25)

Salient features of Shahmahomed's life are listed below:

- 4.104.1 He emigrated from India in 1881 and settled in Cape Town in 1883, where he married the daughter of an esteemed local Cape Muslim religious teacher, Imam Slemman Salie, in 1888.
- 4.104.2 Some 10 000 of his co-religionists lived in Cape Town at that time; they were of the "Sunne faith" but had some peculiar habits and customs (unknown in India) brought about by their sojourn among Western people.
- 4.104.3 In 1886 he travelled through Western Asia and Europe; in 1893/4 he journeyed to Australia, India, China, Japan and North America, and then published a book entitled, "A Tour Round the World".
- 4.104.4 His travels proved to him that the West had greatly benefitted from the East and had progressed. Now the West should contribute to the advancement of the East in cultural terms. This is only possible by means of higher education.
- 4.104.5 To create for the people of Cape Town a seat of higher education he had bought Lots 3 and 4, portions of the Mariendal Estate adjacent to the disused Malay cemetery, Claremont. Thereon he wished a mosque and an academy to be erected.

To have undertaken these long journeys with their implied long absences from Cape Town seems to suggest that Mr Shahmanomed was not only a prosperous trader but also a shrewd investor of his surplus funds that produced dividends in his absence. That an immigrant from India could in a short time of arriving in Cape Town have been enabled to travel so extensively testifies to his business acumen and the economic conditions that produced such reward for a trader. Yet his journeys had a didactic import for he was most curious to observe in loco how people were living and progressing. His book written in English is hardly known in the genre of travel literature but is itself a statement that his journeys were to learn and not a leisure exercise.

- 4.105 While travelling in India, it seems probable that Shahmahomed was inspired in his educational aspirations by that celebrated scholar, Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan, founder of the Aligarh "Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College".

Here was an example of the way in which the West and the East might harmonise in a mutually rewarding manner. These details about the founder are noteworthy:

In intellectual terms, he attempted to integrate Western and Islamic thought because he believed that a Muslim adjustment to modern intellectual realities was absolutely essential. He said, "If people do not shun blind adherence, if they do not seek that Light which can be found in the Qur'an and the indisputable Hadith (Traditions of the Prophet) and do not adjust religion and science of today, Islam will become extinct in India".

In order to carry out his program, Sayyid Ahmad worked to translate Western works into Indian languages, helped to organise special education committees, and establish a modern institution of higher education for Muslims - the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh, which became a major centre for Islamic modernist education

in India.¹³⁸

A conquered people of the East was by means of such an institution to elevate itself from the "sloth of despond" synthesising the intellectual heritage of the West with their own. Mr Shahmahomed intended that a similar facility should arise in Claremont where he bought land for that purpose. (supra 4.104.5)

He had in mind an "Academy", an educational concept far more ambitious than merely a school to alleviate the immediate and urgent problem of the local Muslims. Yet the "Academy" was also conceived as an institution to be accessible to all against which South African law and custom discriminated:

It is with the definite and express object of enabling other Moslem or coloured youths of either sex to continue their studies beyond the fifth standard and after passing Matriculation to prepare for degrees and obtain a college education that this Academy is founded, and Moslems and others are accordingly invited for such purpose.¹³⁹

Given the fact that Mr Shahmahomed's own son had to endure the humiliation of being denied admission to the only available secondary institutions of Cape Town because he was not a "European", this proposed "Academy" was his response to perceived need and an official dereliction, viz. institutions of higher education.

While Abdurahman was keen on having Arabic as a primary school curricular component, Shah Mahomed's scheme might well have furnished the teachers for the purpose. Tragically for South Africa, these two functioned in isolation.

- 4.106 There was an important instruction in the Shahmahomed testament that "reasonable opportunities be afforded for the teaching of Arabic and Islam philosophy generally". Such a semantic qualification as "reasonable opportunities" seems to

suggest that these subjects need not be the main course content, but desirable ancillaries.

If a student's need or the institution's emphasis were to be on what in modern parlance is termed "market value skills" the benefactor would accept that as unavoidable and would defer to such modernisation trends.

- 4.107 We gather from Gerdener, writing in 1915, that a deputation of Muslims had travelled to Zanzibar to seek assistance with the establishment of a centre of Islamic learning:

Zanzibar has been a source of inspiration on more than one occasion, as when a deputation visited that quarter some years ago on behalf of a Mohammedan "College" then in building at Claremont.¹⁴⁰

It could be inferred that Mr Shahmahomed and associates who shared his ideals constituted that deputation to this seat of Islamic learning whose Arab rulers had long historic associations with Arabia.

The services of scholars versed in Classical Arabic, the language of the Quran, could have been discussed during that visit. In securing such services the proposed college could have allayed any sectarian fears that local Muslims might have entertained about Mr Shamahomed's intentions.

- 4.108 While ostensibly a seat of Islamic learning the establishment was actually to be a memorial to its benefactor and his family. It was stipulated in the testament that the name of the establishment shall be, "The Hajee Sullaiman Shahmahomed Academy". A trust was accordingly created to which the property was conveyed. On 29 June, 1911, the laying of the foundation stone of the "New Moslem School at Claremont" was reported.¹⁴¹

His contemporary, Dr Abdurahman, might have read of Mr

Shamahomed's initiative and the choice of name with more than cursory interest: it's name was a precedent or an example to the naming of the school in District Six.

The founder of the "Academy" exhibited a paternalism of his own in the manner that he defined the broad Muslim community's relationship with the institution. Unfortunately, the broad community could not identify with his ideal educational project in their interests. Few of the poor might have qualified for admission to "studies beyond the fifth standard and after passing matriculation" when there was in 1911 not even a high school for coloured people.

Thus Abdurahman's approach in establishing first a primary school while at the same time agitating for a high school was the more commendable and practical. Therefore, the "Academy" at Claremont never succeeded in gaining wide Muslim support to develop as the founder intended.

A fortune was spent, according to the testament, to acquire the land and to construct the mosque and ancillary buildings, but disaffection was inevitable when the Muslim community's leading figures perceived these apparently philanthropic efforts as attempts at personal aggrandisement.

4.109 In terms of the deeds of trust, non-Muslims, the Mayor of Cape Town and the Cape's Civil Commissioner were appointed by Mr Shahmahomed as co-administrators of the trust of the "Academy" as well as the monument to Sheikh Yusuf which is known as the Faure Kramat. Cape Town's Mayor and Civil Commissioner were certainly prestigious white officials to be associated with Mr Shahmahomed's philanthropy, but they were hardly competent to deliberate on matters affecting the cultural life of the Muslim community.

4.110 These appointments were unwise and impolitic as the following newspaper report a few years afterwards demonstrates:

On March 23 (1918) a notification appeared in the Press signed by the Mayor of Cape Town and

the Civil Commissioner, in their capacities as trustees of the Kramat, wherein certain new regulations were enforced, the effect of which would considerably curtail the rights and privileges so long enjoyed at the Kramat. So great was the resentment in the Moslem community (both Malay and Indian) against these new restrictions, that the largest meeting ever held in Zandvlei took place last Sunday, over a thousand persons attending. Among those present were Mr J.M.J. Gool, Mr M.A. Gamiet, Dr. I. Abdurahman and many other leading Malays and Indians.¹⁴²

Although Councillor Dr. A. Abdurahman would not associate with a public protest against the Mayor and the Civil Commissioner, his brother, Dr I. Abdurahman and his cousin, Dr O. Dollie, were involved. The central problem (sensitivity of the Muslim community to allegedly presumptuous whites) could not have escaped his knowledge. No matter how many favours and how much funds he required from whites he did not commit the same error as Mr Shahmahomed. Rahmaniye Institute would be administered by Muslims alone.

- 4.111 Muslims of Claremont saw the mosque erected for the worship of God arising and placed at their disposal, but the "Academy" never materialised.

The idea, nevertheless, was not abandoned and the intended funds for a similar institution as part of the University of Cape Town were bequeathed.

In a letter to the University of Cape Town, dated 21 August, 1923, Hajee S. Shahmahomed wrote as follows:

Re Eastern Philosophy and Oriental Science

I am a Maman (of the pioneer Muslims of India) born in the Presidency of Bombay, and, having come to South Africa in the year 1881, I have been successful in establishing myself.

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I have throughout taken an interest in Eastern Philosophy and am desirous of fostering in South Africa the teaching of what is best in the science and arts that come from India and the rest of Asia.

I am a Mohammedan by religion and have travelled in Arabia, Persia, North Africa and I appreciate the study of Sanscrit and the other ancient languages upon which Arabic is founded.

In my view more attention should be paid in South Africa to these languages and the literature thereof.

Unfortunately I am not in a position to found a Chair so as to ensure the teaching in the University of South Africa of Eastern Philosophy and language, but I should like to make a beginning towards the object of founding such a chair, and therefore, I enclose Union Government Stock certificate No. 12192, dated 14th August, 1923, to the value of One Thousand pounds sterling (£1 000) and hope and expect to make further additions thereto.

To endow a chair for the study of Eastern Philosophy and languages and Oriental arts and science would require a capital amount of something like £20 000. My desire is that the interest accruing on the stock contributed by me be allowed to accumulate and be reinvested, so that at compound interest it will eventually amount to a substantial sum, which when augmented from other available sources, might make up the requisite twenty thousand pounds sterling, (£20 000).

I should like my name, Hajee Sullāiman Shahmahomed, associated with this endowment, and have to request that a statement be inserted in each annual University calendar showing the amount of capital and interest which has accrued.¹⁴³

- 4.112 While the above matter is peripheral to the discussion on the first Muslim primary school, it is nevertheless germane to point to the possibility of teachers in Arabic and Islamic disciplines being supplied by the local university, even if the benefactor did not explicitly express such an intent.

Hypothetically, a student who had undertaken such a course of

study would find expression for his acquired skills within the religious education of the local Muslim community. One could venture the supposition that Dr Abdurahman could not have ignored this vital requirement for the viability of the Islamic education system he had initiated. Unless he was aware of Mr Shahmahomed's exertions.

It is also noteworthy that Mr Shahmahomed acted on his own volition, and did not include or feel the need to include any committee or organisation. Like the founder of the South African Moslem Association he, too, sensed the need for the Muslim community to be educated for the changing socio-economic order of relentless Westernisation. But he was also out of touch with the community and oblivious of its priorities. It was the children of the working-class, mainly, who were not getting a basic literacy and were in consequence economically retarded. Mr Shahmahomed, who could not find access to higher education for his son, felt this need to be the educational problem to address. (Supra 4.16)

His investment of £1 000 towards the founding of a university chair might well have provided two Muslim mission primary schools at that time seeing that Abdurahman required £500 to launch Rahmaniye Institute.

At best only the fortunate few matriculants produced by the Muslim middle-class might have gained from this investment. Elitism was thus consciously promoted. Abdurahman, himself inclined to provide an elitist education for his daughters, (supra 4.100) had the squalor and poverty of District Six weighing heavily on his educational ideals. He knew enough of modern India's history to appreciate that a blue-print for Islam's resurgence devised by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was inappropriate in the socio-historical context of contemporary Cape Town. In a culture of poverty where adolescents were necessarily driven into the work force at an early age, the need was not for tertiary education if primary schooling, the key to higher income, was lacking. Abdurahman could have realised that few children of coloured parents could have studied for matriculation and university entrance at

the proposed "Academy" or the University of Cape Town and studied Islamic subjects if the church mission schools were to supply the candidates. Studies in Eastern Philosophy and the linguistic foundations of Arabic were, in these circumstances, esoteric and an academic exercise in a pejorative sense. Shahmahomed's plans were indeed grandiose and fanciful.

- 4.113 In a community of strong influence of tradition the insistence that the benefactor's name be linked to his philanthropy was arrogant and vain, contrary to the Quran's clear admonition:

By no means shall ye attain righteousness
unless you give (freely) of that which ye love,
and whatever ye give, of a truth, Allah knoweth
it well.¹⁴⁴

In contrast, Abdurahman was dominant and paternalist by disposition, but nowhere was his own contribution written against his own name. Rahmaniye's manager was not in need of buying anyone's grace or recognition ostensibly to promote the education of the Muslim youth. This endeared him to humbler Muslims and they sought his help in getting a school in Claremont more in keeping with their need.

- 4.114 An early mention of the Muslim people of Claremont in the biography of John X Merriman, whose father, Nathaniel, encountered them on the estate of the Bishop of Cape Town in 1849:

Twenty coloured families, descended from Mozambique slaves, lived on the estate, and on New Year's day a tom-tom drumming at the top of an oak tree announced the yearly folk festival (the precursor of New Year's carnivals today).

It distressed Nathaniel that the songs and chants were in praise of Mohammed and that at his first Cape service he saw Malays shut out of St Georges church, so that many turned to Islam

for the equality that Christianity denied them.¹⁴⁵

Their numbers increased so much that in 1854 a Muslim benefactor presented the village community land on which to construct their first mosque and traditional Islamic school.¹⁴⁶

4.115 By 1903 a large number of Muslims were resident near the mosque in Claremont's Main Road, their children went to school at the Christian Mission school of the Dutch Reformed Church in Draper Street. But admission seemed to be predicated on evangelisation. (Supra 3.54) Schooling was already an urgent social need and the community were keen on doing something about this deficiency.

On a cold and rainy night in June, 1903, they converged in large numbers to hear speakers of the South African Moslem Association arguing persuasively that their rôle in society will be determined by their educational opportunities.

The chairman, Neamatollah Effendi, "counselled them not to forget to educate their children and in their ways to give no occasion for a word of reproach against the Moslems".¹⁴⁷

4.116 Some nine years elapsed before a serious effort in this regard was initiated. Early in August, 1912, a Mr A. Toefy of Hemlock Street, invited some concerned Claremont Muslims to a meeting at his home. Dr. A. Abdurahman, known to be involved in the launching of the first Muslim primary school, was to be the guest of honour. Abdurahman wrote an encouraging letter to the host:

I shall be glad to accept your kind invitation and be present on Sunday at your meeting, but you have not stated what time the meeting is to be held nor what kind of education it is intended to give the children. Please let me know the hour fixed for the meeting, and if possible give me some idea as to the course of

instruction to be followed in your school.

I shall be at home on Saturday evening and will
be glad to see you.¹⁴⁸

One of the persons present would be Imam Amien Abduroef, a leading figure in the Claremont Muslim community and a relative of Dr Abdurahman.¹⁴⁹

For this reason, among others, he felt duty bound to be present. But he wished for clarity as to whether the school was to be a traditional Islamic school as was then operating there, or whether the secular would be incorporated with religious instruction. Thus before preparing himself to address the meeting he required to be briefed about their intentions that he might specifically confine himself to the means of accomplishing their objective.

The meeting was held and the concerned parents, perhaps on Abdurahman's advice, constituted themselves as the Claremont Moslem Education Society.

- 4.117 The sociological significance of this development lies in the extension of Abdurahman's educational ideals for Muslims from an urban locus to the peri-urban, for Claremont in 1912 was little more than a satellite village of Cape Town.

In Cape Town he had gathered about himself in the Moslem Education league prominent middle-class personalities; here he had to contend in Claremont with the artisan and vendor class less affluent and less numerous as his associates in an educational initiative. Skilled in the art of communication and persuasion he needed little to convince them of the merits of secular education for he embodied its promise to their own children. Yet his educational philosophy was essentially an adapted liberalism in which he himself was steeped. It had an inordinate stress on reason, progress, and science, and with its ideals of individual freedom, humanism and secularism presented a drastic change of orientation to a strongly conservative community. A subculture that had lived with

diversity at arm's length was being geared for homogenization with the main stream culture without its total assimilation. To those who feared education as conversion at the one extreme of the social spectrum, to those who would seek to exclude perceived subversive influences by retaining the traditional self containment and self-sufficiency, Abdurahman by his District Six school project was showing a middle-way.

- 4.118 In 1912 a building on the corner of Hemlock and Draper Streets, Claremont, was purchased for the Islamic instruction of boys and girls. This school started as a large traditional madressah known as the "Madressahtalfalah". (Literally, the Islamic school for the cultivation of the Muslim personality).

If the word, "Madressah" is removed from the school's name we are left with "Talfalah", which is what the community came to call it.

A description of a typical madressah conducted in Stellenbosch in 1950 would convey a fair idea of what the education programme entailed:

Die doel van hierdie madrasa, of skool, is nie om die Maleier kinders opleiding to gee in vakke soos bv. geografie, ens. nie, want dié ontvang hulle wel deeglik voormiddae in die departement-ele skool; maar die doel van hierdie madrasa is om die Maleier-kindere meer Arabies vertrou to maak sodat hulle die Kur'an kan lees en verstaan. Hulle bestudeer nie die Arabiese grammatika intensief nie en hulle leer nie Arabies skryf nie. Die leermeester stel hom ten doel om die Maleier-kind net 'n goeie lees kennis van Arabies te gee sodat hy die Kur'an kan lees... hoe die Maleierkinders hulle moet reinig, hoe hulle moet bid, ens.¹⁵⁰

In terms of cost-effectiveness alone the acquisition of a building representing a sizeable community investment could not only be for the purpose of instruction supplementing the

conventional school. Important as the reading of the Qur'an for Muslims and the instruction in religious procedures for socialisation and worship were, it would be more desirable to use the building for a longer period of time per day. If the two types of schooling required could be combined into a single, dual-purpose educational institution, a more efficient instruction programme might result.

- 4.119 An unusually large enrolment of pupils at the madressah compelled the sponsor organisation, the Claremont Moslem Education Society, to appoint two instructors who had both studied in Mecca, viz., Imam Abubakar Abduraof and Imam Abdurahman Sedick. Later it could be said of that time:

The staff could not depend on a fixed salary, and fees were collected from a closely-knit but poor Moslem community of Claremont who attended the school...

A gaze into the crystal ball foretold that Talfalah was becoming precarious (sic.), which meant that the inevitable had to be faced. The school could no longer function solely as a madressah. Emaum Sedick negotiated with the late Dr "Doel" Abdurahman who was then serving on the City Council of Cape Town. This resulted in the conversion of the madressah into a secular school in 1916.¹⁵¹

Perhaps Rahmaniye demanded too much of Abdurahman's time between 1912 and 1916 or perhaps he wished to apply his experience with the one institution at the other, and thus avoid errors that might be costly or counter-productive. The most urgent problem was to extend the existing facilities that the building might more successfully seek recognition as a Mission school. To that end a vigorous fund-raising drive was launched and the controlling body organised many bazaars.

- 4.120 Bazaars were very common forms of fund-raising at most Mission schools for they allowed the working-class to contribute while

obtaining commodities produced by means of the home-industries or to take redundant stocks from traders and wellwishers like Dr Abdurahman whose own Rahmaniyeh bazaar could share its surplus with Talfalah. In 1913 he expressed his good wishes to the Claremont Moslem Education Society thus:

Many thanks for your letter of 21st December inviting me to be present at the opening of your bazaar.

I regret that I shall not be able to be present with you. However, I promise that your bazaar will be a success. Furthermore, I hope that you will kindly receive the few small articles which our bazaar committee send you through Mrs Soeker of Cape Town.¹⁵²

A word of encouragement from an esteemed Cape Town City Councillor, along with a tangible gesture of support - "a few small articles" - must have heartened the organisers and endeared Abdurahman to all who heard his message. He cared for the people of Claremont and shared their concern for their children's education. The Rahmaniyeh Institute in Cape Town was by then a reality. The Muslim community under Abdurahman had achieved a milestone in their progress with their own State-aided school to show for it.

Therefore, when the school at Claremont was enlarged and the negotiations for its recognition as a Mission school finalised the benefactor of Claremont was approached by the sponsors of the school. Who could present better credentials and expertise to be the first manager of the Talfalah Institute?

- 4.121 In a notebook kept by the first Arabic teacher at the Talfalah Institute, we read that he was born on 16 August, 1886 and proceeded to Mecca at the age of six. There he received the traditional Islamic training from 21 March, 1892 to 26 September, 1904 when he returned to Cape Town.¹⁵³

A man of such a background must have been held in high esteem by the Claremont Muslim community, and Abdurahman respected

that. Therefore, he approved of this gentleman's appointment as the Arabic teacher and obtained for him a salary subsidisation similar to that which he earlier secured for the Arabic teacher at Rahmaniye. This category of teacher does not feature in the official records and could have been classed with those having "No Academic Qualification" of which there were 7 in 1922.¹⁵⁴ These were only found in Coloured Mission Schools of the Cape Province. Abdurahman had found a loophole whereby he could obtain for teachers of Arabic and Islamic religious instruction a contribution from the State's revenue and its acknowledgement of their status and worth as teachers.

- 4.122 It was a comparatively young and inexperienced Mr Moses Dachie Behardien that was selected by the manager to be the principal of the Talfalah Institute in the latter half of 1916.¹⁵⁵ A year later Abdurahman had him transferred to the Rahmaniye Institute where he was to become the second incumbent of the principal's post.¹⁵⁶ After having passed Std. 6 he trained as a teacher and held the T3 Teaching Certificate.

A more experienced teacher, though not a Muslim, was appointed the principal in 1917, because the Claremont Moslem Education Society had purchased three houses adjacent to the school to allow for an increased enrolment.¹⁵⁷

In his appointment of Mr Curry to replace Mr Behardien, Abdurahman was demonstrating his belief that the best man deserved the job regardless of religious affiliation. The president of the A.P.O. thus silenced his political detractors who might have accused the manager of the Talfalah Institute of being "sectarian".

In truth there were few Muslims qualified for the teaching posts for the vacancies at both of Abdurahman's schools. To the community this appointment of Mr Curry was a message even with a non-Muslim teacher in charge the Arabic was still taught by someone having their confidence and trust; future Muslim teachers would be able to rise to the top position in their own Mission school.

individuality by reason of their characteristic civility, but they have made very little economic progress. Some are well off in the Cape, but they can hardly made two ends meet in Johannesburg and other cities.¹⁵⁸

Religion proved a great socialisation-acculturation factor to the Indian traders that lived in close contact with the Cape Muslims. Because they revealed such an "interesting fusion of Western civilisation and Eastern religiosity" the Cape Muslim community were indeed economically a part of the broad community who retained much that was not part of that community in terms of values and norms of behaviour. Thus they were also a reference group for an immigrant community wishing to be the same, albeit in a different economic rôle. As traders they were ipso facto drawn to the small middle class among the Cape Muslims, who, as a reference group, could affect their attitudes and beliefs.

Kinship ties were also being established by marriages between male Indians and female Cape Muslims. (Mr Shahmahomed's marriage to the daughter of a Cape Town imam is a case in point; supra 4.104.1). Barriers of language and customs were being overcome, in the Cape Peninsula at least, by a shared faith.

- 4.125 The children of such unions and of immigrant families from India required a type of schooling which would reinforce the beliefs and values acquired in their homes. But as assistants to their fathers in business they needed literacy and numeracy for a place in the local economic sun.

Since Christian Mission schools were thus ideologically unacceptable, and white schools were inaccessible even if they could afford the costs concerned, Indian fathers identified with appeals that Islam-orientated schools be established.

- 4.126 While no such schools existed, building upon the existing cultural base appeared the only option open to Indian fathers. This meant sending their children to two schools: the local

- 4.123 The emergence of the two Moslem Mission schools under the direction of Abdurahman was an inspiration to others equally concerned about the lack of schooling for their children and eager to do something about it.

In Salt River the Cape Muslims and the Indian traders founded an organisation to establish a school. Most of the Indian merchants were Muslims and found, in the early Twentieth century that conditions in the Cape Town area were far more amenable than elsewhere because:

- 4.123.1 Cape Town had a long established Muslim community with whom they had in common the desire to establish places of public worship and education;
- 4.123.2 the local Islamic community were a relatively large number whose initial hospitality and active good will allowed for at least their economic assimilation into the broader society;
- 4.123.3 the local Muslim community, consisting mainly of the working-class was not endogamous, and by marrying into this community the Indian immigrant was less conspicuous a target for xenophobic elements than the Chinese (non-Muslims) were.

- 4.124 A writer from India who has described the socio-political status of his countrymen in South Africa suggests why collaboration between these two communities might have hastened the naturalisation of immigrant Indians. His cultural perspective of the Cape Muslims was given thus:

The Cape Malays are officially classed as the Cape Coloured. They lead a Western life, wear the fez, and follow the Islamic religion. The Malays are a distinctive race in the population of South Africa. They are Asiatics. They have absorbed the Asiatic quality of racial pride, and are proud of themselves. They reveal an interesting fusion of Western Civilisation and Eastern religiosity.

The Malays have been able to preserve their

Christian mission school in the mornings and the traditional Islamic school in the afternoon. It also amounted to a long separation from the children whose help could be invaluable to a profitable operation of the business and ipso facto the economic independence of the family. Trading was one of the few family enterprises where skills training within the family context was still possible and where a father's expertise could be passed down to the son.¹⁵⁹

In a sub-culture where children were early involved in the family's income, a long absence from home and shop was hardly efficient or desirable.

A persuasive argument for the combination of value orientation with skills training was to the Indian immigrant the dominant culture's operation of its denominational schools. Dr Abdurahman had proven that Muslims could for their own purposes adopt the dominant class model and get the help of the State once the buildings were provided.

- 4.127 Local Cape Muslim artisans and Indian traders providing the required funds could collaborate to erect such school building. It was such collaboration that brought into being the Salt River Moslem school.

A commemorative brochure of this school gives these details:

Prior to 1917 there was no Muslim school in the Salt River/Woodstock area to serve the needs of the then rapidly growing Muslim community. It was through the valiant effort of such men as the late Hajis Abdullah Adams, Ebrahim Martin, Boenie Samaroen, Gafieldien Marlie and Lutta, and Messrs Bardien and Jaffer that the establishment of such a school was made possible.

The school started off in a small room in Kingsley Road, Salt River. With the increase in the number of pupils more space was required.¹⁶⁰

That it should be mentioned that some of the founders were

"Hajis" - persons who had undertaken the pilgrimage to Mecca - indicates the social prominence of these men. A heightened social conscience is normally associated with Islamic piety. However, an inability to make ends meet, to extend the school, compelled them to turn to well-disposed persons in Salt River's Indian community.

- 4.128 Haji Ebrahim Norodien, who had served on Abdurahman's Moslem Education league's committee, and who was an esteemed merchant, associated himself with the founders and was elected the school's first manager, because he

had the religious and educational interests of the children at heart and called together a number of leading merchants and some friends and associates. At the very first meeting a thousand pounds were collected, an enormous sum of money...¹⁶¹

Collecting the sum of £1 000 in one afternoon in 1916 was no mean achievement and this fact bears testimony to the charisma of that school's manager, who had once been asked by Abdurahman for "a long list of Indians" as donors to the Rahmaniyyeh Institute. (Supra 4.67)

His appeal had its positive response from the Indian trading fraternity because of a modernisation impulse finding expression in another sphere, viz. sponsorship of an Islam-oriented public school.

Establishing a school could be a statement of their bona fides among people often critical of their tendency to repatriate some of their income locally derived. Even more important was a communal need to achieve, a social phenomenon analysed by D.C. McClelland.¹⁶²

- 4.129 According to McClelland, the need to achieve - he terms it the n Ach Virus - is important for economic growth readily apparent in expatriate businessmen from Asia:

Previous research had established that businessmen are the best "hosts" for this virus: they are most likely to harbor some n Ach already and most likely to benefit concretely from being infected with more of it.¹⁶³

Schools were also part of the economic growth in the long term, essential for the socialisation of the young destined to participate in the economy of the main stream culture. Kinsfolk and kindred spirits within the Indian business community could thus more easily be organised in school-building initiatives.

- 4.130 Some historical detail about the Indian community of Cape Town at this juncture will allow for a clearer picture to emerge regarding their involvement in founding a public school. Apropos of the first settlers from Western India a South African academic notes:

Unlike those Cape Coloured Muslims who congregated in what came to be the Bo-Kaap, the Indian Muslims did not originally form a localised community; instead they were scattered rather widely over Cape Town and its environs, wherever there were suitable opportunities for retail trading which was what most of them came originally to do. There was some tendency for Indians having the same religion (Islam or Hinduism) and coming from the same home village or district in India to be found in the same general area of Cape Town, but they still lived fairly far apart from each other.

To be associated with a school-building project was to them a way of showing communal solidarity while rendering a public service, and also to create an instrument of socialisation that would bring their children into closer contact.

- 4.131 The solidarity of common origin, reinforced by feelings of mutual obligation, and shared long-term interest in the future

of their children was also complemented by religious sentiment. Although they were attracted to the Cape Muslims as co-religionists, the Indian immigrants adhered to their own folkways, continued to speak their vernacular language, and maintained contact with their places of origin in India.

- 4.132 In Salt River, therefore, the invitation of the Cape Muslims to an Indian merchant, Haji Ebrahim Noordien, to help them found a school was a significant milestone in consolidating the diverse local families into a unified force for social advancement. A former principal of the school asserts that artisans and labourers of Salt River volunteered their labour that a school for all the Muslim children might arise there.¹⁶⁴

With the relations between the two sponsoring Muslim communities regulated contractually by the school's constitution, it is germane here to mention some of that constitution's features:

- 4.132.1 the school shall ever remain the property of the Moslems and shall not be sold, mortgaged or otherwise pledged;
- 4.132.2 it is acknowledged that Muslims of Salt River consisted of "Afrikaners and Indian Muslims", and that these two distinct cultural entities shall in equal numbers comprise the trustees of the school;
- 4.132.3 all Muslims shall, ipso facto, be intitled to membership of the governing body officially designated the Salt River Moslem Educational Society;
- 4.132.4 any trustee who by act or omission forfeits his right to that position shall be replaced by one of his own "nationality"

- 4.133 Making their joint educational project "the property of the Muslims" and having erected its building entirely from their own resources gives the Salt River Muslim primary school a special significance in Islamic law. A public institution characterised in these terms is by definition then a "waqf", i.e. a religious charitable trust property.

"Waqf", literally means suspension or standing.

It is a word used in the sense of transferring an individual's property or income for some charitable purpose. Endowments among Muslims are made for the erection or maintenance of the following:

- (a) mosques
- (b) hospitals
- (c) free schools
- (d) sacred shrines
- (e) benefit of the poor
- (f) maintenance of reservoirs, waterworks,
etc.¹⁶⁵

While these public facilities are clearly the result of a desire to be of service on the part of the benefactors, these provisions are especially meritorious when used for the promotion of Islamic life or education. Once dedicated to charitable service no such facility could ever revert to personal use or any exclusive ownership, for Islamic law expressly forbids its use for purposes opposed to Islamic teachings.¹⁶⁶

All the founders clearly intended and stipulated in their documents that great store would be set by the Islamic ethos of the school as a social organisation even if no Arabic name or one associated with Islamic culture was given to the school.

4.134 Restrictions were imposed by the founders regarding the use of the school buildings. Hence the last two paragraphs of the Salt River Moslem Public School's constitution declares unequivocally:

4.134.1 This property should not be let after school hours (for) such purposes as dancing and all purposes that is (sic.) prohibited by the deanel Islam (the religion of Islam).

4.134.2 The teaching of the children, first of all, that they should learn the Towheid Koran (the unity of God as

expounded in the Quran) and sufficient to know Allah and Rasoul (God and the Prophet Muhammad), and to make his five times prayers a day, before he can teach any other language.¹⁶⁷

It was a declaration of simple folk unschooled with regard to refinements of lexis, syntax and semantics. What the nature of the school should be is nevertheless lucidly conveyed. Theirs would be a school where the religion of Islam should precede any other subject in importance. In effect this constitution says: modernisation of education shall not be at the expense of what were perceived to be eternal and universally valid verities. This is the *raison d'être* of the school to this day.

- 4.135 At the end of the first decade of the twentieth century three Muslim primary schools receiving State aid were in operation in Cape Town and environs. In two instances Dr A. Abdurahman played a leading rôle and the possibility is strong that his advice and assistance were sought by the founders of the Salt River school as well. But while he may have been the common denominator, the schools functioned quite independently of one another. It could even be argued that their influence was localised and their interests parochial.

All the schools faced problems of expansion to accommodate the large enrolment of pupils anxious to have the benefits of schooling and to achieve.

Every one of the principals would have endorsed the sentiments of Abdurahman when he appealed for funds:

I may explain that Moslem children are growing up practically without any education whatsoever. Of the one hundred and sixty children who were admitted, no fewer than one hundred and forty had never been at any school, whatsoever, although they were between the ages of seven and twelve. The need for such a school will appeal to everyone who wishes to see South African children

regardless of race or creed becoming respectable members of the country.¹⁶⁸

South Africa was then a new country with an untapped human potential which these schools could develop. They represented in their own way education for economic progress. Children from two different Islamic communities of Cape Town could by this education understand one another and widen their loyalties beyond their kinsfolk. They would not have any influence on public affairs for as long as they remained excluded from schools or preferred to exclude themselves from the schools of the churches.

4.136 CONCLUSION

The chronological pattern presented thus far has traced the historical, political and social influences upon the Muslims of Cape Town for the first two decades of the Twentieth century. Here we also surveyed the salient features of educational development, particularly the way in which an increasing racial segregation in schooling affected this community and elicited certain responses from their leaders of the day.

Cape Town, Claremont and Salt River have constituted the geographical context of this process of cause and effect.

In establishing an interpretive understanding of the relevant data a pattern of comparisons and contrasts has allowed similarities and/or differences between personalities such as Neamatollah Effendi and Abdullah Abdurahman to emerge. The principle of cause and effect has been presented by way of events, educational policies and conventions on the one hand, and the forces that produced certain responses on the other.

In our analysis of the social processes and political negotiations in which Abdurahman featured so prominently we have demonstrated the truism that social élites of most modernising groups among Muslims find that a policy of putting the new wine of economically relevant education in the old bottle of

the religion-orientated school tended to ease acceptance of change. Fears of alienation that Christian schools generated were thus allayed.

While religion as a cultural imperative is given its recognition here it has been shown that it was an asset rather than a liability to the modernisation of Islamic schooling. In this process Abdurahman's charisma and coercive authority coupled with the acumen of the professional politician seems to prove Arnold Anderson's thesis that the social environment is critical to educational innovation. In other words educational advancement increasingly occupied the public mind as social disadvantages became pronounced. All that was needed were the organisation and the leadership to address the lack of schools for Muslim children.

These schools could bridge the social cleavage and unite diverse people in a common purpose. Rendering a public service by providing education facilities was also a means of personal glorification as happened in the case of Mr Shahmahomed and, with greater subtlety, in the case of Abdurahman.

Nevertheless, Rahmaniyyeh was an admirable achievement for Abdurahman and an incentive to other Muslim communities to initiate similar projects.

- 4.136 Educational deficiencies were also contributing to political awareness and thus a primary concern to a politician seeking to broaden his constituency and enlarge his influence, both among the dominant and the dominated classes. Abdurahman found the greatest need for his educational exertions within that community from which he had emerged. By virtue of his education and his own persistence in broadening his mental horizons he was eminently qualified to initiate educational change for them.

Having a clear idea of education's rôle in social uplift, Abdurahman was set on modernising the school for the Muslim community, drawing it closer to the economic processes of the

main stream culture. To accomplish that within a circumscribed political context he had to develop a patron-client relationship with men of the calibre of John X Merriman, a dyad of utility. The relationship was reciprocal; in exchange for Merriman's help and political sponsorship, the doctor-politician could offer electoral support from his constituency in a quid pro quo that also enhanced the patron's status in the coloured community. Abdurahman in turn could serve as the patron of those public-spirited folk of District Six, Claremont and Salt River. As a City Councillor and Cape Provincial Councillor, Abdurahman participated in legislative processes and thus had higher power and status in effecting material changes for his clients. Some changes were by way of establishing Muslim mission schools for which he secured favours and funds overcoming political weakness by using the credit he had built up in the past. The affluent could thus help the indigent to help themselves, under Abdurahman's guidance and supervision.

For these reasons, primarily, Abdurahman was far more successful in realising his educational ambitions than the more affluent, but politically guileless Hajee Sullaiman Shahmahomed.

- 4.137 Until Abdurahman's intervention the Cape Muslims regarded education of children exclusively in the religious context, teleologically conceived: the end product of the traditional education process was to be a practising Muslim. This sentiment also emerges in the constitution of the Salt River Moslem Public School.

The primary alignments that made the first Muslim school receiving State-aid possible were in terms of shared identities, the salient features of which were articulated in juxtaposition to the identities of other groups sharing the same geographic space. Abdurahman found that even within the existing laws governing "mission schools" non-Christians could gain advantage.

- 4.138 A man having so many public personae as Abdurahman could

mollify his accusers who protested his "sectarianism" by pointing to the dereliction of the Muslim children's schooling which resulted from the contemporary education policy. But at the same time he could be seen marshalling the demands for a non-sectarian high school for coloured people in Cape Town as well. As a public figure serving a diverse constituency his Islamic identity was consistent, and so it appeared that he was reconciling the irreconcilable simply because he was cautious as an accountant. In the process he placed a novel connotation on the Aristotelian concept of collective justice, the means between profit and loss.¹⁶⁸

By establishing the first Muslim primary school Abdurahman was simultaneously making both a political and a religious statement, and emboldened others to do likewise.

4.139 After 1920 the trend towards establishing Muslim Mission schools proceeded with greater enthusiasm. Abdurahman had created two models to emulate. As the patron of the Muslim community he continued to serve his clients in this initiative. His guidance was ever available even if his personal commitments prevented his active association. Quite imperceptibly the education of Muslim children was taken from the hands of the traditional teachers and was incrementally being secularised. Even with the compromise Abdurahman made whereby a religious teacher was assigned the task of Arabic teaching, the greater part of the school day was still occupied with the secular curriculum. For the latter purpose the building and later the salaries were increasingly subsidised, but an inspector of education called to ensure that the State's interests were served.

4.140 In the next chapter we shall again be occupied with Dr Abdurahman's part in the expansion of the Muslim mission school system "under the Government". However, the emergence of the Cape Malay Association as an agency for educational advancement points to a polarisation within the broad Muslim community.

Not all of the Muslim élite were enamoured of Abdurahman or persuaded by his impeccable English and public postures.

Conflict also crystalised around internal divisions within a religious collectivity. Politically, divergent thrusts of traditional Cape Muslim communalism and Abdurahman's multi-culturalism continued as coeval forces.

Thus the focus will be on the last two decades of Abdurahman's life to demonstrate the strides made in establishing Islam-oriented schooling. There was a sense of urgency as the social problems of the city and its environs grew in size and complexity; there was an impulse to modernisation.

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CHAPTER 5

THE FOUNDING OF ISLAM-ORIENTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS FROM 1921 TO 1940

5.1 Historically, this period also coincided with the last two decades of the life of Dr A. Abdurahman, a formidable figure in local politics and educational initiatives. By virtue of his position as a Cape Town City Councillor and Cape Provincial Councillor at a time when a non-racial franchise allowed him to serve on these statutory bodies, Abdurahman could offer patronage to a diversity of political clients and interest groups. That client-patron relationship had its value in the communities where modern educated Muslims were increasingly vigorous in the affirmation of their faith and its relevance to the social order.

5.2 It is a period in which the number of State-aided Muslim Mission schools almost quadrupled as a direct result of precedents that Abdurahman created in the previous decade when he founded - in concert with other concerned Muslims - schools in District Six and Claremont, or aided others as in Salt River.

Each school constituted an effort at modernising the instruction and socialisation of Muslim children in a synthesis of the Islamic and the Western curriculum, albeit at primary level only.

5.3 There occurred within the Muslim community a continuation and extension of what Professor J.W.H. Sprott has identified as "patterned change" focussed on their children's need for schooling. Such State-aided schools would allow for increasing numbers of children to benefit from the manner in which educational funding was made available. Providing a basic education also constituted an aspect of a social development programme. About this objective there was a large measure of political and economic consensus.¹

Founding such schools was at that time a strategy of survival of Islamic influence by establishing a sorely needed community facility.

5.4 Ginsberg mentions that outstanding personalities and groups might contribute in a positive way to social change when they are involved in that collocation or confluence of elements which all converge at a given point - addressing a problem.² In the given period this confluence occurred at Paarl and Simonstown (1923), Worcester (1928), Wynberg and Strand (1929) as well as in Cape Town itself at Muir Street and Schotsche Kloof (1930) and Frere Street (1938), where schools arose. Some of these schools will be the foci of attention in this chapter to demonstrate the Ginsberg hypothesis.

Against the background of the increasing secularisation that the changing economy demanded, the Islam-oriented schools could be seen as statements asserting group identity, building upon institutional changes that had taken place in the preceding decade. They were related to the changing nature of Muslim society itself. Concerned persons associated with the ad hoc organisations that the need for schools eventuated were in this way creating social structures both modern and authentically Islamic, socially useful and economically desirable.

In this chapter I shall show that Abdurahman was the most prominent figure in the extension of the Muslim Mission Schools to other parts of Cape Town and environs. His own initiative was emulated by others with the help of Abdurahman's patronage and his active interest even when other urgent political issues demanded his time. A policy of divide et impera whereby the Coloureds and Indians were categorised for different legislative treatment obliged Abdurahman to divide his own political responses accordingly. This elicited the reaction among the Cape Muslims that he was neglecting his own people for the sake of personal aggrandisement. As a result of which the Cape Malay Association came into being. A teacher, Mr Salie Berdien, had a prominent role in this organisation dedicated, inter alia, to improvement of their education facilities with the assistance of the State.

The possibility of self-interest on the part of Mr Berdien cannot be excluded. Michael B. Katz's observation about school initiatives in America has its relevance in this context as well:

Katz questioned the motives as well as the aims of urban school creators. They were neither benevolent nor disinterested. School reforms were advocated by an elite of wealth and position largely for their value in the flight to help solve the problems of urban-industrial society. In alliance with the elite were the aspiring middle class who saw the school as an agency of social mobility for their children. Educators joined the fight for school reform to enhance their precarious professional status.³

This, in a nutshell, will inform our evaluation of the persons and organisation concerned with the establishment of Muslim Mission Schools in Cape Town and its environs for the period under discussion.

The following salient features of the historical process will come into focus:

- 5.4.1 the implications of modernisation in the quest for State-subsidised Islam-oriented schools;
- 5.4.2 Dr Abdurahman's political philosophy and the educational implications of his political commitments;
- 5.4.3 the founding of the Simonstown Moslem School as an example of inter-community collaboration;
- 5.4.4 Salie Berdien's role in the establishment of the Mohammedeyeh Primary School in Wynberg;
- 5.4.5 the Cape Malay Association's quest for a new political patronage;
- 5.4.6 Abdurahman's influence in the founding of the Paarl Moslem State-aided school;
- 5.4.7 the practical effects of the State's education policy regarding school provision in Cape Town from 1920 to 1930;
- 5.4.8 Abdurahman's political role in the Indian community and its effects on his Cape Muslim constituency;
- 5.4.9 the founding of the Muir Street Moslem Primary School and the Worcester Moslem Primary School;

5.4.10 urban renewal in Schotsche Kloof and Abdurahman's vision of an Islam-oriented school in that area.

5.5 Within the selected time scale the following definition is especially valid and its explanatory usefulness self-evident in appreciating what is meant here by the modernisation of schooling for Muslim children.

The term "modernisation" - a conceptual cousin of the term "economic development", but more comprehensive in scope - refers to the fact that technical, economic, and ecological changes ramify through the whole social and cultural fabric. In an emerging nation we may expect profound changes (1) in the political sphere, as simple tribal or village authority systems give way to systems of suffrage, political parties, representation, and civil service bureaucracies; (2) in the educational sphere, as the society strives to reduce illiteracy and increase economically productive skills; (3) in the religious sphere, as secularised belief systems begin to replace traditionalistic religions; (4) in the familial sphere, as extended kinship units lose their pervasiveness; (5) in the stratificational sphere, as geographical and social mobility tend to loosen fixed, ascriptive hierarchial systems. Furthermore these various changes begin at different times and proceed at different rates in a developing nation.⁴

Cape Town's many religious communities found themselves part of a new political dispensation as citizens of the Union of South Africa. For the politically disabled there was effective exclusion from the highest legislative body because of white supremacy. But in those organs to which they still had access they displayed a keen interest giving their elected representative, Dr Abdurahman, their support whenever he had need for it. He in turn, could voice their concerns on public platforms and in the corridors of power, particularly when educational

defects and desires were discussed. They needed to be literate to enjoy the maximal benefits of their citizenship and social justice.⁵

Ad hoc organisations had to be established because the traditional structures of client and patron relationships that characterised earlier negotiation between imams and officialdom were obsolete. Social welfare and advancement were broadened in scope and effect and were no longer initiated within the constraints of the neighbourhood and kinsfolk contexts alone.⁶ Ethnic considerations in terms of indigenous Muslims and immigrants were becoming increasingly irrelevant as both communities went in search of schools willing to accept their children.

Writing about the effects of the introduction of free primary education for Coloureds in 1921, the Cape Superintendent-General observed: "we often hear that people do not value that for which they do not pay. In the Coloured schools, however, there is not sufficient accommodation for all who wish to attend: and those Coloured children who are able to gain admission to school value their privileges highly..."⁷

Progress in the provision of accommodation came at a glacial pace unless communities were prepared to erect the buildings wherein new schools might be organised. In this regard Abdurahman was invaluable to organisations established to that end.

- 5.6 Some of the financial burden that Abdurahman had to bear in 1913 was relieved by the State's increased funding of schooling that obviated the need for school fees to contribute to staff salaries. That fact heartened many less affluent persons to acquire land and buildings for school purposes. In some of the Muslim Mission schools Abdurahman dominated with an efficient, autocratic style of management. In others the more conservative managers who did not equate modernisation with all of Abdurahman's philosophy held their own even if his success was

5.7 Not one of Abdurahman's contemporaries in the 1920s and 30s was more au fait with the cultural deficit of Cape Town's non-whites vis-a-vis the white citizenry with whom he socialised and deliberated in statutory bodies. He would not only criticise the educational environment that generated social inferiority, but would actively be committed to recreate it. First he was obliged to examine the policy that found its expression in educational provision. At a mass meeting in Cape Town's City Hall he showed:

5.7.1 there was no clear State policy regarding the provision of educational facilities and opportunities for non-whites;

5.7.2 existing educational facilities were outrageously inadequate for at one school, 250 coloured pupils were being taught by only three teachers;

5.7.3 one teacher was responsible for the instruction of 122 children at a certain school's sub-standard class;

5.7.4 the average salary of the coloured assistant teacher was lower than that earned by a municipal dirt-cart driver or a caretaker of a public toilet in the city.¹⁰

A man who had exerted himself energetically to improve the physical environment of Cape Town had necessarily to measure the advancement in social conditions of the city he helped to govern. He had a policy regarding the former, but those who governed the social institutions such as schools were clearly in default. Symptomatic of that dereliction was the overcrowding of schools which had the effect of delaying social advancement. The youngest of the school population, the most vulnerable in pedagogic terms were suffering incalculable harm because of lack of accommodation. Little inducement existed for the recruitment of additional staff if teaching salaries could not compare favourably with municipal employees whose remuneration was crucial to Abdurahman's strategy of social uplift.

5.8 An editorial of The Cape Times endorsed Abdurahman's sentiments regarding the lack of a clear political intent, or public policy towards the education of Cape Town's disadvantaged non-whites. It enlarged on Abdurahman's address by citing the

following pertinent facts supporting the modernisation of education:

- 5.8.1 South African public opinion did not grasp the extent of its educational problems;
- 5.8.2 rapid economic and social changes had taken place, especially in the towns;
- 5.8.3 the "mission school" period had ended and the coloured people could no longer be regarded as mere clients and dependents of the whites;
- 5.8.4 coloured people were entering more "into the intricacies and intimacies of our economic life" showing increasingly a capacity to live and act as civilised Europeans";
- 5.8.5 allocating more money for the education of non-whites would ensure that more schools were available to prepare a more productive citizenry.¹¹

Here the thrust of the argument is that provision of schools had to keep pace with economic trends and demands because the growing needs for goods and services required a skilled work force. The prospects for consumerism were limited by restrictive education policies too. Hence the following admonition of the grim political implications:

Merchants and others who lament the smallness of markets in a country of over seven millions of people would do well not to overlook the merely business aspect - putting at its lowest - of raising the whole standard of the coloured people by better education. Meanwhile those who shrink almost with horror from the cost of providing an adequate system of coloured education would do well to consider very seriously what their own method would be for the preservation of a civilised South Africa.¹²

Almost a century earlier, another protagonist of modernisation of the economy and education's utility, argued that the burgeoning industrial State of Massachusetts would be advantaged in these ways:

Universal education could be the "great equaliser" of human conditions, "the balance wheel of the social machinery" and "the creator of wealth undreamed of".

Poverty would almost assuredly disappear, and with it the rancorous discord between "haves" and the "have-nots" which had marked all of human history.¹³

This observation of Horace Mann was as valid for Cape Town of 1921 where education for the dominant class preceded the needs of the subjugated, though more numerous, coloureds.

5.9 Ogburn and Nimkoff present with greater clarity the grievance that Abdurahman and those of his persuasion sought to redress:

When culture begins to change, the modifications do not occur evenly in all parts of the social heritage. Some parts change faster than others.

When the different parts are interrelated, the varying rates of change produce a strain between the unequally moving parts. The part that is moving at the slowest rate of speed constitutes the cultural lag. Since the other part of culture has already changed, as a rule the most practicable method of effecting better integration between the two parts is to make some adjustment to the part that is lagging.¹⁴

Culture and economy were indeed changing in Cape Town of the 1920's and these changes were directly related to the educational dispensation that by default made the coloured part of the social machinery move at a slower rate. The resulting tension found its expression in the fact that most coloured organisations had to include "education" in its programme of social action, "to make some adjustment to the part that is lagging". It was an important plank in the platform of the A.P.O., the Cape Malay Association and local Muslim associations outside Cape Town.

5.10 Wherever Muslims settled they established mosques as centres of worship and cultural reproduction, but they were increasingly drawn into the main stream culture where their inadequacies were keenly felt in the job market. Leading figures in the administration of mosques were especially alive to the optimal use of their cultural facilities. They looked with interest to the model schools with which Abdurahman was associated. A case in point is the Muslim community of Simonstown.

5.11 The background as a settled community of this South African naval base has been sketched as follows:

Malay artisans, both slave and free, pobably did much to develop the harbour of Simonstown following the instruction of Van Imhoff, and work carried out in the 18th century is believed to be the original cause of the growth of the Malay community in the area.

As the earliest permanent community of significant size in Simonstown, the Malays located themselves close to the harbour near the centre of the town. A room was set aside for worship throughout most of the 19th century and in 1876 a mosque was built. In 1925 the mosque was rebuilt on the same site and extensions for a school incorporated into the building.¹⁵

If any community is to be recognised as the pioneer labouring class of the town then it was the Muslim community whose residence there goes back to the earliest days of its settlement. That they were generally an indigent community is borne out by the lapse of time between the founding of the town and the construction of the first mosque. As a small community the room that served as their place of worship would have sufficed as the place for the traditional Islamic school.

Technological advance by way of improved transportation between Simonstown and Cape Town might have impressed on perceptive

community leaders their own cultural lag in comparison with communities at Claremont, Salt River and particularly in Cape Town.

- 5.12 Even their relative isolation did not allow them to escape Abdurahman's appeal for help in the establishment of the Rahmaniye Institute. A letter addressed to Mr Abdul Aziez, The Gardens, Simonstown, dated 31st October, 1914 acknowledged implicitly that not too much was expected:

We intend to give a bazaar about the middle of December in aid of the Aspeling Street school for Moslem children, and I am appealing to you to give us a little assistance in some way or other.

We have over three hundred children attending the school and we are badly in need of funds.¹⁶

Coming from such an esteemed person the appeal could hardly have been refused, but Abdurahman was planting the idea of a similar institution rising to their need.

- 5.13 Mr Sedick Davis¹⁷ who was born in Simonstown in 1910 recalls the consternation in the Muslim community in 1920 when he and all other Muslim children at the Anglican Mission School, St Francis, were told that there was no accommodation for them. It was then a community of some 300 souls and the menfolk were mostly engaged in the Royal Navy's dockyard or worked as craftsmen, tailors, fishermen and labourers. A small Indian element was added to the community when some retail shops were opened at the turn of the century.

Although the children expelled from the Mission school did find accommodation elsewhere, it was felt by the imam and the congregation that Muslims should establish their own denominational school attached to the mosque. Although no hard evidence exists, a consultation with Dr Abdurahman could have ensued, and encouragement obtained. His contact with this community is borne out by the above letter, (supra 5.12).

5.14 At a meeting held on 9 July, 1923, interested members of the Simonstown Muslim community unanimously elected Mr H.B. Manuel, the first manager of the school and the Cape Education department was advised accordingly.¹⁸

Community initiatives of this nature could only have been welcomed by the Department at the time because the growth of population outstripped the availability of schools. Statistics given by the Superintendent-general of Education showed that of the 426 educational institutions in the Cape Province, 399 were Mission Primary Schools and only 17 were under the supervision of school boards.¹⁹

It can be appreciated that church congregations such as in Simonstown would avail their school facilities in the first instance to their members' children.

5.15 Schools were generally insufficient as the following report illustrates:

The majority of coloured school children receive only a shortened primary education in a mission school.

As good work as possible is done under very difficult circumstances. Nearly all the buildings have been designed primarily for church purposes; and the accommodation available is usually taxed to the utmost. Indeed, many of the schools are seriously overcrowded.²⁰

Given this distressing state of affairs it was indeed a paltry sum that the Union Treasury made available to relieve the situation. Simonstown's Muslim community thus made their application for a State-aided school at a fortuitous time.

Mr A.W. Pomeroy, Acting Superintende-General of Education, wrote to the manager, Mr H.B. Manuel of 5 Alfred Lane, Simonstown on 18 September, 1923:

I have to inform you that the Department has now

been authorised to proceed with the establishment of a limited number of new schools out of the sum of £12 000 advanced by the Union Government. If you will kindly complete the accompanying appointment form on behalf of the principal at the above school, the school will be placed on the list of Government-aided schools as from the 1st October next.²¹

- 5.16 A noteworthy feature of the Simonstown Moslem Primary School was that it was initiated by the Mosque Congregation as an integral part of the mosque-building complex and administered as such, but with Mr H.B. Manuel, a trustee of the mosque, serving as the Manager. In this respect the school was quite unlike the Rahmaniye Institute which did not have and was not intended to have such an association.

However, the Simonstown Muslim congregation was in fact imitating the other religious congregations of their town. Observance of the Islamic precepts of conduct was thus a sine qua non of qualifying for election to office as a trustee of the mosque and the school.

- 5.17 According to the minutes of a meeting held on Sunday, 16 July, 1911, at the Alfred Hall (Simonstown) a European, Mr William Runciman (also an acquaintance of Dr. A. Abdurahman) was present as an advisor.

Mr Runciman advised the Congregation not to take a bond on the Mosque property as he felt that they could easily raise the requisite finance in a very short time. He also advised them not to seek pecuniary aid outside of Simonstown.²²

To a small community this advice was not only practical good sense in business terms, but also a directive regarding their autonomy. Thus the title deeds of the mosque (No. 766) and of the attached dwelling house which later became the primary school (No. 4472) was on no occasion removed from the custody of the trustees.

5.18 A trust deed adopted at a meeting of the "Mohammedan Congregation of Simonstown" on Monday, 21 August, 1911, stipulated, inter alia,

1. The Mosque shall be known by the name of and called, "Noorul-Islam".
2. The above mentioned and all other property belonging to the said Community shall be held by and shall be vested in nine Trustees all members of the Moslem Congregation and three of whom shall be Indians or of Indian descent.²³

Thus was recognised the ethnic duality of the congregation and a proportional representation was assured for an economically more affluent segment.

This recognition also brought the Indian segment into direct participation in the community's cultural and educational endeavours effecting a local synthesis of their aspirations in the sphere of education.

Self-reliance was so impressed upon the Simonstown community that they managed out of their own financial resources and by voluntary labour to complete the two classroom for their own denominational school within two years.

5.19 In effecting the appointment of the first principal of the Simonstown Moslem primary school the influence and involvement of Dr A. Abdurahman is clearly discernable. Mr Salie Berdien, the Simonstown appointee, who held the T3 teaching qualification had served on the staff of the Rahmaniyyeh Institute of which Abdurahman was the manager.²⁴

His appointment, presumably on Abdurahman's recommendation to Mr H.B. Manuel, could have been informed by the following facts:

- 5.19.1 Berdien came from a prominent Wynberg Muslim family;
- 5.19.2 he was professionally qualified and an experienced teacher under Abdurahman's direction at the Rahmaniyyeh Institute;

- 5.19.3 as an assistant teacher he would have had an increase in status and salary by being appointed principal in Simonstown, thanks, in part, to Abdurahman's patronage.

The web of Abdurahman's social relationships and political influence was intersected and reticulated by such informal arrangements as existed between himself and other school managers such as Mr H.B. Manuel of Simonstown and Mr E. Noordien of the Salt River Moslem Public School. Max Weber appreciated this complexity of social relationship and social or institutional change that might emanate from it.²⁵

- 5.20 Along with Mr Salie Berdien the Simonstown school manager also appointed as his assistant teacher a local white lady, Mrs Basson, because no local Muslim lady teacher was available. Again, the precedent of Abdurahman at Rahmaniyeah was being followed with the understanding that Mrs Basson was charged only with the school's academic programme.

Although a teacher of Islamic religious instruction was also appointed, the Cape Education Department was not prepared to subsidise his salary as it was prepared to do at Rahmaniyeah, Talfallah and the Salt River schools. A special fund had to be created to ensure this teacher's remuneration. Nevertheless, Mr Berdien appeared greatly heartened by the successful initiative at Simonstown and thenceforth devoted himself earnestly to establish a similar school in his own community of Wynberg.

- 5.21 Given the personality and gifts of Mr Salie Berdien, in a sense a protégé of Dr Abdurahman, we find in Wynberg an interesting interplay of causation, teleology and the fortuitous when the Muslim Mission School in that community comes into being. Biological factors such as the change in size of the population after 1920 and the increasing demand for school accommodation as well as the variations in race, colour and culture of the population accompanied by increased political awareness contributed to the impulse for change through education. Individuals and groups responded to the need for changes in Islamic education.

The individual assessment cannot be separated from the group assessment. Each has nevertheless its own coherence. There is the individual personality on the one hand, there are the group-sustained mores on the other. The evaluational scheme is imperfectly coherent on both levels, deviates on both levels from the professed norms, and is forever subject to change. But these interdependent schemes of valuation together constitute the assessing system by means of which diverse factors are brought within the single order of social causation.²⁶

Therefore it could hardly have been difficult for Berdien to persuade his community to found its own Islam-oriented school.

- 5.22 Berdien was a member of an esteemed and, compared to most, an affluent, land-owning family of Wynberg. Their public-spirit-
edness was widely known in the Cape Peninsula. He seems to have been an exemplary student for his time and availed himself of the existing opportunities for formal education.

Having completed his primary schooling at the Battswood School of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in Wynberg, he proceeded to the Cape Town Training College then located in Queen Victoria Street, Cape Town. After obtaining the T3 teachers' qualification Abdurahman appointed him to the staff of the Rahmaniye Institute in 1915.²⁷ After he qualified the College became exclusive to "Europeans".

- 5.23 A profile published in a Cape Town newspaper in 1934 mentioned the following facts about Berdien's background and stature within the Wynberg Muslim community:

The son of a Malay Minister of religion, the late Emaum Abduraquib Berdien of Wynberg, he is the Secretary of the Yusufiye Mosque, near the Railway Station, Wynberg.

The said Mosque and the site upon which it

Christian segment of the coloured community had their socio-cultural interests advanced by their respective churches.

- 5.26 In terms of the Ginsberg hypothesis Berdien was obliged to adjust that part of the social order that was moving at a slower rate than their reference groups, the dominant whites and their cultural appendage, the Christian coloureds, represented. While partisanship was anathema to the conservative elements of the Muslimbourgeoisie and, ipso facto, a divisive factor, association with Abdurahman and with "politics" had to be avoided in socio-cultural pursuits. As president of the A.P.O. his 1923 directive to the coloured people could be construed as provocative to the dominant class which Berdien and associates had to negotiate with for concessions and favours. They might have taken umbrage at Abdurahman saying:

... it seems to me that we have little hope of securing the blessings of education until we have gained our political freedom.³⁰

- 5.27 Berdien's heart was set on building an Islam-oriented school in Wynberg and he could reasonably have assumed that he could serve as the patron of his Wynberg clients towards the end. Thus Davids accounts for the growth of the Cape Malay Association when he declares:

Politics was the last concern of the Cape Malay Association. The strong religious sentiments; promises of concrete efforts to alleviate their social problems and the support of the local Muslim clergy, among them the popular imams, Mogamat Sudley Awaldien and Sheikh Achmat Behardien, were important drawing factors for the Cape Malay Association. It soon gained popularity and the almost undivided support of the Cape Muslims in the Western Cape.³¹

Significantly enough, when this body was founded, Abdurahman stayed aloof, but did not apparently utter a word of public censure confident in the knowledge that the individuals might

in clandestine ways solicit his patronage.

They did indeed take to heart much of his public advice to his disadvantaged community. In 1913 he had urged the coloured people to achieve more by way of education, trade, industrial effort, and buying land.³² All these steps were to promote the growth of the middleclass. They were possible outside the constraints of "politics" and within the programme of an organisation that Berdien wished to foster.

5.28 Under the auspices of the Wynberg Branch of the Cape Malay Association a "Moslem Public Meeting" was convened in the St John's Hall, off Wellington Road, Wynberg, on Sunday, 19 October 1924. "All Moslems, Malays, Indians, Arabs, etc." were invited to attend.³³

The object of the meeting was the establishment in Wynberg and District "of a school for the education of children of Mohammedan faith".

The meeting resolved:

- 5.28.1 that a school as aforesaid, to be known as Mohammedeyah Moslem School, should be founded;
- 5.28.2 that to found such school, funds should be obtained by way of subscription, donations, and the holding of functions;
- 5.28.3 that if and when sufficient funds as aforesaid were available, the school should be commenced and ground purchased;
- 5.28.4 that all matters connected with the said proposed school should be charged to a committee of twelve than and there elected;
- 5.28.5 that the said committee should be known as the Mohammed eyah Moslem School Joint Committee.³⁴

A crucial feature of this resolution is that which circumscribes the manner of fund-raising, and which implicitly forbids the raising of a mortgage bond with the property as collateral. The fact that on 12 July, 1929 a mortgage bond No.

5958 was raised resulted in a litigation before the Cape Supreme Court in which the validity of the school's representative body was contested.³⁵

- 5.29 It appears that Berdien earned the displeasure of a section of the Wynberg Muslim community when he created the Moslem Education Trust. This Trust acquired land for the school buildings and proceeded to obtain registration for the State's aid. Thus the Mohammedeyah Moslem School became a State-aided school in terms of Sections 325 and 326 of Ordinance No. 5 (1921) as from 1st November, 1929.

There seems to have been some haste in the establishment of the school if a mortgage bond was necessitated to complete the building. Berdien's personal advantage in the matter could have been his appointment as the school's first principal and thus being relocated nearer to his home. Wynberg had a larger Muslim community with the prospect of promotion greater than in Simonstown's case. Ostensibly, Berdien as principal would be directly concerned with a school seen to be the first of many that the Moslem Education Trust would bring into being. It was the greatest good for the greatest number that motivated Berdien and associates.

Therefore, as the prime defendant in the litigation Berdien, in resigning his post at Simonstown to take up the principalship in Wynbeg was the most knowledgeable as to the question of whether his own or the community's interests were being served.

- 5.30 Apparently, Berdien felt obliged to create the Moslem Education Trust rather than function with the Joint management Committee that the original resolution stipulated. In a submission to the court Berdien showed that the original resolution was impracticable because of the following prescriptive clauses:

- 5.30.1 that the grounds and the buildings when acquired, would be transferred on behalf of and for the benefit of all Moslems irrespective of race, nationality or

place of residence and vested in the name of nine trustees comprising eight Emaums (priests) and one member of an organisation known as the Wynberg Branch of the Cape Malay Association;

5.30.2 that each emaum who was a trustee would have the right to appoint four delegates consisting of three Cape Malays and one Indian from members of his congregations to serve on the management committee of the said school, known as the Joint Management Committee;

5.30.3 that the said Joint Committee should consist of the principal of the said school for the time being, the delegates by the emaums as aforesaid, and four delegates appointed by the Wynberg Branch of the Cape Malay Association.³⁶

5.31 The court heard that only six emaums appointed delegates and the Wynberg Branch of the Cape Malay Association effected the other appointments to complete the Joint Management Committee. However, because of the apparent apathy and discontent with Berdien's modus operandi the Committee became defunct. To ensure the continued administration Berdien created the Moslem Education Trust.

This Trust espoused the following objectives:

5.31.1 to undertake the control and administration of existing schools and other educational trusts;

5.31.2 to establish other Moslem schools or other Moslem educational institutions for primary, secondary or higher education.

5.32 From the above it is clear that a broad mass movement with the aid of the traditional leaders, the imams, was envisaged.

This was unlike the approach of Abdurahman who could disregard the imams unless they deferred to his authority as in the case of the Claremont Talfalah Institute.

Berdien could have seen the support of the imams as an assurance of the support from the congregations. When the

imams were not forthcoming with unquestioned support, Berdien took a leaf from Abdurahman's book and created another body, the Moslem Education Trust to consolidate the school as an educational institution.

- 5.33 The new Trust was far more ambitious in aspiring to "control of existing schools and other educational trusts". Implicit herein is not only the possibility of establishing schools on a larger scale perhaps under the aegis of his Cape Malay Association, but also to create secondary and tertiary educational institutions as were at that time the preserves of the churches. It implied teacher-training too. A reasonable conclusion is that Berdien was bringing the Cape Malay Association into greater prominence using as its launching the management of the Mohammedeyeh School. That he deferred to the reality of Indians as a powerful economic entity even in Wynberg was perhaps to counter any charge of ethnic exclusiveness. That would have alienated a powerful source of financial support but also have negated the school's claim to an Islamic orientation in which ethnicity is irrelevant. The stated aims of the Moslem Education Trust suggest that it was to be an instrument of social change and educational modernisation. Extending the Muslim community's educational facilities could only have been realised in an organisation more widely distributed in its membership and influence.

In other words, the objectives of the Trust that Berdien created were inseparably bound to the role he saw for the Cape Malay Association.

- 5.34 Unlike Abdurahman who in public at least saw the Muslims as part of the demeaned and politically impotent coloured group, Berdien saw them as a distinct cultural collectivity with special needs, and, ipso facto, a special role to play in society. Stated in another way, Berdien was for the Muslim community's modernisation through more formal education but not by way of secularisation in toto.

A primary school with an Islam orientation was clearly not

argument based on a different premise: as it is for the dominant whites, so too for the subjugated coloureds, is citizenship and its rights and obligations a birthright; it cannot be granted unconditionally to some but conditionally to others. Schools alone cannot accomplish a change of heart or a just social order, therefore

He opposed color discrimination. He opposed segregation... He fought these matters where, he believed, the root lay; in political discrimination and in the withdrawal of the full franchise from the non-white people of the Cape... He saw with clear insight how the lack of political power would lead to discrimination in other spheres - in occupations, in wages, in education, in housing, in social matters.³⁸

Because the colour discrimination was most pronounced and insidious in the area of public education where the political socialisation of the young was consciously perpetrated the segregatory social order was being reproduced and perpetuated.

Although no public record exists, Abdurahman might well have judged Berdien's conception of what "good citizenship" for coloureds could accomplish as naive and misguided. Politically, Berdien was opposed to Abdurahman, perhaps, on occasion, antagonised by the latter's candour or impatience. Of his character a writer notes:

Charismatic, dictatorial, eloquent, furiously energetic, Abdurahman snatched up each challenge as it was offered him. Often his tactics or his razor-sharp tongue landed him in hot water with black and white alike. Abdurahman was not disheartened. Right was right and wrong was wrong, that was what counted.³⁹

5.38 Being at that time the most capable public spokesman for educational justice presented Abdurahman with a quest of such magnitude that he might have devoted all of his time between

1920 and 1940 to it. But other urgent matters seemed to demand his attention and divert his furious energies and passionate commitment. This respite gave his detractors reason to hold him to account, and reinforce Muslim traditionalists view that his sincerity could be questioned.

While marshalling the forces on the broad political front as president of the A.P.O. he was also sensitive to the plight of the Indian community and keen to address their grievances.⁴⁰

A visit to India to address the Viceroy compelled his long absence from Cape Town and the delegation of his managerial role at the two Muslim Mission schools to others. Berdien and his Cape Malay Association had a breathing space in which to consolidate their organisation. An even worse dereliction was that he was outside the country while an official investigation was being conducted into the educational problems of the Coloured people.

- 5.39 An Education Commission had been created in 1925 and Abdurahman's apparent disregard for its importance evoked this dissatisfied observation:

Some six months back, a Commission to enquire into Coloured Education was appointed, and to the satisfaction of the coloured community, two coloured men, Dr. A. Abdurahman and Mr Hendricks were appointed to serve on this commission...

However, we now find that Dr Abdurahman has seen fit to proceed to India for at least four months. Is this commission to wait until he returns?

I suggest that a mass meeting of coloured people be called, and that the authorities be asked for a definite statement whether the commission has been shelved, or for the appointment of another person in place of Dr Abdurahman.

I hope the Teachers' League or some other coloured organisation will take the matter up, and convene the suggested meeting with a view to

speeding matters up.⁴¹

J. EDWARDS

What is clearly implied in this matter is the crucial importance of the matter which Abdurahman preferred to disregard while great hopes were pinned on his participation in the enquiry. As the initiator of the Teachers' League and the mentor of its leading lights Abdurahman's ordering of priorities was not going to elicit a whimper of protest from that quarter.

- 5.40 While he was absent the constitution of the Rahmaniyyeh Institute allowed him to suspend meetings of the management committee, and the manager to hold the fort. In his absence the building at that school deteriorated. A report by the Inspector of Education in 1925 noted:

The building last year was in a much improved condition, but it had again fallen into disrepair. Many window-panes were broken, and the roof was still in a leaky condition.⁴²

Considering the area in which the Rahmaniyyeh Institute was located it could be expected that overcrowding and vandalism would show in the standard of maintenance. The manager's vigilant care was essential, but Abdurahman would not surrender the position to anyone who might have had more time for the responsibility.

- 5.41 Rahmaniyyeh's neglect was symptomatic of Abdurahman's realisation that his own contribution had its limitations for he had reached a point where the State's increased subsidisation of the Muslim mission schools was an urgent problem for the political arena. In a sense, his educational initiative could be construed as the pursuit of politics by other means. Yet, the schools themselves were to him as their manager a means for the exercise of his authority within the coloured community.

His influence extended wherever coloured communities were settled in the Cape in part because of his presidency of the African Political Organisation. To the Muslim community he was the manager of three Muslim mission schools and his advice was eagerly sought by others wishing to emulate his example in founding such a school in the small towns. Paarl is a case in point.

- 5.42 Mr Bean, Abdurahman's collector of funds for Rahmaniye Institute, had been sent out to Paarl soliciting contributions. A letter to Mr H. Latief of Van der Lingen Street dated 9 December, 1913, sought a contribution of flowers for sale at the Rahmaniye bazaar.⁴³ Thus Abdurahman had a patron-client relationship with the Paarl Muslim community which might have been instrumental in that community's decision to change their traditional religious school (Madressah) into a State-aided Muslim Mission School. The following details about the school reveal that Abdurahman's correspondent in Paarl became the first principal:

Following representations to the then Administrator of the Cape, Sir Frederick de Waal, the building was brought into use as a Government-aided Mission School under the Cape Provincial Administration from 1923. A condition laid down was that no non-Muslim child was to be enrolled, while a full-time Arabic teacher (Emam Kiemie Gamielien), was provided and paid for by the Education Department. Mr Hajeez Latief was the first and only teacher and became the first Principal when one assistant was added around 1929.⁴⁴

Even if the "representations" alluded to are not elaborated it would not be unreasonable that if a deputation was sent to the Administrator, Abdurahman, as the only Muslim Member of the Cape Provincial Council might have been leading the deputation. Armed with his expert knowledge of Muslim Mission Schools he might have pointed precedents out to the Administrator and secured the concession of a State subsidy for the Arabic teacher's salary.

For as long as Abdurahman could relate on mutually advantageous terms with the political party in power his political stance was unassailable. Once the power structure was changed by way of national elections his negotiating value on behalf of the Muslim community was being questioned in some places.

After 1924 Abdurahman had for the first time to contend with leading personalities in the Muslim community who wished to hasten the pace of school provision.

- 5.43 Mindful of the need to have their children placed in schools, Muslims were also keen to extend the Muslim Mission Schools for Islamic education was to them an indispensable part of the character-training their children were entitled to have. A solicitous Abdurahman had demonstrated his ability in this connection, but other irresistible challenges were drawing him from the fray. By 1925 some disillusionment with Abdurahman as champion of Islam-oriented schools was becoming palpable; his unqualified commitment was no longer axiomatic. Hence the declared aims of the Cape Malay Association to take over the existing schools and educational trusts in the Muslim community. (supra 5.31)

In the view of malcontents in the Cape Muslim community, Abdurahman was far too much involved with the Indian community's grievances although they had a political home in the South African Indian Congress of which Abdurahman's son-in-law Dr. A.H. Gool was the Deputy President.⁴⁵

Increasingly some of the Cape Muslims who sympathised with Afrikaner political formations saw their greatest advantage in a patronage they could obtain there. Perhaps they operated along the rationale: the enemy of my enemy is my friend. Abdurahman's political intimacy with the English establishment seemed not to be as valuable as once it was.⁴⁶

- 5.44 A new national government elected by the white voters and a few coloured voters⁴⁵ on 17 June, 1924, heartened the anti-Abdurahman elements among the Cape Town Muslims. Precisely one year later the Cape Malay Association convened an historic

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gathering in the Cape Town City Hall hoping to hear education policy spelled out from the horse's mouth. A morning newspaper reported the event thus:

What is considered one of the biggest gatherings of Mohammedans ever held in South Africa assembled at the City Hall last night on the occasion of the opening of the Cape Malay Association Conference. Practically every sect and shade of the many followers of Islam were represented.

Not a corner of the spacious hall, galleries and bays was unoccupied. The sea of red and black fezzes which packed floor and galleries alike, made a picturesque scene beneath the scintillating canopy of Chinese lanterns suspended from the centre of the roof - a remnant of the recent Royal decorations.

Amongst those present were Dr D.F. Malan (Minister of Education)...⁴⁷

Only an intensive propaganda campaign with the able and eager assistance of the traditional Muslim leadership, the imams, could have been so rewarded. Neither the presence nor the influence of Dr Abdurahman could account for such an attendance. On the contrary, he was significantly absent and his political patronage as well as his patrons were pointedly ignored. A disappointed editor noted the absence of a South African Party representative, "whose friendship for the Malay community requires no public protestation."⁴⁸

Political friendship without political power seemed hardly viable, or worth having. Dr Malan's presence had its own significance of the Cape Malay Association's premium placed on social advancement via educational opportunity.

5.45 Lest the bona fides of the new ruling party be called into question, and lest the formidable persuasion of Abdurahman had

sown doubts and reservations, Mr W. Snow, M.L.A. offered the Muslims this reassurance: "...whatever you have been told in the past... you have nothing to fear from this government".⁴⁹

As the former editor of the Afrikaans newspaper, "Die Burger", Malan had more than a cursory acquaintance with Cape Town's Muslims and their most pressing need for schools and social uplift which his hosts purported to address as an organisation. Malan's address tended to reinforce Snow's conciliatory tone:

He played on the Hertzogian concept of (the Cape Muslims') cultural identity with the Afrikaner, developing this theme to show the commonality of language and the development of that language - Afrikaans. He also expressed a recognition of Muslim civilisation and the parallel development of this civilisation with that of the Europeans in the history of this country.

He commended them for their sobriety, loyalty and love of hard work and promised them opportunities to further encourage the growth of their community.⁵⁰

Not only were Cape Muslims and white Afrikaners sharing the same geographic space but they were sharing semantic space by their use of Afrikaans, which gave them a base of shared meaning. Their adherence to their language was in both cases part of their resistance to cultural imperialism, a common ground for negotiation in a patron-client relationship.

- 5.46 Malan's vagueness and lack of candour beyond mention of "educational opportunities" could be attributed to the constitutional arrangements of the time. These precluded the Central Government's involvement in provision of schools. Speaking as a former minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, Malan could also not be more forthcoming on the provision of schools for the Muslim children, which was an important grievance of this community. His political power was the result of a compromise between white political formations brought into office by a white grievance vote,⁵¹ so he could

offer the Cape Malay Association no more than pious platitudes:

The interests of the Europeans are the interests of the Malays, and the policy for which the present Government stands is based on three great principles - South Africa first, co-operation of all civilised sections in the interest of a civilised country, and finally, justice for all.⁵²

In acknowledging that Muslims, too, were civilised, but not in terms of the connotation that whites attached to that qualification, Malan was hinting at their development parallel to the whites by "co-operation of all civilised sections". Even this possibility held out some hope to the participants of the Conference, for Malan's party espoused "justice for all".

5.47 Among the specifically educational decisions of the Conference were:

- 5.47.1 the introduction of Arabic as a third language in schools;
- 5.47.2 transfer of coloured education from the Provincial to the Central Government;
- 5.47.3 the introduction of night schools.⁵³

Arabic was already part of the curriculum at the Muslim Mission schools, but more by way of a special concession that could arbitrarily be withdrawn.

By implication the request was also for Arabic teachers to have their accreditation recognised and that they be duly compensated. In extension this could have been an inducement for Muslim students to study Arabic at tertiary institutions locally or overseas and be assured of State employment once qualified as teachers of the subject. Because of Arabic's strong religious associations educational policymakers did not seem too well disposed to affording Arabic an equal status with, say, Latin or Greek, also with religious associations,

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but of a more favourable kind. To prove just how precarious that status of Arabic really was, one might point to the fact that the Arabic teacher at the Rahmaniyyeh Institute was not classified as qualified by current accreditation criteria. What happened at Paarl throws more light on the official attitude to the Arabic teacher as a full member of a school's staff:

In 1931 the school's Arabic teacher reached retirement age and the Department insisted that his successor should be a qualified teacher on the permanent staff. As the enrolment did not warrant the appointment of another teacher, the community itself appointed and paid a part-time religious instructor who taught on the premises during school hours.⁵⁴

Thus the special concession granted could be lost by default rather than entail any alteration to the existing laws. One could also interpret this decision of the Conference as a request for the recognition of Islamic culture in the school curriculum, as a civil liberty to which tax-payers are entitled. More so if they perceived and the Minister of Education recognised that their salutary conduct was culture-related.

5.48 Transfer of coloured education to the Central Government implied both an impatience with the procrastination of the Cape Provincial Education Department in the provision of schools, but also amounted to the hope of a new client-patron relationship between apparently well-disposed Dr Malan and the leaders of the Cape Malay Association. Abdurahman's political influence and his patronage would thus be effectively curtailed. The doughty doctor was thus himself censured in the process by a community whose social advancement he could not or would not promote on the basis of narrow sectarianism. If education were to be an instrument of modernisation then Abdurahman's sense of honour did not permit the exclusion of others similarly disabled.

5.49 The introduction of night schools was in fact mooted by Sir

James Rose-Innes and implemented by the Anglican Church. However, it would seem that the type of night schools the Conference had in mind were non-sectarian ones offering a chance of further education to children obliged to terminate their school careers and who thus were unprepared for the market of skilled labour.

This might also have been a remedial step because of the limited accommodation in the conventional schools of Cape Town. But the most important implication was a greater expenditure of the State to raise the level of education for a disadvantaged community.

- 5.50 An aversion for the "political" still prevailed among those who considered the Muslim community's social advancement and the modernisation of its education as a sphere of interest from which non-Muslims were best excluded. It was a "domestic" matter that had no place in the contest of parties.

Some conservative persons in Cape Town's Muslim community felt it unwise that the Cape Malay Association should have given the impression of support for the Minister of Education and the sectional interests he represented. Indeed, the Chairman, Mr M.A. Gamiet, had, in the opinion of one person, caused disaffection as a letter to The Cape Argus made clear:

I deem it, Sir, a disgrace to our Association to have carried on in such a manner, instead of discussing religious, social and educational matters, which vitally affect the life of our community.⁵⁵

Gamiet and Abdurahman had essentially the same educational objective, viz., more schools for Muslim children. But the former had allowed some point scoring in the manner he sought to display a new political patronage, and a new political process. Abdurahman operated on the assumption that politics could be treated as an autonomous institutional sphere and in which he acquired a persona that an electorate of diverse religious affiliation demanded. Only his fez worn in public

testified to his cultural affiliation, but his rhetoric, in the main, testified to a theological neutrality that allowed him to articulate the hopes and grievances of Christians and Hindus as well as Muslims. Poverty, ignorance or disease were common to people of all religions and intolerable to Abdurahman. But the racial arrogance that characterised the denial of so much of the benefits of citizenship to non-whites was his pet aversion. This alone could draw him from his managerial duties at the three Muslim Mission schools to take his fight to distant parts.

... in 1927 the South African Indian Congress paid Abdurahman - a non-Indian - the singular compliment of choosing him to lead a delegation to the Viceroy of India to protest against the (South African) government's proposed legislation on local Asians.⁵⁶

People who placed too many hopes on Abdurahman to redress local wrongs, or who resented his involvement with what was perceived to be an immigrant group, did not see that his fight redounded to the credit of the entire non-white community of Cape Town. His moral sense for equity thus gave him international prominence. Muslim political opponents would disagree.

- 5.51 Gamiet's educational ideals were not advanced one iota by extending his platform to Dr Malan and his Pact Government colleagues. Ironically, when a commission was appointed to enquire into the needs of the coloured community with regard to education (supra 5.39) it was Abdurahman who was recognised by the State as the most eligible person to serve on the commission.

Both men must have realised how little they counted when Malan interpreted the Pact Government slogan "South Africa first", or even "justice for all". (supra 5.46) In 1926 the Pact Government enacted the Apprenticeship Act which cancelled every promise of justice for and consideration of the coloured people's needs. To counter the possible exclusion from trades

and occupations that his people had practiced for centuries, Gamiet called for compulsory education for coloureds too.⁵⁷

- 5.52 Without the implimentation of compulsory education, Gamiet was sure that the social advancement of coloured people and their greater involvement in the economic life in higher categories of work were jeopardised.

In 1921 the coloured population of the Cape Province was about 485 000 and some 10% of this population was attending school. By 1926 their number rose to 508 000 and the number of school-going children increased by 1% to 11%. White children of the Cape were in that period compelled by the School Board Act to attend school and not a single eligible child went unschooled.⁵⁷

It was with understandable bitterness that Gamiet addressed the Cape Malay Association's annual conference on 27 January, 1927, when he castigated, "the white extremists of the North and the cant and hypocrisy of politicians at the Cape".⁵⁸

The prospect of a client-patron relationship between the Cape Malay Association and the Cape National Party died with that public declaration. If the education of the Muslim community were to be further advanced it had to be within the existing statutory structures and by the community's own initiatives and resources. They alone could place themselves first in the process of modernisation.

Even the white dominant Cape School Board tended to dampen the enthusiasm on occasion.

- 5.53 In Cape Town's densely populated District Six there was an increasing desire of parents to give their children a basic education by the eager support of every fund-raising drive to extend school buildings. A socially distant officialdom feared going too far and too fast with school provision and would insist on suitable standards as the Cape School Board's 1929 Annual Report illustrates:

The proposed establishment of a new school in Pontac Street was not agreed to by the Department. Two reasons given were the unsuitability of the Hall and the possibility of over supply of accommodation in view of the extension of certain Mission Schools in the vicinity. The matter is therefore in abeyance pending the result of the Mission School extensions.⁶⁰

Unfortunately this report does not present statistical data to confirm why there might have been "an over supply" of school accommodation in an area where at that time no compulsory schooling was implemented, nor is it clear that even if the existing schools were being extended why the teacher/pupil ratio was acceptable. Thus even if the Education Department was not itself concerned with the building of schools in the area it was non too helpful in recommending how the "unsuitable Hall" might have been made to conform to its minimum requirements.

- 5.54 A letter to the Cape School Board from the Superintendent-General of Education needs to be cited here to show the official policy regarding the provision of schools for coloured children of Cape Town in the 1920s:

With reference to the interview which a deputation from your Board had with the Honourable the Administrator and myself on 21st January, I have to say that while the policy of the Administration is that Coloured Education must for the present remain largely a denominational matter, it is not intended so to administer that policy as to rule out undenominational intervention when it is plain that denominational effort is powerless or inadequate to cope with a particular situation. The 1928 Ordinance is not viewed as depriving School Boards of the powers to establish schools for Coloured pupils in cases approved by the Department.

Where, for example, a thickly populated area is served by a number of Mission Schools, it may be a good plan to restrict these schools to Standard 111 or Standard 1V, and to provide instruction above such standard in a school under the School Board. In cases such as these, and in other exceptional circumstances, the general rule may be departed from subject, of course, to the necessary funds being available.⁶¹

From this letter could be deduced that the poorer classes were to have their schools provided by their churches, but were to be restricted as to the level at which they could conduct their classes. Their denominational schools would not have classes beyond Std. 1V. Then the School Board could provide for the higher level of instruction at schools built with State funds, if the funds were available. Thus a restriction on local initiative in the provision of schooling beyond Std. 1V effectively amounted to the termination of schooling for those unable to gain access into the School Board schools thereafter. For as long as school accommodation was inadequate it was also impossible to implement compulsory school attendance.

5.55 It is clear that the Cape Education Dept. tried to control the growth of the Mission school system but accepted the status quo as better than having children totally unschooled. Yet it was hardly forthcoming regarding the earnest address of the accommodation problem. A subsequent letter to the School Board advised them that the Cape Education Dept. would keep it informed of all its decisions to establish Mission Schools in the Cape Division. In that way the Board would be able to assess the adequacy of the school accommodation for coloured children.

5.56 Coloured people well disposed to the Government of the day were not finding their confidence rewarded by this official attitude to their children's schooling. On 17 August, 1923, the African Methodist Episcopalian Church had Dr A. Abdurahman M.P.C. as their guest speaker to open two new classrooms at

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their Mission School in Goodwood. People of Goodwood at that time were generally very poor and the extension of their school was indeed an admirable achievement.

Their distinguished guest told them that educational work was the concern of the State, not of the churches in an advanced society. Coloured people were by far the poorest in the Province, but were nevertheless required to provide their own schools. Education facilities of the highest order were, however, provided free to even the wealthiest Europeans. Economic and social conditions were making new demands on the work force of the country and contemporary educational provision by the churches was making no significant contribution to meet these demands.

- 5.57 No longer could the coloured people be content with a basic literacy inadequate to help them rise up from poverty. Abdurahman argued that formal education must be carried to the sixth standard to be of any use for that was then the standard of education prescribed for boys entering the skilled trades.

The position in 1923 was that few coloured schools could maintain a sixth standard since the vast majority of pupils were leaving after passing Std. 1V and in a culture of poverty many would leave even before that.⁶²

- 5.58 Perhaps Abdurahman recalled the poverty he saw in the cities of Scotland in his student days, but he was aware that poverty is an effect of opportunities denied. Only the intervention and the resources that the State could marshal could significantly reduce poverty. In an industrialising country a modernised education system was even more difficult for churches to provide. This could be explained thus:

Some hold that westernism or modernism is essentially rationality, others argue that it is essentially equality, others yet that it is impersonalism and an achievement orientation, and still others that it is politicisation of the

63
masses.

Abdurahman, the public representative, opening the school-rooms of the A.M.E. Church was striking a blow for the modernisation of schooling pointing to the manifest advantages that the dominant culture was enjoying. He was also persuading his audience to see education as removed from the religious context and to raise their sights higher. Nor could there be modernisation of their economic position without a heightened political awareness, i.e. calling the State to account.

- 5.59 Abdurahman would have conveyed an inaccurate impression if the application of education policy towards the coloureds were seen in isolation of their socio-political status in Cape Town at the time. The Administrator and the Cape Education Department could not but consider their schooling needs as peripheral.

From 1905 when the Cape School Board Act excluded all who were not white from the benefits of compulsory schooling,⁶⁴ the Act of Union and subsequent legislation aimed at them made the coloured people increasingly powerless to call the State to account. They had no direct voice in the disbursement of the revenue for education by the national legislature. Recognition of their political impotence is noted by Don Pinnock when discussing criminogenic factors in District Six during Abdurahman's lifetime:

Belief was reinforced that improvements could only be achieved through appeals to enlightened authority. These appeals were directed by organisations like the African People's Organisation, the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union and the African National Congress together with a multitude of others like school PTAs, teachers organisations, church groups, sports and music clubs and the City Council. Ideologically, these various groups reinforced the notion that coloureds must struggle as individuals (through getting an education or making it

in business) rather than collective action to escape their oppressed class position.⁶⁵

- 5.60 To the residents of District Six the post-World War 1 period was one of noticeable social and economic change that compelled a modification of attitudes to the schooling of children. The Muslim community's closely knit ascribed bases of social existence viz., kinship and mosque group affiliations were becoming less pronounced. Formal organisations such as social clubs, voluntary associations and special interest groups reflected an increasing emulation of the dominant culture in the urban social context of Cape Town. One such special interest group, the Indian Moslem Relief Fund emerged during the 1918 influenza epidemic to provide welfare aid to affected indigent families especially resident in District Six.

An appeal made to Indian Muslims in Transvaal and Natal was so well received that the sum of £1 000 was collected. Of this £600 was distributed among the needy. With the balance a small school was started in Aspeling Street, a kilometre or so from the Rahmaniyyeh Institute. This apparently traditional religious school had eventually to close down for lack of Muslim community support.

In 1923 the trustees of the Indian Relief Fund donated £200 to Dr Abdurahman towards the purchase of land and buildings in Schotsche Kloof (Bo-Kaap) that an Islam-oriented educational facility might arise there.⁶⁶

- 5.61 Rahmaniyyeh Institute's inability to cope with the demand for admission, and its management's inability to extend the existing number of classrooms forced the Indian Moslem Relief Fund to establish another Muslim Mission School in District Six. Thus it was giving its welfare orientation another expression responding to the community's need. This special interest group did not disband but retained its vitality because Abdurahman's organising ability seemed concentrated on other political and civic commitments. Perhaps he would not be too closely identified with "Indian" Relief Fund lest

he stifle their initiative or earned some censure from political opponents. Nevertheless, he had had some help from them and could not have been unaware of or indifferent to their intention to establish a school.

- 5.62 Almost all the founders of the Indian Relief Fund seem to have been in a special relationship characteristic of recent or second generation settlers.

... some evidence shows that migrants to cities display what might be called the "brother-in-law syndrome; they seek out relatives or tribesmen, reside with them while seeking employment and sometimes after finding it, and limit their social life primarily to them. The invariable development of racial, tribal, and ethnic "ghettos" in the growing cities of the world, it seems to me, reveals both outright residential discrimination and a search for community in cities.⁶⁷

That sense of community and the constructive energy it generates were focussed in District Six to address the problem of building an Islam-oriented school in 1929.

- 5.63 Mr M. Halim, president of the Fund, announced at a "largely attended and enthusiastic meeting of members of the Indian community of the Cape Peninsula" held at 38 Muir Street, Cape Town, that the trustees of the Fund had purchased for the sum of £3 200 a contiguous row of houses known as Nos. 10, 12 and 14 Pontac Street, Cape Town, as well as Nos. 36 and 38 Muir Street abutting on these properties.⁶⁸

- 5.64 Their declared intent was "founding a school for community requirements". About £5 000 was required to make the necessary alterations and construction for a school building conforming to requirements.

A list of the original donors to the Muir Street Moslem School testifies to the generosity of the Indian community so that

Most of the school committee members were members of the mosque's congregation.⁷⁰

- 5.66 Although Dr Abdurahman's influence in the establishment of the Muir Street school might have been negligible and his role in the selection of a principal only circumstantially established he was at that time very much involved and the central figure in the establishment of the Schotsche Kloof Institute.

It was in the Bo-Kaap where nine mosques and some communal prayer-rooms were located in 1924, which had the greatest concentration of Muslim families per square kilometer had no Islam-oriented primary school when there were already such schools in District Six, Salt River, Claremont, Simonstown and even Paarl.

At that time there were two schools in the area.

The St Pauls School which had been established in 1860 by the Reverend Lightfoot; and the Dutch Reformed Mission School on Riebeeck Square, called St Stephens Primary School. As both of these schools were built by specific religious communities, it would be expected that they would give preference to children whose parents were members of their church. This resulted in both schools being full and many Moslem children being denied access to even rudimentary secular education.⁷¹

- 5.67 As Dr. Abdurahman's consulting rooms were at 119 Loop Street, in the Bo-Kaap, on the western side of the city, this was also the catchment area of his medical practice.⁷²

More than any other community leader of that time Abdurahman was acquainted with the generally squalid and overcrowded living conditions of the poorest residents as well as the high mortality rate that such conditions could cause.

On the slopes of Signal Hill close to the Muslim Cemetery of the city (Tana Baru) where the pioneer teachers of the Muslims are buried, there was a large tract of undeveloped land.⁷³

It was perhaps in his capacity as chairman of the Cape Town City Council's Streets Committee that Abdurahman became aware of the possibility that a sizeable portion of unused land was for sale. Some ten years earlier as the President of the A.P.O. he had urged coloured people to buy land as an assertion of their civil rights almost as if anticipating the constraints that the various land acts of Parliament would in the future impose.⁷⁴ He had urged the disfranchised to greater exertions in respect of "education, trade, industrial effort and the acquisition of land". In 1924 he persuaded Mr M. Halim, president of the Indian Relief Fund, to provide £200 towards the purchase of land in Schotsche Kloof.

- 5.68 With his son-in-law, Dr Abdul Hamid Gool, who was serving with him on the Rahmaniyyeh Institute Management Committee, Abdurahman and some prominent businessmen formed themselves into the trustees of the Schotsche Kloof Institution. The name, probably conceived by Abdurahman himself, suggests that an ambitious community project was contemplated. This was not, however, a grassroots organisation such as initiated the Muslim primary schools at Simonstown, Wynberg or Paarl, but rather a cabal under Abdurahman's leadership.

On 25 March, 1924 the following trustees of the Schotsche Kloof Institution signed the Deed of Transfer to alienate the property from the estate of the late Mr William Cavanagh:

Abdullah Abdurahman, Khan Gool, Mohamed Halim,
Abdul Hamid Gool and Ganiefa Harris.

The land was nine morgen, one hundred and eighty nine square roods, one hundred and thirty-six square feet in extent. It was sold to the Schotsch Kloof Institution for Five Thousand and Twenty Pounds Sterling.⁷⁵

It was a cash transaction which indicates that the trustees were also the sole subscribers acting in the interest of the Muslim community for whose advantage they acquired the land and proposed to develop it.

Subsequent events were to show that Abdurahman's concern in the project was not without self-interest.

- 5.69 In the Bo-Kaap parents were turned away when seeking admission for their eligible children to the local church schools. Mr Khan Gool, a relative of Dr. A.H. Gool, was then a resident of the area and perhaps aware of the great need for another school. Pressures increased on the trustees to proceed with establishing the school even if the required amount for the intended building was not yet acquired.
- 5.70 Accordingly, the trustees decided to add two more rooms to the house on the land it had purchased, to effect further improvements and to seek registration of the school.

In 1931, Mr Mohamed Ashraf Abdurahman, a nephew of Dr A. Abdurahman, and brother of "Sonny" Abdurahman, principal of the Talfallah Institute in Claremont, was appointed principal at the age of 23. Mr Abdurahman had been on the staff of both the Talfallah Institute and the Salt River Moslem School in Kipling Street.⁷⁶

Since he was the manager of this school as well, Dr A. Abdurahman, might have had good reasons for this appointment, viz., to ensure that the incumbent was au fait with the intentions of the trustees, but loyal to the manager in a client-patron relationship, and also that his nephew was presented with a form of promotion and its associated position of influence and prestige. Thus was a member of the Muslim élite brought into alliance with the aspirant middle class and the school an agency of social mobility. (supra 5.4)

- 5.71 At this juncture it would be useful to examine the notarial deed of agreement that constituted the trustees on 28 December 1923. Some salient features are cited:

5.71.1 The Trustees of the Institution shall be those presently in office as such and, should any vacancy arise, it shall be filled by such person as may be elected by

the remaining Trustees provided that such newly elected Trustees shall be of the same nationality as the Trustee whose office he is elected to fill.

- 5.71.2 (Trustees are) to elect, out of their own number and/or of other persons of good standing and repute, a Board of management consisting of a Manager and at least four other members... for the proper control and management of the affairs of the Institution;
- 5.71.3 to take charge of, invest and control all the funds and assets of the Institution to the best advantage of the Institution, and
- 5.71.4 to regulate the policy of the Institution.
- 5.71.5 Trustees shall be eligible for election to such Board of management and any vacancies on such Board shall be filled by such persons as the Trustees may appoint provided that at all times the composition of the Board of Management shall maintain the same proportion in nationality as the Trustees.⁷⁷

It can be deduced from the above that the Institution was not to be administered by publicly elected persons but rather by the initial subscribers who are empowered to fill vacancies themselves. In this way Abdurahman might have sought to thwart a grassroots organisation like the Cape Malay Association in gaining control of the Institution. (supra 5.31) Hence the use of the term "cabal" (supra 5.49) to describe the management body that Abdurahman preferred.

It will be noted that the initial subscribers consisted of two Cape Muslims (Malays) viz., Messrs Abdurahman and Harris, and three "Indian" members, viz., Messrs. Gool, Gool and Halim. Such a proportional representation of "nationality" could also have had the effect of excluding chauvinist elements of either community.

However, by virtue of its geographic location, the school had to draw its clientèle from the Malay Quarter.

- 5.72 According to the school's first admission register, 156 children were enrolled by the principal, Mr M.A. Abdurahman during the first three days of the second term in 1931. Some were already registered at the church mission schools but were withdrawn by parents who preferred their children to benefit from the Islam-orientation of the Schotsche Kloof Primary School.

Among the children enrolled for the Sub A. class some were 9 and 10 years old and were attending school for the first time.

This shows how the shortage of school accommodation was affecting the community of the Bo-Kaap.⁷⁸

- 5.73 The Schotsche Kloof Primary School started in 1931 with the principal and three assistants teaching from Sub. A to Std. 2 that being all the number of classrooms permitted.

Besides the principal, three other teachers were appointed; Mr H. Edross, Miss Gow and Mrs Woodman. The following year when two Moslems qualified as teachers the two non-Moslem ladies resigned to make way for the two young Moslem ladies.⁷⁹

Being the Manager of the school Dr Abdurahman held a position of considerable power in the recruitment of teachers and could therefore make "political" appointments as he saw fit. By this means Abdurahman could accomplish the following:

- 5.73.1 loyalty to himself and his ideology from persons owing their employment or promotion to his favour and trust;
- 5.73.2 a significant role in developing the coloured middle class of whom teachers as professional people were a part in Cape Town;
- 5.73.3 promote a curriculum consonant with what he regarded as the needs of the community.

- 5.74 Paragraph 4 of the Notarial Deed of Agreement sets out the powers that Abdurahman's fellow trustees conferred on him and

his successors:

- 5.74.1 The Board of management shall through the Manager control and direct the Educational and Social activities of the Institution;
- 5.74.2 the manager shall appoint, suspend and dismiss the teaching and all other staff of the Institution;
- 5.74.3 the Manager shall receive monies and pay staff salaries in respect of running the Educational and social activities of the Institution, as well as advise the Trustees on all matters concerning the educational and social activities.⁸⁰

- 5.75 Significantly there is a link established in this document between the "educational and social" to indicate that the benefactors of the Schotsche Kloof community were concerned with more than just conducting a school but also with the amelioration of social conditions.

Although this school presented some relief to the problem of school accommodation and finding appointments for young qualified Muslim teachers, it was located in an economically depressed area. Housing was generally overcrowded and squalid for the labouring classes resident there. Thus there was an unacceptable mortality rate as a result of poverty-related diseases such as pulmonary tuberculosis. Incidence of tuberculosis is generally regarded as an index of insanitary living conditions, compounded by overcrowding of available housing.

- 5.76 To have been in such important posts as chairman of committees of the Cape Town City Council, a Member of the Cape Provincial Council and serving on ad hoc statutory bodies such as the Coloured Education Commission placed Abdurahman in a very privileged position regarding the socio-political disabilities of the coloured people. But he was even more privileged to know the prospects for their advancement and the means of bringing that about within the constraints that law and custom allowed.

Their state of poverty prevented them from having healthful housing without the intervention of the State. In the Bo-Kaap several thousand Muslims needed not only schooling but also homes. From 1927 onwards Abdurahman was insistent that the Cape Town City Council undertake a large scale building scheme to reduce the incidence of poverty-related diseases such as pulmonary tuberculosis.⁸¹

Herbert J. Gans has postulated the tragic irony that many in society have a personal stake in maintaining poverty,⁸² but Abdurahman could have been politically advantaged in getting the City Council to address the problem:

- 5.76.1 poverty in Cape Town was essentially concentrated in the coloured community from where Abdurahman drew much political support and enjoyed a creditability that gave him influence and leverage vis-a-vis the dominant class aware of their labour and consumer value;
- 5.76.2 under his direction and influence members of the Indian merchant and professional classes as well as a few affluent Cape Muslims could use their leisure time and surplus funds to establish and maintain schools to preserve and transmit Islamic culture as part of the conventional curriculum;
- 5.76.3 this class would also benefit from urban renewal programmes that would inject additional funds into the local economy as income increased and consumer demand also increased;
- 5.76.5 the socially peripheral would by virtue of upward social mobility have an increasing demand for education, and participation in the main stream economy and the political processes.

- 5.77 We need to look at the magnitude of the poverty and housing problems of the 1920s and 1930s to appraise Abdurahman's role in the light of the Ginsburg hypothesis, (supra 5.4). His surgery was located in close proximity to St Monica's Maternity Hospital where the Anglican parish of St Pauls provide a vital service to mothers of the Bo-Kaap and

environs. A report by the hospital's chairman⁸³ in 1933 gave this description of working class domicile in the Bo-Kaap:

Housing conditions are appalling. In tiny single rooms these coloured people live together sometimes two or three families in one room, sometimes in lofts - in tiny places scarcely larger than cupboards - in cellars and underground rooms, whose only light and air come from the door, or in adapted stables. Often with very little or no furniture at all. The bed may be a heap of dirty straw on the floor and the only furnishing a shelf on the wall. The floor itself may have holes large enough to see through into the room below. Is it any wonder that in such surroundings, with no privacy or attempt at it, ideals are lowered; and disease, moral and physical are rampant?

- 5.78 The co-founder of the Schotsche Kloof Institution, Dr. A.H. Gool was also persuaded to the view that only a dramatic initiative on the part of Muslims could effectively address many of the vexing social problems affecting the working class of the city.

As far back as 1913 when he addressed the inaugural conference of the Teachers' League of South Africa he related the poverty of this community with their susceptibility to diseases and their poor school attendance records:

Dr A.H. Gool estimated that well over 80% of coloured school children suffered from either tooth decay and infestation with lice whilst up to 30% might have suffered from more serious afflictions such as defective eye-sight and hearing, malnutrition, anaemia, consumption and "mental" deficiencies".⁸⁴

Bringing this information to the attention of teachers, the speaker seemed to intimate that the education of children is

not merely an impartation of knowledge and skills but also dependent on the health status of the educands.

- 5.79 At the time when Gool was addressing the teachers he and his father-in-law, Dr Abdurahman, were organising the establishment of the Rahmaniyyeh Institute even if the latter was convinced that mission schools had become obsolete. Through the columns of his newspaper, APO, Abdurahman argued against mission schools, as these institutions, per se, no longer made economic sense, nor were they politically defensible given the changing social and economic conditions.

Mission (school) education, it was argued, had outlived its usefulness, and now only served to handicap coloureds.

Even if they wanted to, the churches through sheer lack of resources were unable to provide coloureds with an adequate education.

They could not provide proper accommodation and equipment, pay teachers an adequate salary, implement a system of compulsory education or provide secondary education on any scale. The A.P.O. and Abdurahman on more than one occasion made stinging attacks upon the mission establishment for trying to strengthen their hold on coloured education. The A.P.O. constantly agitated for the transfer of the control of coloured education to school boards and for more public schools to be established.⁸⁵

In the light of the above it is questionable whether both Abdurahman, and Gool had intended the Schotsche Kloof Institution to be another mission school as this would have been contrary to what was generally perceived to be the policy of the A.P.O. That such a school eventuated was perhaps because of circumstances beyond their control.

There was to have been a phased development had time allowed. The little school they founded might have been conceived as a nucleus of an ambitious educational project associated with

training in skills as a panacea for the unemployment and under-employment that precede social evils such as poverty and all its related deviations from the norms of a "civilised" community which Abdurahman wished the community might become. To remove them from their conditions of squalor and unsanitary housing provided the strongest reason why those plans had to be modified.

5.80 How urgent the housing problem was can also be seen from the following statistics presented at the 1934 conference in Cape Town (supra 5.57)

Increase in population (over a period of 17 years)	88 340
Number of new dwellings to house this increase	14 421
Number of dwellings actually built	9 085
Shortage of dwellings over 17 years	5 336

Bishop Lavis mentioned that in certain wards of the Cape Town City Council some 7 900 families were being accommodated in 3 421 houses whereas the most there should be were only 3540 families. In the areas he had surveyed it was also found that 43 855 persons were accommodated in 10 222 "lettings".

There were 23 917 persons living in 7 888 single rooms of houses and tenements, which meant that the room was at once bedroom, kitchen, diningroom and bathroom. People so housed were most susceptible to contagious diseases especially pulmonary tuberculosis.⁸⁶

5.81 Children born in these conditions of poverty and squalor had, in Abdurahman's opinion little prospect of deriving optimal advantage from schooling if, and when, it became accessible to them. Teachers in such a community would find that family life, crucial to initial socialisation and informal education, was in most instances hardly normal nor exemplary.

Thus when his nephew assumed the principalship he felt no need for a special Arabic and religious teacher that the education

might grant as a concession and that would require financial support from the management. Conditions demanded a shift of attitude and emphasis.

As the pupils were fairly young - the highest standard in the school was only Std. 2 - the accent of the religious instruction was more on character-building than dogma. Honesty, respect and cleanliness were stressed in the moral lessons which took the place of Islamic dogma and ritual.⁸⁷

The school would rather have had qualified teachers for this task, and the traditionalist elements would have been assuaged by the fact that the entire complement of teachers, eventually, were Muslims.

- 5.82 Larger numbers of children were annually drawn to the Schotsche Kloof Primary School, ... the only Islam-orientated school in the area. Enlargement of its facilities was thus imperative because of the demand for accommodation. The large area of ground owned by the Schotsche Kloof Institution would have allowed for such expansion. However, the Cape Town Municipal planners had a problem of finding suitable land for housing improvement close to places of work and centres of community life. Inevitably they would look with a jaundiced eye at the land owned by the Schotsche Kloof Institution. Large numbers of people were in need of housing in the Bo-Kaap once the Council's Medical Officer of Health declared a densely populated area there a slum in terms of the Slums Act of 1934.⁸⁸

- 5.83 It could be conjectured that Abdurahman's knowledge of this development was hardly deficient for here was clearly a conflict of interest: he was serving on the Cape Town City Council and was also manager of the Schotsche Kloof Institution. Demolitions consequent to the declaration of the slum area would have increased the need for alternative land to rehouse and resettle affected families. Hence the increased desirability of the school's adjacent vacant land and a concomitant increase in its market value. One could only speculate as to

how Abdurahman's part in the Council's decision to acquire land affected Abdurahman the nominal owner of desirable land.

- 5.84 In a report on the declaration of the slum area, the Deputy City Engineer recommended that flats be built to house the people facing demolition of their homes.⁸⁹ He advised that land owned by the Schotsche Kloof Institution be bought for the purpose.

Abdurahman at the time the most knowledgeable and capable city councillor in matters of public health, who had been nominated to represent the city at the Annual Conference of the Royal Sanitary Institute⁹⁰ needed no persuasion as to the advantages that the flats scheme held for health improvement nor its stimulation of the local economy with its attendant effects after the Great Depression.

- 5.85 Reluctant to abandon its commitment to develop a substantial education facility for the Muslim community, the trustees of the Schotsche Kloof Institution refused to part with the school's land for housing development. An exchange of correspondence ensued between the municipality and the trustees as its letter of 2 September, 1936, indicates:

We have already indicated in our letter of 11/6/36 the conditions on which Schotsche Kloof was purchased, as well as the aims and objects of the (Management) Board, and that it was never contemplated to sell any part of the land.⁹¹

Given its declared intention of social uplift through education, the Council had also to contend in this instance with a body whose spokesman was one of its most senior members. This called for much circumspection and restraint in applying the customary carrot of more favourable terms or the stick of expropriation.

- 5.86 Provision had been made in the Slums Act No. 53 (1934) that a local authority could expropriate such land as it deemed

suitable for housing schemes. Permission was then sought from the Minister of Health, in terms of the said Act's subsection (1) of Section 17 to proceed with the alienation of the Institution's property.⁹² Sanction from the Secretary of Health was thereafter obtained.⁹³

This compelled a direct negotiation between the Council and the Board of Management who had by then accepted that there were no legal grounds to thwart the Council and were prepared to seek the most advantageous compensation.

At a meeting in the City Hall on 4 November, 1938, Dr Abdurahman presented the case of the Schotsche Kloof Institution but would not yield on the principle of the Institution's continued existence.

5.87 The following details of that meeting emerge from the records:

- 5.87.1 two years had elapsed from the time the Management Board first rejected the Council's offer of expropriation and compensation to the meeting of 4 November, 1938 where an agreement was reached between the principals;
- 5.87.2 the property of the Schotsche Kloof Institution would be used by the City Council to build a housing scheme for working class tenancy;
- 5.87.3 in return the Council would pay £8 000 in cash, provide in another part of the proposed housing scheme one acre of land and build thereon a school;
- 5.87.4 it was to be a school for Moslem children because there was no State school in the area and the other schools were built by Christians, who, quite correctly, gave preference to Christian children.⁹⁴

In retrospect it is clear that this agreement was indeed a most remarkable coup by Dr Abdurahman for he succeeded in getting the municipality, which was not according to the Act of Union and the Constitution (1910) concerned with schools, to provide land and to construct a suitable building out of its own revenues. A handsome financial gain on the initial investment

of the Trustees viz., £2 800, was also obtained. By insisting on the peculiar need for an Islam-oriented school Abdurahman was seeking help for his project. His success was in part due to the ignorance of these white officials of the contemporary educational dispensation to which a newspaper had alluded a decade before. (supra 5.8)

In a sense, the City Council's decision, to construct an Islam-oriented school, constituted a statement of religious tolerance and of the Muslim community as a de jure part of the cultural mosaic of the Mother City. After almost four decades of service as a city father this substantial act of good will might well have been seen by Abdurahman as a tribute to himself.

- 5.88 An effect of this agreement was that Bo-Kaap was assured that an Islam-oriented school would be a fitting embellishment to a residential area for the Muslim community. It was assumed that the school building would arise simultaneously with "a garden village for the Malay community", as the Town Clerk had earlier advised the Trustees.⁹⁵

Unfortunately Abdurahman died in 1940 before the Schotsche Kloof Housing Scheme was completed. His removal from the deliberations of the municipality allowed for much procrastination even if he was succeeded by his daughter, Cissie Gool. She not only replaced her father as a Councillor but also as a trustee of the Schotsche Kloof Institution.⁹⁶

However, it was only in 1952, fourteen years after the agreement was reached, that a building was erected in terms thereof and handed over to the trustees by the Town Clerk.

- 5.89 Not only was the construction of the school delayed to the detriment of the school's development for 15 years, but the City Council failed to provide the housing indicated on the blueprints by which Abdurahman came to reach accord sacrificing an ambitious educational project in the process.

Originally it was the intention of the Cape Town City Council, the owners, (of the Schotsche Kloof farm) to construct 400 flat units. Only 198 were built when World War 11 prevented further capital expansion (sic.) on housing. After the war, despite the fact that the foundations for the additional flat units had been laid, no concerted effort was made to complete the scheme.⁹⁷

Apparently the bureaucrats of the city came to realise the magnitude of their error in accommodating the suave doctor and by default reneged on what in Abdurahman's day was deemed "a gentleman's agreement". The promised "garden village" became no more than another coloured housing scheme with the school added as an afterthought. There was yet another dimension to Abdurahman's agreement with the City Council: the creation of the first "Malay area" in South Africa.

- 5.90 Even before the enactment of the Group Areas Act No. 41 (1950) and the inseparable Population Registration Act (1950), Abdurahman obtained from a statutory body, the Cape Town City Council recognition of the city's Muslim community as a distinct cultural collectivity. They had the right, if they so wished, to reside in a culturally homogeneous area of the Mother City. By extension, such a community would require a school consonant with beliefs and value system.

David contends that

The conditions of tenancy of the Schotsche Kloof Flats include a clause which states that the tenant must be "Muslim Malay". This was on the insistence of Dr Abdullah Abdurahman, the prominent Cape Town City Councillor of the 1920s and 1930s who initiated the construction of these flats.

They have since their inception been occupied by Muslims only.⁹⁸

It was not the first time that an area of South Africa was set aside for a religious community's exclusive residence as Article 18 of the Congregation's Regulations at Genadendal had since 1816 prescribed as a qualification for residential rights a person has to be a confessing Christian.⁹⁹

5.91 With the benefit of hindsight today's young people might construe Abdurahman's role in creating as part of the city a residential enclave complete with a school as a "Malay area" as a statement of sectarianism. To judge him charitably one could see that he was developing on a number of facts of Cape Town's history:

5.91.1 that Muslims were living on the slopes of Signal Hill in large numbers for centuries and that their oldest Cemetery and mosques testify to that;

5.91.2 the area had in the main an Islamic ethos and cultural homogeneity;

5.91.3 the Muslim community needed to be 'uplifted' by the provision of healthful housing and a pleasantly structured environment for their children to grow up;

5.91.4 the school was indispensable to prepare the young for the economic life of the city without sacrifice of their beliefs in the process of modernisation.

5.92 Although his position on what the Schotsche Kloof Institution was to accomplish had he had his own way, was never publicly elaborated, Abdurahman must have had a social engineering experiment or project in mind. His indifferent health and declining political fortunes began to affect his leadership style. In a letter to the Town Clerk of Cape Town dated 11 June, 1936, he intimated:

the property was purchased for the Moslem community of Cape Town for the purpose of establishing a school, which in the process of time, it is hoped, will have developed into a large industrial school.¹⁰⁰

The property purchased by the Schotsche Kloof Institution consisted of a two-roomed house with a storeroom as well as adjacent land used for stock-grazing. Little clarity is provided as to the exact nature of the proposed "industrial school" Abdurahman had in mind for the "Moslem community". It was the latter community's fortunes that occupied his mind in his declining years and he perceived them as a pool of skills potentially invaluable to an industrialising city. Those skills were present since the days of slavery but needed modernisation for a new economic climate. Given the size of the land purchased (supra 5.49) Abdurahman's plan seemed far more ambitious than establishing a school similar to the Rahmaniyyeh Institute. With this purchase occurring soon after the 1918 epidemic and the likelihood that there would be many orphaned children needing institutional care Abdurahman might easily have persuaded the president of the Indian Relief Fund to be associated with the Schotsche Kloof Institution and to donate £200 for the project. (supra 5.42)

- 5.93 Matters concerning education were the special forte of Abdurahman the Provincial Councillor and he pointed to disparities in the taxpayers' rewards with persuasive rhetorical skill at public meetings. After being ignored by the British Government in 1909 he came to accept that a modus vivendi had to be found with the dominant local white community which entailed an accelerated modernisation of the subjugated people of colour. Industrial schools were State-subsidised instruments of modernisation for the whites and Abdurahman wanted the same institutions for Cape Town's underclass as well. It was a remedy for the massive unemployment they suffered.

A resourceful Abdurahman could have envisaged Schotsche Kloof as a site for a dairy industry complete with a school for training in related skills as the University of Stellenbosch was operating at Elsenburg in the 1920s.¹⁰¹

As an M.P.C. Abdurahman was aware of 12 industrial schools for white children where about 1 000 were being trained with the

State's assistance. He would certainly have led the deputations to the authorities for the necessary funds once the preliminary development had been completed and the small primary school "developed into a large industrial school".

- 5.94 Cape Town's deplorable slums also occupied the mind of Abdurahman the city father who as a student in Britain could have been aware of the sterling rehabilitational work attempted by Robert Owen for the working class. Perhaps as an intelligent conservative, Abdurahman, like Owen had done in Britain, wished to dabble "with Bethamite reform schemes for settling unemployed labourers on the land in specially constructed villages".¹⁰²

- 5.95 A later generation of enquiries will look at the Schotsche Kloof Housing Scheme and its modern primary school and appraise only a partial realisation of Abdurahman's grand design for the modernisation of Cape Town's Muslim community.

His project could not have earned the sobriquet "Parallelogram of Paupers" for he envisaged a forward-looking, future-oriented Muslim community located in the Bo-Kaap and interacting with his "large industrial school".

Therefore, he compromised with the Cape Town City Council when he had to part with much of the land purchased only on the assurance that there would arise "a garden village for the Malay community". (supra 5.66)

Mr Halim and the Indian Relief Fund had collected funds for disbursement to the indigent, but Abdurahman would have used those funds with more telling and permanent effect for the sick and the poor. In sum: the Halim-Abdurahman alliance intended not to give a hungry man a fish for one meal, but to teach him fishing that he might regain his dignity and worth. Through education the prospects of hunger, poverty and disease might be effectively reduced.

- 5.96 Even if only realised in part the Schotsche Kloof Institution was an instrument of social modernisation in so far as it

initiated an extension of literacy to the people of the Bo-Kaap, allowed for environmental improvement conducive to the reduction of poverty-related disease in the area. Abdurahman, as author of the industrial school-cum-garden-village idea, was aware of the rich traditions of the people closely associated with their religious expressions. It was a fortuitous purchase of land between the old cemetery of the pioneers and the mosques where he intended the project to arise as a statement of a cultural presence. In that project tradition would continue to live but traditionalism would die, because

Tradition refers to the customary set of behaviours and symbols of a society. It is not the same as traditionalism, which is a reactionary attitude that involves holding on to some parts of old traditions as a bulwark or cushion, against new trends. The examples of societies in which traditionalism had hindered change are legion. But it is also possible for a modernising society to retain strong traditions without this necessarily being traditionalism.¹⁰³

- 5.97 We have seen that in each case cited here where Abdurahman was associated with the founding of a Muslim Mission school he had a certain short term objective, viz., to supply a needed educational facility wherein he could exert his personal influence as the manager on the curriculum and administration, and also to create jobs for trained individuals who might not otherwise have secured employment as principals or teachers. It was only in the case of the Schotsche Kloof Institute where he exhibited a broader vision as social reformer and agent of modernisation. To do that he had to be above the special interest groups and traditionalists, and in the process he heartened men of similar disposition living far from Cape Town.
- 5.98 Worcester, an important town in the Boland, had in Abdurahman's day, a small but devout Muslim community that in the late

19th century acquired a mosque.

5.99 On 15 July, 1881, leading Muslims of the town constituted themselves into a trusteeship for the administration of the mosque and related affairs. Their Deed of Trust was "Made, covenanted, concluded and agreed upon, by and between us the first undersigned, members of the sect or body corporate of Shaffites, residing in or near the town of Worcester; and Saedo Sadan Soleiman, Abdol Bazier, Oowam, Abdol Le Fleur, Mohammed-Samaa, Soleiman Jamie and Talabodien; at Worcester on this Fifteenth day of July - One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighty One..."¹⁰⁴

A later document of the mosque congregation therein designated "The Worcester Muslim Jama-at" espoused the following aims and objects:

1. to function as a single community according to the tenets of the faith of Islam as taught by the Holy Prophet, Muhammad, - may Allah's Peace and Mercy be bestowed upon him - and as expounded in the Holy Qur-aan, supported by the recognised True Traditions;
2. to defend with all the power at its disposal all that is good, correct and noble in the Faith of Islam, and to encourage the propagation of its true and noble ideals;
3. to live in peace and harmony with Communities of other religious conceptions around it;
4. to establish schools where the children of the Community may be taught all the essentials of the Faith of Islam in a proper and correct manner;
5. to strive to become a Community of Practical Muslims who practise the True Islam instead of mere lip-profession adherents of Islam.¹⁰⁵

The above declaration of aims might have been typical of similar Islamic communities except that in this instance there is also the desire to perpetuate their norms and values by means of schools. While the town was small and the Muslims isolated by distance from the cultural matrix in Cape Town, the

Mosque was probably the only venue for such a school. Technology, by way of improved road or rail transport, came to change the economy of their town and the related demands for skills. They had in turn to come to terms with such change by relating their educational facility accordingly. Worcester was lagging behind in comparison with others.

- 5.100 Paarl, the nearest big Boland town had a Moslem Mission School and provided Worcester a model to emulate. Marion Levy offers an explanation for this tendency:

We are confronted - whether for good or for bad - with a universal social solvent. The patterns of the relatively modernised societies once developed, have shown a universal tendency to penetrate any social context whose participants have come into contact with them... the patterns always penetrate; once the penetration has begun, the previous indigenous patterns always change; and they always change in the direction of some of the patterns of the relatively modernised societies.¹⁰⁶

Some of the abler Muslim children of the town had gone to train as teachers at the Söhne Training College and only Paarl presented to them the nearest prospect of an appointment.¹⁰⁷

- 5.101 On 19 May, 1928, about twenty-five Muslims, representing the businessmen and artisans among the Worcester community, gathered in the traditional Arabic school-room attached to the mosque. A Muslim Mission School was to be the main topic. This represented a departure from the past and a step towards the main stream culture, in a sense. Thus it seemed appropriate that they chose as chairman Imam Abdol Karriem, "terwijl Mnr A.D. Crotz gevraagd werd om as Sekretaris te ageer. Prokureur P.A. Malan werd gevraagd om die vergadering bij te wonen en met advies te dien". It says something for the measure of mutual respect prevalent in the town that white persons were associated with the attempt to modernise a Moslem-initiated school seeking the State's aid.¹⁰⁸

5.102 That meeting made the following decisions:

5.102.1 that a school shall be constructed in the town of Worcester, under the name of the Worcester Moslem School, with the aim of giving education to children of Moslem parents living in the town and district of Worcester;

5.102.2 that the purchase of the following immoveable property "a certain piece of land in the Municipality and District of Worcester being Lot 9 of Erf No. 4, Block J, of size 30 square roods and 80.16 square feet" for the sum of Six Hundred Pounds (£600) be confirmed;

5.102.3 that the following shall be the rules for the said school:

5.102.3.1 all school property shall be controlled by nine trustees of whom the priest of the Worcester Moslem Church shall be one;

5.102.3.2 the first trustees shall be the following persons:

- (i) Emaum Abdol Karriem in his capacity as Priest for the time being of the Moslem Church in Worcester;
- (ii) Valley Omar,
- (iii) Dawood Hadye,
- (iv) Mogamat Kassiem Tromp,
- (v) Gamat Karriem,
- (vi) Tape Sadam,
- (vii) Ebrahim Bapoo,
- (viii) Mohamad Allie Panday, and
- (ix) Ismail Ahmad.

It was further specified that these trustees would take transfer of the property or any further acquisition of property for the school. They were also empowered to obtain to this end a mortgage bond: "om van tyd tot tyd verbande te passeer op vasgoed onder hulle beheer wanneer nodig".

It was unequivocally declared that properties acquired shall be put to the use of the school, and, if not further required,

shall revert to the ownership of the mosque committee.¹⁰⁹

- 5.103 For purposes of complying with legal custom it should be noted that this religious association styled itself, "The Moslem Church in Worcester" thus giving itself a status commensurate with the Christian denominations of the town. The terminology used and the concept conveyed thereby were a departure from Islamic convention in which the mosque is a public space with a complex range of meanings.¹¹⁰

The designation, "Moslem Church" could be viewed as relating this religious association with the main stream culture and having the necessary rights and privileges including the State's aid to its school as other denominations.

- 5.104 By the prescription that the imam be the first trustee the rules of the school conformed to another convention of the main stream culture whereby ministers of religion served as mission school managers administering the school-building as an asset of the church and in its name. Hence the stipulation that the property shall revert to the mosque if not required as a school.

While the influence of the white legal adviser in this matter cannot be ruled out, this school's legal status was quite different to that of the schools where Dr Abdurahman's influence prevailed. In that instance, the school was "for Moslem children" but no association with the mosque was acknowledged.

Abdurahman could have been sensitive to the divisive nature such an association implied in Cape Town where many mosques existed to serve a single religious collectivity. However, there were occasions where Moslems had allegiances to different mosques in a given area but were united in their desire for and support of a Muslim Mission School. The Strand Community is an example.

- 5.105 The Strand's Moslem Mission School also traces its history from the same period when the traditional religious leaders of that town reached a large measure of political consensus directed at their children's need for schooling.

According to Maulana Yusuf Karaan, present Imam of the Strand Mosque, all the Muslim children attended Christian denominational primary school prior to the establishment of the Muslim State-aided school in 1928.¹¹⁰

A Cape Town newspaper mentioned that on 2 October, 1928, a bazaar was held in the Strand "to build a new school for the Mohammedan community of the Strand".¹¹¹ Once again the Indian businessmen and the local Cape Muslims significantly advanced harmonious inter-group and intra-group relations by erecting a school constituting ipso facto a statement of institutional modernisation.

One local religious leader, Imam Moosa, presided at the opening of the bazaar and associated himself with the ideals. In deference to local authority the Mayor of the Strand was the main speaker. He assured the people "of his pleasure in assisting the Strand Moslems in educational projects".

The manager of the new school, Mr Hoosen Khan, noted that there were in fact three mosques serving the Strand Muslims, but they stood united on the principle of a school. A Mr Visser spoke on behalf of the A.P.O.'s Strand Branch - perhaps deputising for the president, Dr A.Abdurahman, - and alluded to the happy relations existing between Christians and Mohammedans in the Strand.¹¹²

- 5.106 While Abdurahman was not present, the A.P.O. representative had a clear message which its leader would have approved: a Muslim Mission School in the town was no expression of sectarianism but an acknowledgement that Muslims wish to see their children educated in one institution for both their spiritual and temporal wellbeing. Thus the school was inaugurated in a climate of active good will extending across the ideological spectrum of the Strand's people, and this milestone in their history may therefore be seen as the groping efforts of public-spirited men to leave the world a better place for succeeding generations.

- 5.107 From the social-psychological perspective the once divided Muslim community's establishment of a school is an example

Of men slowly becoming aware of their common needs and the possibilities of harmonious co-operation. The results of their efforts are embodied in social structures which, in turn, rest upon the individual concerned, creating new situations and generating new wants and strains which in their turn stimulate new efforts. Social forces thus consist of the energies of men in conscious or unconscious interaction. The individual may often be powerless, largely because he is thwarted or unaided by other wills, though on occasions, when opposing forces are equally balanced, the contribution of one or more determined men may be decisive. Slowly the interrelations enter into consciousness, making a common purpose possible.¹¹³

When the first children were admitted to the two-teacher school in 1929 the Strand's people realised the possibilities of harmonious co-operation between the leadership elements of the community. Looking to the main Muslim community in Cape Town, perceptive persons could see Abdurahman's achievements in the Muslim Mission schools he initiated or inspired thus "generating new wants and strains which in their turn stimulate new efforts".

- 5.108 Almost a year prior to his death, Abdurahman, manager of the Talfallah Institute, invited the deputy mayor of Cape Town, Mr W. Brinton, to open that school's annual bazaar. It was noted by the guest speaker that in 1939 some 40 000 children were attending coloured schools in the Cape Province. The Muslim community were responsible for school accommodation to 2 381 primary school pupils, and yet another Muslim school was being planned.¹¹⁴

In 1932, according to I.D. Du Plessis, 1 737 pupils were so accommodated. (supra 1.17) Thus the 1939 figure reflects an

increasing self-sufficiency in school provision, as well as an expansion of employment opportunities for Muslim teachers.

- 5.109 Increasingly, too, more children from the Muslim middle class of Cape Town remained longer at school to proceed to the University of Cape Town or the teacher-training institutions. Teaching was only beginning to provide the remuneration to make it a rewarding vocational option. A comparison of salary improvement over thirteen years (1920 to 1933) suggests that the State was slow in effecting change:

In 1920 it was stated by a competent authority that the intellectual and social leaders of the Coloured people were not to be found in the teaching profession; we had to look for them among the skilled artisans and the few men with professional status.

The teaching profession with its meagre rewards was avoided by the ambitious and intelligent youth.

In 1922 when I was in charge of the Cape Town area the principal of a large primary school with more than 500 pupils was paid at the rate of £150 per annum, while a woman assistant with many years of service received a salary of £90 (p.a.). Today (1933) the principal's salary is over £400 per annum and the assistant receives £200.¹¹⁵

This speaker intimated that general satisfaction prevailed in this regard:

At the recent annual conference of the Teachers' League there were protests against the temporary cut but there was no criticism of the basic scales.¹¹⁶

- 5.110 Ambitious and intelligent youth and their parents in Cape Town's Muslim community were being subjected to the familiar mix of pressures to an attitudinal change regarding higher education, viz. population growth, urbanisation, the increasing

absorption into a consumerist economy and a growing literacy.

Only the Muslim Mission Schools presented those without financial support to proceed to the University of Cape Town or overseas the chance of employment. In many instances this meant that at existing schools additional classrooms had to be built or new schools had to be created. Thereby two problems solved: accommodation for a larger number of children and appointments for a growing number of teachers. There were too few schools operated by the Cape School Board that did not apply religious affiliation as a condition of appointing teachers or, in some instances, admission of pupils.

Mr Stephen Reagon's address to the Cape School Board in 1940 pointed out that overcrowded conditions in all Mission Schools were related to contemporary education policy towards coloured people.¹⁷

Segregation in education was becoming more pronounced when in 1930 the Cape Education Department established a special section to deal with coloured schools.

- 5.11 An attempt had been made to study the development needs of the coloured people and questionnaires were circulated in the 1930s to assess the views of organisations and persons concerned with coloured education.¹¹⁸

A report ensuing from the enquiry was published in 1937 (The Wilcox Commission) and Dr A. Abdurahman, being part of the exercise, felt obliged to compile his own minority report.

In 1934 Dr Abdurahman was honoured by being made a member of the Cape Coloured Fact-Finding Commission, during which he received evidence of the terrible poverty and disease prevalent among the Coloured people... he submitted that the position of the non-Europeans, socially, and economically was appalling and urged that drastic reforms should be introduced. He strongly recommended the abolition of the White

Labour policy, the provision for skilled employment for Coloured youths and the extension of full political rights to the Coloured people.¹¹⁹

The medical practitioner-cum-educationalist thus pronounced his verdict, empirically derived, that poverty and disease were twin flails of the scourge of political subjugation and emasculation. Only against Abdurahman's politically qualified observations could the following recommendations of the Wilcox Commission have a semblance of realism:

- 5.111.1 to give all (coloured) children at least the common tools of learning, so that on leaving school they might take their places as citizens in a civilised community and build on the foundations laid at school;
- 5.111.2 to compensate for deficiencies of home and environment;
- 5.111.3 to enable the children to make the best use of opportunities available to them;
- 5.111.4 to make the schooling as valuable as possible during the period that children attended;
- 5.111.5 to encourage children to value learning and education so that they would stay at school as long as possible and develop their abilities to the fullest extent;
- 5.111.6 to cultivate any desirable "innate characteristics" or "natural talents" that Coloured children as such might possess.¹²⁰

- 5.112 These recommendations acknowledge in the main the fact that coloureds were a deprived community in a society that tended to inhibit their development by limiting "opportunities available to them". Among these was the opportunity to be educated because of the lack of sufficient schools, and gainful employment because of the White Labour policy. To a Government so disposed, the redress of coloured people's grievances was hardly an urgent matter.

The development needs of Coloured education, carefully considered by the Union Commission of 1937, but subsequently neglected with the onset of the Second World War, were again investigated...¹²¹

Little substantial development therefore occurred to improve schools or increase their number from the time the one commission reported to the time, twenty years later, when another completed its investigations.

- 5.113 When Abdurahman rose to address his last A.P.O. Conference in 1939 the world was a dismal place for one who cherished hopes of social justice, or who had visions of schools and jobs opened to all who sought the chance to rise up from poverty. Prophetically, this frail erstwhile charismatic leader, looked from the dreary present into a dark future where the prospects of amelioration would decline with the rapidly shrinking fund of even enlightened self-interest among the powerful. Abdurahman lamented the fate of South African society:

The age of chivalry, tolerance and kindness has passed away, and an age of fear, of unreasoning suspicion and of the blind prejudice which is the deformed offspring of the union of these two has usurped its place.

True learning is in the course of liquidation; fresh, constructive, far-sighted and dispassionate thinking is at an awful discount, and mere lip-service is being paid to the great principle of love already so distorted by racial bias, that its original purity and simplicity can no longer be found or even recognised.¹²²

A plethora of laws directed against the powerless bore testimony to "unreasoning suspicion" and "blind prejudice", because the education system allowed these diseases of the human mind to flourish. In the absence of "true learning", by which Abdurahman alluded to the hallowed search for truth and the pursuit of excellence, the redemptive force of love was driven from the

social order.

He was certainly one of very few non-white contemporaries who might have made a claim to "true learning" which he had acquired outside the context of racial segregation, and mission schooling in his life was minimal. His childhood was at a time of a liberal political climate when his inherent abilities allowed his studentship at the South African College School; his father's ability to pay his tuition and maintenance ensured him a tertiary education in Britain. Once the barriers of racism were erected by laws and custom his example was made difficult to follow, even if his public life redounded to the credit of his own educators.

5.114 On the platforms of countless political meetings, when opening bazaars or addressing fellow-legislators in the Cape Town City Council or the Cape Provincial Council Abdurahman's impact was enhanced and his stature ennobled by "far-sighted and dispassionate thinking". Others could not follow in his footsteps for the curse of racism had made of people who were not white the victims of denial and exclusion.

5.115 Every concession won, every compromise reached by Abdurahman's negotiating skills in extending the opportunities for schooling cannot be attributed to his education alone. As an initiator and instigator of social change in every political or cultural arena where he broke a lance for the victims of white supremacy he brought to bear his daunting charisma making his role the mainspring for modernisation and social change. Max Weber has used the term "charisma" in this context to designate

a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such that they are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin, or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual is

treated as a leader.¹²³

In social and political terms he found the non-whites, and indeed the Muslim community from whence he came, in a state of crisis caused largely by diminution of their civil liberties. Their traditional education tended to emphasise duties, his own tended to emphasise rights. He deferred to the moral content of their teachings but his own "true learning" which he wished for others too was a preparation for the exercise of rights. To establish schools for his co-religionists became part of Abdurahman's assertion of rights for he perceived those schools as instruments of modernisation, of a rightful participation in economic and political experience. Such assertion required of the Muslim community an attitudinal change, a stage towards modernisation, to upward social mobility in the main stream culture.

Spokesmen 40 years ago (at the time of his death in 1940) acclaimed Dr Abdurahman as the greatest coloured man South Africa had produced. For several decades he was his people's main policy-maker, chief negotiator and principal spokesman. He continually condemned the deplorable conditions of education of the coloured child and pointed out the necessity of raising the level. It was he, with Morris Alexander, an M.P., who made the University of Cape Town open its doors to enable Harold Cressy to study for the BA degree.¹²⁴

Constituting a significant part of the coloured people in Cape Town, the Muslims were thus also beneficiaries of Abdurahman's exertions. Yet they had special need for Islam-orientated schools at a time when primary education was mostly a Christian church undertaking. If they took umbrage at the curriculum of such mission schools then Muslims were obliged to create their own with a more acceptable curriculum and ethos.

5.116 Among the Muslims his passing was also regretted and his achievements acclaimed. At a special meeting after his death

was announced, the Cape Moslem Circle resolved;

This meeting places on record the untimely death of Dr A. Abdurahman, who was a champion of the coloured people for 40 years, as a national calamity and an irreparable loss to the Moslem community...¹²⁵

This was hardly the customary funeral eulogy, but a statement of fact, if one looks at the way Abdurahman found this community and the way he left it after leading the way to educational and economic advancement. Abdurahman had the intellectual stature to command a common respect along the cultural continuum of Cape Town's Muslim intelligentsia. At one end of the continuum would be an assimilated Muslim like his collaborator in establishing the Rahmaniyyeh Institute, Dr A.H. Gool, who viewed the Muslims as a religious entity, a cultural minority, sharing social and political disabilities with other non-whites. At the other end would be an orthodoxly observant Muslim like the imams of various mosque congregations whose association was largely confined to Muslims and who continued to conduct the traditional madressah (school) and reproduce a culture functioning in isolation.

5.117 Committed as he was to educational modernisation and a qualified measure of cultural assimilation, Dr Abdurahman had to demonstrate that an Islamic identity could not exist in isolation. Given the demographic realities of South Africa, an Islamic identity could also not be the only identity of an individual. Muslims of Cape Town, especially, were governed by laws enacted for "coloureds", for example, in the sphere of public education. Thus Abdurahman served on the Coloured Education Commission and also on a deputation to the Administrator to plead for the appointment of an Arabic teacher. The relationship of Abdurahman's two sub-identities can best be analysed by regarding him as being in overlapping situations, i.e. as being subject simultaneously to influences from two or more psychological situations.

Proving in his public behaviour that the two psychological

situations need not be mutually exclusive in pursuit of a moral aim, Abdurahman drew around him many kindred spirits as when he found the three Muslim Mission Schools of which he became the manager. That in turn encouraged others further away from Cape Town to found local education committees that would create similar schools. Often Abdurahman was consulted and became the mentor of the leading figure in this endeavour.

Wherever his influence was most marked, that is, with the exception of Wynberg and Worcester, he set the school apart from the mosque without alienating the latter's leadership in the process.

- 5.118 Gradually the more conservative Muslims would leave the firm control of the imams and go to listen to the politicians like Abdurahman addressing the burning issues of the 1930s: lack of work, the "civilised labour policy" that favoured the white worker in terms of opportunities and remuneration, the lack of schools for the large numbers of coloured children exposed to every vice of the streets.

As president of the African Political Organisation, the fez-wearing doctor who could quote Scripture impressed upon Christians and Muslims the need for schools as the first requirement of a community seeking social justice. The dominating groups made claims to serving their own interests and the cause of justice, in the order. (supra, 5.46)

- 5.119 There were occasions where the degree of compatibility between Abdurahman's secular exertions and his own loyalty to the Muslim community was being questioned, when he was feared to be insensitive to their needs and disabilities.

During a municipal election a newspaper correspondent noted caustically:

Dr Abdurahman should be the last person to talk about Moslems or pretend to speak on their behalf. As a Moslem I fail to see what connection he has with us.¹²⁶

Public life demanded and the discriminatory laws of the land dictated that he respond to civic issues in terms of the "coloured" identity, which in that situation was in the forefront of his consciousness.

Neither did the churches look kindly at his outspoken denunciations of the spurious and untenable arguments used to rationalise legalised racism. Some Christian coloured people, obedient to the pressures of their clergymen, refused to subscribe to his political leadership because he was a Muslim.¹²⁷

- 5.120 But when he brought the Rahmaniyyeh Institute, an Islam-oriented school, into being, and supervised the Arabic teaching to ensure its modernisation, his Muslim identity seemed more central in the concern he expressed. The evidence presented here suggests that if his secular leadership tended to diminish towards the end of his life, his Muslim role seemed to increase in inverse proportion. The grand design for Schotsche Kloof as a residential area for the Muslim poor complete with its own Islam-oriented school could be cited in support.

We can infer that as the ceiling on the one form of his creativity lowered, it was raised on another. His spirit was never completely vanquished.

- 5.121 Religion to Abdurahman was essentially a matter of service to the needy, not a ritualistic exercise under the guidance of theologians. Therefore he could exploit the vanities and weaknesses of all manner of religious people to advance a project or gain a concession. Communication with representatives of every community came easily to one whose own education had been encountered with their teachings or institutions. From those teachings he seemed to have distilled the ethical content which made a fruitful dialogue possible.

Some churches invited him, as an elected representative on statutory bodies, to open new classrooms at their schools. He would in turn invite the distinguished son of an English missionary to grace the opening of "a school for Moslem children".

But he was consistent in pleading for the modernisation of education facilities, persuading that secular schools funded less parsimoniously by the State were the panacea for the social ills of the disadvantaged. Mission schools were mere palliatives. The thrust of his argument was that the modern State draws its revenue from taxpayers of all religions and should disburse it as equitably. Just as Peter the Great was said to have pulled the Russians by the scruffs of their necks to European modernity, so, too, Abdurahman's ideal was to pull his own constituency of every religion to modernity by means of undenominational schools.

5.112 Without his unique educational background, his cosmopolitan associations, his personal charisma and his political position he could not have achieved his educational objectives for the coloureds in general or the Muslims in particular. To accomplish the social advancement of Muslims through education, he had to be a "cultural amphibian" moving with ease between the sub-culture of that constituency and the main stream culture of the dominant class, articulating the aspirations of the one to the other and sharing the semantic space with both. Van der Ross postulates a symmetry of the political and the educational in Abdurahman's personality:

His interest in education also gave him the opportunity for displaying some of the positive fruits of his political work; and this must have been a source of much satisfaction to him. There was, for instance, the establishment of Trafalgar High School, Cape Town, and Livingstone Secondary (later High) school, Claremont. There was the acceptance at the University of Cape Town of Abdurahman's protégé, Harold Cressy, who, in 1911 became the first Coloured graduate. There was the establishment of the Teachers' League of South Africa, led by Cressy, which served as the professional body in the educational field to supplement the A.P.O. in the political field.¹²⁸

Being the fruits of his political work, these schools were significant steps to increased State involvement in the social advancement of coloured people, but they were also each a statement for secularisation.

In the last decade of his life Abdurahman might have had the satisfaction of seeing children from his Rahmaniyyeh Institute in District Six progress to Trafalgar High School, or from his Talfalah Institute in Claremont to the Livingstone High School. Ambitious parents with the means could then send promising sons and daughters to university.

- 5.123 A path for the Muslim community's eventual vertical social mobility through education was thus mapped out. Their modernisation seemed assured. Hypothetically, Abdurahman's educational achievements meant that a Muslim child, initially socialised in the values and norms of the home could have that training reinforced in the Islam-oriented school and thereafter be further socialised into the main stream culture at the secular secondary and tertiary institutions without any parental fear of alienation. In his relations with the Muslim community Abdurahman was not one to address many communal gatherings nor to define his ideological position by published tracts as he did for the non-Muslims. Perhaps the Afrikaans language which they preferred did not have the register for the thoughts he wished to expound. Most probably there was no time for speeches. Practical results spoke for themselves. So he gathered about him subscribers for his projects and directed the course of development until the children had a Muslim Mission School to go to. Therein he displayed another feature of modernisation as defined by Smelser (5.5): he relegated religion to the realm of personal choice rather than a dominant feature of his political existence.

His Moslem Education Committee and the Schotsche Kloof Institution seemed reserved for a coterie of friends. Some leading Muslims took umbrage over this.

- 5.124 More conservative public figures such as Berdien of the Cape Malay Association tried to emulate the churches in making the

Muslim Mission School an extension of religious organisation committed to preserving its values in primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions. (supra 5.35) Primary schools were in Abdurahman's programme of action the greatest need that local communities could address and local financial resources could maintain. Beyond that the demands could only be the responsibility of the State.

Berdien's perceptions were characteristic of cultural minorities concerned not only with cultural transmission but also preservation of public identity. To appreciate the merits of this ideological response we might look at the content of Jewish identity and apply it mutatis mutandis to the Muslims by way of Simon Herman's questions:

5.124.1 On the social level: Does the individual regard himself as aligned with and responsible for the welfare of all Jews wherever they are; and

5.124.2 does he see himself linked to the Jews of the present as well as generations past and those still to come?

5.124.3 On the cognitive level: How does the individual perceive the attributes of his group, and which of these attributes does he see inhering in himself?

Furthermore, in what situations is group membership a salient factor in his consciousness, and how central a position does it occupy in his life space?

5.124.4 On the affective level: How does he feel about the group, its members and its attributes? What attracts him (positive valence) and what repels him (negative valence) ?

5.124.5 On the behavioural level: To what extent does he adopt its norms, i.e. to what extent does the membership group also serve as a source of reference? Is his self-definition as a Jew purely classificatory, with possibly an affective element, or is it seen also to include obligations to action?¹²⁹

5.125 Abdurahman had several sub-identities in terms of which he had to relate in his political career and expediency defines for a politician his responses on the various levels. Every disadvant-

aged section of Cape Town's population needed his attention, but it was in the area of schooling where the Muslim community seemed to need him most. Teleologically considered, his educational initiatives were for the assimilation of Muslims into the broader community, the economy and the political participatory process where they would act and react as South Africans. He envisioned South Africa as a melting-pot of cultures wherein religion is a personal choice. Berdien might have seen his country as a salad-bowl of multicultural collectivities and the Muslims as a segment contributing in terms of its uniqueness to the diversity. Rev. Lightfoot had in the previous century noted that Abu Bakr Effendi tended to stress the brotherhood of Muslims and thus drive them away from others (in the coloured community). Berdien could therefore be regarded as the spiritual and ideological descendant of Abu Bakr Effendi, defending the realm of the Sultan. In the establishment of Muslim Mission Schools Abdurahman's religious and political interests converged, where the one persona supplemented the other, where he found the opportunity to shape a tool of modernisation. Abdurahman was in effect undoing the negative features of Effendi's legacy.

- 5.126 It remains, however, to examine more closely why Abdurahman's efforts were not universally endorsed by the Cape's Muslim community, at least to the degree that there might have been consensus about a strategy of modernisation or unqualified emulation of the dominant class. As a political figure the problem of his partisanship was never quite resolved in his life time. Nor was his close association with non-Muslims of various races promotive of unqualified confidence in his innovative type of school as being adequate to allow Muslim children to be like their parents after exposure to higher education. Cape Town Muslims shared this problem of adjustment with their co-religionists elsewhere. Hence the Cape Malay Association's initial grass-roots support, and Abdurahman's need for circumspection in his organisational strategy particularly regarding the Schotsche Kloof project.

The impetus for the revival and solidarity of
Moslem societies lies in their aversion to

western value systems and the effects of modernisation which caused shocking economic and social problems in the Third World.

Health clinics contribute to the health and life expectancy of these societies but also contribute to the population explosion.

Industrialisation stimulated economic growth and created job opportunities, but also destroyed the sacral family structure of these societies, caused the establishment of dreadful slums and squatter camps, and gave morality a severe setback as the steady stream of men towards the cities caused permissiveness to take root. After the colonisation of some of these societies, western Christian culture caused the suppression of the majority of Moslems for nearly 150 years, during which time they were relegated to a secondary position in their own societies.

This elicited a violent Moslem reaction.¹³⁰

Islam is irrevocably bound to community structure.¹³¹ For that reason, primarily, it was logical that the initiatives for school establishment in Worcester, Paarl, and Simonstown, should come from the imam and the congregations concerned.

Abdurahman preferred only in the case of the Talfalah Institute to defer to the imams who were related to him, but in District Six and Schotsche Kloof he was not to be encumbered by such an association. These were his urban constituencies, subjected more intensively to the pressures of capitalism's manifestations such as the factory system and the destruction of the family's autonomy in economic and social matters.

- 5.127 While Abdurahman was studying in Britain, the sons of other local Muslim families were students in Mecca and Egypt. There they were subjected to the various pressures of religious revival movements arising in reaction to westernisation in those societies. Their traditional education did not permit their prominent participation in cultural movements of Cape

Town, but the Cape Malay Association seemed at the time a vehicle of expression. Many of these imams had a strong following. In general, although most Muslims followed the line of assimilation and adaptation, there was a growing sense of pride in the Islamic heritage. This sentiment Abdurahman shared with them in his establishment of Islam-orientated schools. Perhaps it was also the way of the politician rejecting the rejectors. Nevertheless, he and the conservative elements who founded Muslim Mission schools were exhibiting a growing willingness to make Islamic affiliations more publicly apparent.

- 5.128 Berdien and Gamiet were during the 1920s the only rivals to Abdurahman in seeking the Muslim community's support for their modernisation initiatives. The former were leading figures in the Cape Malay Association, the latter soldiered on in small, relatively obscure committees directing their energies at short-term viable projects. On the basis of the evidence presented, Abdurahman was clearly the most astute and the better endowed intellectually, and the more powerful politically. There were no overt personal gains for Abdurahman other than the prestigious and influential position as manager. On the other hand, Berdien gained the principalship of the school established in Wynberg.

In failing to get Malan as their political patron, Gamiet and Berdien could not deliver the political services that Abdurahman did without any claim to public acknowledgement. During the 1930s only Abdurahman remained a formidable public figure while his erstwhile rivals declined in stature as Muslim leaders. Only the Mohammedeyeh Primary School in Wynberg continued after its initial association with the Cape Malay Association. There were certainly some object lessons for Abdurahman in the litigation of 1934 involving the administration of this school's affairs. But the matter is peripheral to this study because it concerned the raising of a mortgage bond on the property. For our purposes of assessing whether progress had been made, we need to look at the following:

The word 'progress' indicates not merely process, but process towards some pre-established and evaluated goal. The words progress and process are frequently used in popular discussion as interchangeable words, but in the context of social change, at least, 'progress' implies a value-judgement whereas 'process' is simply descriptive of continuity, good, bad or indifferent, without any further judgement. Value-judgements are relative, and what may constitute social progress for one may represent retrogression, decay or stagnation for another. Everything depends on the sort of ideal one has of society itself and the goal at which one is aiming. Thus, 'progress' is, in essence, an ethical concept.¹³²

Our discussion thus far has been concerned with the process of founding Muslim Mission Schools. To that end we may conclude that Abdurahman could account for most of the progress that had been made by 1940.

- 5.129 The first four decades of the Twentieth century were years of change to the Muslim community of Cape Town and environs. By means of conservative, fundamentalist, adaptationist and individualist styles the leadership elements had to come to terms with modernisation of their institutions of cultural transmission. Local conditions set limits to their options in many cases, but the great issues of the interaction of elements of ideas and structures were a common theme. Abdurahman's school initiatives were a redefinition of education's role in the Muslim Community as part of that interaction. Yet he saw only a limited role for the Muslim Mission Schools stating in public that such schools are only symptomatic treatment for a malaise caused by political emasculation.

In the ensuing chapter we need to look at the few similar schools established in other towns of the Western Cape.

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CHAPTER 6THE MUSLIM MISSION SCHOOL AND THE CHANGING POLITICAL CLIMATE - 1940 TO 1980

6.1 Thus far it has been demonstrated that the Muslim Mission School was part of a modernisation impulse within the Muslim community of Cape Town and environs. Abdurahman's seminal contribution and his pervasive influence were brought into focus as the process of development was described.

Here, however, it is intended to survey and examine the socio-political factors during the period 1940 to 1980 contributing to the current educational and ideological complexities confronting the Muslim Community.

The concepts and framework of modernisation as the main analytical paradigm will again underlie the presentation of the argument. We must necessarily view the Muslim Mission School in the context of the political climate. As Kogan had put it:

education is political. It is volatile. It strongly reflects the often conflicting and wide-ranging preference of society which it also helps to sustain, improve and embellish and from which it draws resources. If politics are the way in which individuals assert their claims and have them reconciled with the claims of others, education reflects and clarifies and expresses these claims in the society, though it cannot of itself reconcile them.¹

To Abdurahman, who asserted his claims for education as a political exercise, the creation of the Muslim Mission School was to serve the manifest purpose of providing school accommodation on the conditions that the educational dispensation determined. He could not have envisioned a latent function of these schools, viz, the emergence of a communal leadership class from the ranks of their teachers.

- 6.2 Prior to 1940 Abdurahman had politicised education in the popular mind, and the schools he established, both secular and Islam-oriented, were in fact political statements. Education, he would repeatedly stress, was inextricably bound to the political processes by which the dominant culture made the schools the reward of the taxpayers. But he had success with the school supply in so far as he accepted the segregated school system or that Muslims had a special claim to schooling. To him politics was the art of the possible, whether in his role as City Father or in the school committees he presided over.

Evidently, however, Dr Abdurahman did not absolutely oppose the provision of separate facilities for Coloured people. This does not mean that he approved such separation, but at least he took a pragmatic view of it. We find him, for instance, (as City Father) supporting the erection of a Rest Room for Coloured people, to be erected "somewhere on the Parade, similar to the existing Rest Room in Darling Street".²

Such pragmatism allowed Abdurahman to extract greater educational opportunities as well.

- 6.3 A younger generation of perceptive people, products of the two high schools Abdurahman helped to establish, described the Abdurahman era scathingly as

a period when Dr Abdurahman, Dr Xuma, A.W. Champion and the A.I. Kagees were embroiled in the tribalist, sectarian manoeuvres to secure separate concessions for different sectors of the disfranchised.³

Every step up the separate ladder of Coloured advancement was disparaged by those aspiring to fill the vacuum of leadership that the demise of Abdurahman caused. There were derogatory names for persons and organisations that sought to effect

change by conformity, and the political dimensions of the teachers' role in society became more pronounced. Muslim teachers in the Muslim Mission schools were confronted with an identity crisis as a result.

Radicalised teachers eschewed sectarianism even while occupying posts in Muslim Mission Schools founded by Abdurahman because

They fought the quislings and the organisations through which the state strove to preserve segregation and the slave mentality...They were 'to take a whole people to school' : to teach that common oppression arose from a lack of political rights.⁴

A world at war from 1939 to 1945 was changing perceptions of social realities and the old verities of patron-client relationships went out of fashion as political rights were diminished and paternalism became the established style of white hegemonists. Teachers, whether sectarian or not, were more exposed to mass communications in the city, became more mobilised in the surge of urban life, were more courted by the competing political movements, including those of a resurgent Islam. Paradoxically, while radicalism may be engendered in cities the densest urban centres may also shelter the most traditional network of human relations. The characteristic mark of the teacher in the urban milieu is that he has two parts: one internal, the other external; one dealing with his work environment, the other with his attitudes, values and feelings. One part could make him a rational-evolutionist, the other, a romantic-traditionalist. For large numbers of Muslim children there were no Islam-oriented schools to attend and they adhered to the traditional madressahs for their religious training. Muslim teachers with strong community ties seemed to accept that the two parallel school systems would have to continue, that the prospects for a meaningful expansion of the Muslim Mission School were minimal.

introductory remarks will emerge in the overview of educational development, but the following salient features of the period in the Muslim Community's history will receive attention:

- 6.5.1 Muslim Mission Schools in the Coloured education dispensation;
- 6.5.2 Indian initiatives in the establishment of Islam-oriented schools;
- 6.5.3 Weaknesses of the Muslim Mission Schools;
- 6.5.4 Traditional Muslim leadership and educational needs;
- 6.5.5 The Muslim Teachers' Association;
- 6.5.6 The Botha Commission;
- 6.5.7 The Group Areas Act and its effects on Mission Schools;
- 6.5.8 The Theron Commission, 1976;
- 6.5.9 Secularisation of education and resurgent Islam;
- 6.5.10 Privatisation of Islam-oriented schools

Our first objective will be to locate the Muslim Mission Primary Schools in the general educational dispensation available to coloured people in the selected time framework.

- 6.6 After the death of Dr Abdurahman the schools he founded continued with their respective new managers and selectively augmented management committees. His educational institutions designated administratively as "Mission Schools" (Moslem) contrived by a legal fiction that classified them among several denominations as also being associated with a Church.

They were self-regulatory institutions whose staff was paid by the Cape Provincial Administration and whose upkeep was partially subsidised by means of "rent-grants". Fund-raising was to be an important responsibility of the teaching staff and regular school concerts and bazaars were the only direct involvement of parents in their administration. These features were characteristic of all State-subsidised Coloured schools. But "Coloured" institutions as opposed to "White" institutions were starved of funds while in curricular terms were expected to reinforce the dominant values and cultivate the expected ethnocentrism.

As institutions these schools became bureaucratised under paternalist management such as Abdurahman exemplified. Thus the Rahmaniye Institute was deemed a good training ground for the selection of Muslim Mission School principals appointed at other similar schools.

- 6.7 The following members of the Rahmaniye Institute's teaching staff assumed principalships after an initial period of service at that school:

Teacher	Appointed principal at
M.A. Baker	Simonstown Moslem Primary School
O. Misbach	Sheikh Joseph Primary School
M.H. Allie	Habibia Kokani Educational Institute
M.A. Arnold	Strand Moslem Primary School
J. Adams	Strand Moslem Primary School
A.E. Abdurahman	Talfalah Institute
M.S. Berdien	Mohammadiyeh Primary School
A. Khan	Schotsche Kloof Primary School
Mrs G. Manuel	Siddiqui Primary School ⁵

Thus the Rahmaniye Institute could influence the other Muslim Mission Schools by way of its bureaucratic features and educational leadership example, but also could export persons having certain orientations, theoretical and practical knowledge. This was eventually to facilitate the establishment of an organisation of Muslim teachers, even if the managers of these schools never could effect a coalition or joint organisation. Among the reasons for this omission were that school management did not require a high level of education with the result that Indian businessmen, the main subscribers to Muslim Mission Schools, served in that capacity with a few exceptions, of course. No one who even came near to Abdurahman in aspirations, education or organisational skills after him assumed the position. After 1940 three Muslim Mission Schools, all founded by Indian businessmen, were the only such schools established.

The Anglo-Urdu Primary School of Wynberg is a case in point.

6.8 While the Anglo-Urdu School of Wynberg is taken here as a representative institution it is useful to examine some common features of the three schools established by the Indian businessmen between 1940 and 1956, a period of accelerated industrialisation and economic growth in Greater Cape Town. It is noteworthy that

- 6.8.1 the schools were built in suburbs of Cape Town, where land was relatively inexpensive and thus potential growth areas for residential redistribution;
- 6.8.2 population growth in the suburbs resulting from the above as well as natural increase created the need for school accommodation which the existing institutions and their system of funding could not provide;
- 6.8.3 certain local Indian social movements with emotional ties to villages such as Morba and Kokan in India found in education a cause and a unifying force;
- 6.8.4 schools so conceived and established were not exclusive in admission policies, but could also be seen as expressions of organised charity and social responsibility;
- 6.8.5 liberal admission policies and staff appointments removed the stigma of reaction or particularist affectations;
- 6.8.6 the schools allowed for the children of the Indian minority to be integrated and culturally homogenised with the local non-Indian Muslim community, in effect, an orderly socialisation for the broad social order.

6.9 Islam was the common denominator of all these societies that established schools in Wynberg (1942), Athlone (1945) and Elsie's River (1956). Therefore, an Islamic ethos was to be the sine qua non of these schools and experienced Muslim schoolmasters were required to administer the schools.

Socio-political conditions determined that these societies went through the stages characteristic of social movements, viz., unrest, excitement, formalisation, institutionalisation, and in one instance so far, dissolution.⁶

6.10 In the case of the Rahmaniyeah Anglo-Urdu Primary School of Douglas Road, Wynberg these stages were identified by the school's manager:

- 6.10.1 on 15 December 1940, a group of Muslims from the Indian village of Morba came together and discussed the need to provide for the children's "religious education" in Urdu (their Indian language), Arabic (the language of Islamic precepts) and English (the language of the dominant culture in India and South Africa);
- 6.10.2 thus they were in the state of "unrest" or discontent and the occasion generated the required "excitement" derived from consensus;
- 6.10.3 they constituted themselves formally as the Morba Anjuman, (literally, the Society of Men from Morba) under the leadership of Hadjie Adam Bray and Hadjie Enoos Omar Bray;
- 6.10.4 a further stage of "formalisation" was the establishment of an ad hoc body designated the Rahmaniyeah Anglo-Urdu School Society;
- 6.10.5 the Morba Society soon acquired a hall in Douglas Road, Wynberg, and started a school there which opened on 6 January, 1941;
- 6.10.6 "institutionalisation" was taken further when a teacher of English and Urdu, Master Dhansay, was brought from India in 1942 to operate a private communal school;
- 6.10.7 in 1948 State-subsidisation was obtained and "institutionalisation" was thus completed.⁷

6.11 According to a pioneer teacher at the school, Mr E. Albertus, the teaching accreditation of Master Dhansay was not acceptable to the Cape Education Department and a locally qualified Muslim teacher, Mr A. Orrie, was therefore appointed as the school principal. However, the services of an Urdu teacher after school hours were retained, while Arabic and Islamic Religious Instruction proceeded according to the curricular arrangement applied at other Muslim Mission Schools. The original intention of the founders was respected in the retention of the school's name as Rahmaniyeah Anglo-Urdu Primary School.⁸

1937. This Commission recommended action on all the main problems which had worried educational administrators for many years before. Church schools should continue, but any new schools within five miles of an existing school should be undenominational and under the management of a public body.¹⁰

When the Rahmaniye Anglo-Urdu Primary School was registered as a State-aided school these recommendations were still not implemented and the provision of another school building was a boon to a parsimonious officialdom.

A public-spirited Indian organisation could be accommodated in the prevailing scheme of things with a relatively minor concession granted for the use of their property to relieve the shortage of school accommodation. This utilitarian official attitude might well have informed later decisions to register the other two schools as well.

6.13 Another Commission of Enquiry, the Botha Commission, reported in 1956 that mission schools were no longer desirable and that the Churches in most instances were prepared for the phasing out of these schools.¹¹

Those who defended the status quo argued that the religious and moral education of children could not be properly served in State schools.

Objections to the religious bodies' operation of public schools were:

- 6.13.1 education suffered because of denominational rivalry;
- 6.13.2 teachers' organisations were opposed to continued church control;
- 6.13.3 fund-raising required much time and effort because of the chronic shortage of money to service mortgage bonds or effect urgent repairs.

It will be shown later in this study that the Muslim Mission

Schools were generally poorly maintained, except in the cases where they were administered by Indian businessmen whose subscriptions alone could meet the required costs.

Only a social class collectively capable of substantial financial resources could give such an account of itself as the manager of the Anglo-Urdu School acknowledged:

It was envisaged to institute a private school within these premises and in 1942 under the leadership of Master Dhansay, the private school started its operations, continuing for 6 years, maintained by private contribution. Here one must record the sacrifices by the pioneers, for, were it not for them and the support by the community, then who knows what the future would have held for us.¹²

What sets this school apart from many mission schools was the fact that the "pioneers" had no reason to borrow money for capital works. Indeed, the borrowing of capital and the concomitant payment of interest to financial institutions is anathema to many Muslims. This may well account for the poor standard of maintenance that was symptomatic of financial starvation because of inadequate rent-grants as well as a bureaucratic disposition in management to decline in efficiency

It will be recalled that the Salt River Moslem Primary School constitution made it clear that mortgages may not be raised on the property of the school. (supra, 4.132.1). Salt River Moslem school's management also would not allow such decadent acts as the western forms of dancing on their premises (supra, 4.134.1) but some Cape Muslims had a more liberal attitude. eg a newspaper report in 1940 was captioned:

"Dance and Bazaar for Meadows Estate Lansdowne Moslem School".¹³

While this is a rather extreme form of fund-raising in the Muslim

community it indicates how desperate the school concerned was for funds. Perceptive Muslim teachers were not indifferent to the poor physical environment in which they had to work; overcrowded classrooms, poorly ventilated and lighted, and inadequate recreation facilities.

Their working conditions and other factors compelled them to organise themselves into an organisation in 1951. Within the context of the Muslim Mission School's development this formation also requires sociological diagnosis.

6.14 A change in the Central Government in 1948 tended to intensify the radicalisation of the Coloured intelligentsia because of the calculated attempts at enforcing Afrikaner hegemony, the more excessive type of white supremacy. At another end of the political spectrum the Coloured teachers struck equally severe ideological postures. Abdurahman's brain-child, The Teachers' League of South Africa, had already in 1943 reached its formalisation stage when the ideological battles were fought between the Abdurahman pragmatists and the doctrinaire radicalists. Losers departed or were expelled.¹⁴ Out of this crisis emerged a moderate aggregation that styled itself the Teachers' Educational and Professional Association. Muslim teachers that accepted religion to be a private affair tended to have no qualms with the League's "non-collaborationist" orientation. Many of these modernised Muslims were actually quite prominent spokesmen of the League.

To conservative Muslim teachers this modernisation presented a problem since

In the first place, the change from more traditional to more modern qualities in man often means someone must give up ways of thinking and feeling that go back decades, sometimes centuries; and to abandon these ways often seems to be abandoning principle itself. For another thing, the qualities that make a man modern often do not appear to be neutral characteristics that any man might have, but

instead represent the distinctive traits of the European, the American or Westerner that he is bent on imposing on other people so as to make them in his own image.¹⁵

Established middle-class families might not have taken umbrage at such change for it was part of social élitism, whereby Abdurahman's daughters were tutored by a governess or the sons of Mr Gool or Mr Shah Mohammed proceeded to London for professional training and the acquisition of English culture.

Some of these young people of the late 1940's gravitated towards the political left as part of their "modernism" where

Ideas, organisational methods and a new comradeship were used to destroy the cancerous attitudes of racialism, caste, colour and religious sectarianism.¹⁶

- 6.15 Any organisation that sought to organise teachers on the basis of religious conviction would have earned the hostility and militant opposition of the Teachers League and particularly of the ostensible Muslims in its ranks, who in the words of Kwame Nkrumah were to "seek the political kingdom first".

A caveat was thus sounded in 1945 by Dr Ghulam Gool when he located the Teachers' League in the radical formations:

The (the Teachers' League) are sufficiently educated despite the barriers placed before them to realise that their struggle for an education subsidy for the Coloured child and for a salary on the same basis with the European teacher is intimately bound up with their struggle for political rights... It is the duty of the Non-European Unity Movement to point out the extreme danger of the isolationist, sectional, segregationist approach to the trade union movement to its problems, and to the short-

sighted folly of divorcing the economic struggle from the political struggle.¹⁷

6.16 While the manifest intent and function of the Muslim Mission School was to create an Islam-oriented educational institution for Muslim children, its latent function was also to generate an Islam-oriented teacher. Such a teacher was not likely to be an unqualified supporter of an existing teachers' organisation in which Islam was privatised and the concept, "education", secularised and radically politicised. Nor was he enchanted by the opposing formation that stressed the "professionalism" as a Christian concept and ideal. To make a meaningful contribution to the educational needs of the Muslim community, which seemed peripheral to the other organisations but central to the teachers of the Muslim Mission Schools, a new, Islam-oriented teachers' association was a logical development.

6.17 Consequently, the inaugural meeting of the Moslem Teachers' Association was convened at the Talfalah Institute, Claremont, on 10 October, 1951. Its *raison d'être* was "to uplift our Community in all spheres - educationally, socially, economically and spiritually".¹⁸

More specifically the organisation formulated the following objectives:

- 6.17.1 To take an active interest in the education of the Moslem child.
- 6.17.2 To found bursaries, scholarships and grants to assist Moslem students.
- 6.17.3 To assist with renovating and extension of existing Moslem Schools.
- 6.17.4 To strive for the establishment of new State schools where necessary.
- 6.17.5 To draft a Moslem Religious Instruction syllabus to ensure the systematic teaching of Islam.
- 6.17.6 To strive for the introduction of Arabic as a third language in the Secondary School.
- 6.17.7 To strive for the establishment of social centres.

- 6.17.8 To establish boys' and girls' clubs (first-aid, physical culture, sewing, etc).
- 6.17.9 To strive for the establishment of an orphanage for Moslem children.
- 6.17.10 To strive for the educational, social and economic upliftment of the Moslem community as a whole.
- 6.17.11 To maintain an official Journal.¹⁹

Featured in the above list of aims is the recognition of the socio-cultural deficit of the Muslim Community and thus a manifestly social welfare orientation of the Moslem Teachers' Association was thus a legacy of the defunct Cape Malay Association. For our purposes the aims also reflect a concern for the generally poor maintenance of the schools in which these teachers served, while the inadequacy of accommodation detracted from the professional effectiveness. Hence the desire to renovate and extend the existing Moslem schools.

By implication there is also recognition that such schools seemed to have served their initial purpose and the State ought to be called to greater account in provision of school buildings. Unlike the Cape Malay Association there was no demand for secondary and tertiary education along "denominational" lines. A certain political neutrality seemed to have been built into the programme which seemed to suggest that political expression of the members could be sought in other organisations.

- 6.18 A crucial grievance which the organisation succeeded in redressing was the lack of a uniform and standardised syllabus of Islamic Religious Instruction (supra, 6.17.5). This was directly attributable to the unco-ordinated community initiatives in establishing these schools and their appointment of uncertificated religious teachers to discharge the responsibility of Religious Instruction. In every case this was left to the discretion of the teacher and the principal, for this aspect of the school was considered by Inspectors of Education as outside their scope of duty. When the Muslim religious leaders constituted themselves in the Muslim Judicial Council one of their aims was

To introduce a uniform and more methodical system of Islamic Education in Moslem schools. Members of the Judicial Council to supervise such education by at least annually inspecting the Moslem schools.²⁰

Six years later nothing seemed to have come of this and so was written into the programme of the Moslem Teachers Association a similar objective.

However, producing a syllabus universally acceptable to managers and religious teachers proved extremely difficult. If endorsement or confidence was not possible then the supervision of instruction was out of the question.

- 6.19 The Association also intended its own sponsored mobility in an economically disadvantaged community by financial aid to deserving students in order to increase the Community's median income and thus enlarge its middle-class.

This was a mere imitation of a similar objective of the Teachers' League but aimed specifically at the use of the obligatory religious charity funds for educational purposes among Muslims. Many teachers in the Muslim Mission Schools could cite numerous examples of their pupils terminating studies for lack of funds. The resulting "realism" among promising children tended to nullify the good foundations laid by their Muslim teachers.²¹

Further amplification of this intention came during the first presidential address at the 1952 Annual General Meeting:

It is our duty to see that every Muslim boy and girl receive an education up to at least the Matriculation standard. With this object in view the M.T.A. intend building up a strong education fund so that no student will be deprived of education due to financial difficulties.

It is our aim to assist any deserving

student who wishes to proceed to university for higher studies for the need of a strong professional class in our community is long overdue. We have a fair percentage of artisans and businessmen - we require very many doctors, teachers, chemists, lawyers, etc.²²

Pupils wastage seemed at the time vitiating the Muslim community's potential as a salutary force in the mainstream culture and economy. It seemed axiomatic to the president that Muslims alone should be doing something about the lamentable situation and not expect advantages to come by way of political endeavour in the Coloured community even if the disabilities cited were shared by other non-white religious communities too.

6.19 Convening a meeting of his Moslem Education League in 1913 might have been Abdurahman's method of approaching a problem that between 1911 and 1952 was only minimally addressed. But the shrewd politician sensible to intergroup rivalries preferred to work towards his objectives with some discretion rather than to proclaim his intentions in public. A teachers' association could not operate thus.

6.20 A year later the M.T.A.'s president indicated by way of the Cape Education Department's statistics how unfavourably the Muslims compared with others:

Distribution of education facilities

WHITES	COLOURED
<u>Training Colleges</u>	
7	1
<u>Training Schools</u>	
0	0
<u>High Schools</u>	
181	13
<u>Secondary Schools</u>	
57	14

WHITES	COLOUREDS
<u>Agricultural Schools</u>	
3	0
<u>Farm Schools</u>	
21	19
<u>Church Schools</u> *	
28	0
<u>Primary Schools</u>	
950	78
<u>Mission Schools</u> *	
0	1 003

* The asterisk denotes only partial State financial support.

The figures demonstrate the State's policy of providing the bulk of the education budget for the benefit of white children, but the president noted:

There are in the Cape Province at present 15 Moslem Mission Schools, the majority of which continue to Standard 111 - only one (the Habibia Kokani Educational Institute) continues to the sixth standard. With the exception of one or two the majority of these schools are in a dilapidated condition, unsuitable for housing school children...

This year (1953) there are 1,705 pupils in the substandards at the 15 Moslem schools, but only 825 in Standard One, and 329 in Standard Four. Very few continue as far as Standard Eight and an infinitesimal percentage proceed to Standard Ten.²³

That the thrust of his argument should have been the lamentable contrast between the Muslim community and its reference group, the whites, without recognition of the superordinate-subordinate relationship, was grist to the mill of his detractors.

6.21 Not only did the president's address and the rationale behind

the separate professional organisation offend the well organised Teachers' League, but the modernised Muslim middle class with an above average secular education found the replacement of Islamic resurgence as a new priority higher than "the unity of the oppressed" suspect and indefensible.

Later the establishment of the Moslem Teachers' Association could be recalled in these terms (and tones):

Just over twenty years ago an attempt was made to form a Muslim Teachers' Association in the Cape. At the time, people, organisations and publications in the struggle for full democratic rights (the most forthrightly being the "Torch" newspaper) vigorously attacked the formation of this sectarian professional body.

At the inaugural meeting, to which only those with 'Muslim' names were invited, the overwhelming majority voted against the formation of such a body. At the second meeting, the organisers had to resort to subterfuge, meeting behind closed doors and inviting only selected 'cronies'. The reaction of the ordinary man and woman was such that this reactionary association never got off the ground.²⁴

Mere argument alone did not form the thrust of such detractors. Their way of silencing opposition at a teachers' conference has been described by a newspaper columnist recalling a historic conference broken up by organised pandemonium.²⁵ However, the launching of the Moslem Teachers' Association coincidentally with the introduction of the Coloured Affairs Department in 1951 proceeded despite local political barometers indicating inclement weather. Mr. A. Adams, principal of the Rahmaniyyeh Institute and Secretary of the Association, was obliged to mention in his first annual report:

The date of the formation of the Association roughly coincided with the formation of the

Coloured Affairs Department and consequently gave the critics and our opponents ample scope for attacking us in the daily papers.²⁶

Maintaining the decorum and restraint of schoolmasters in the face of vituperation proved extremely difficult, but they threw down the gauntlet.

The lie to false allegations published was given when our Association offered to donate £100 to the Somerset Hospital if our Association could be linked up with the Coloured Affairs Department. So far the challenge has not been accepted. In spite of these scurrilous attacks we are going straight ahead for we know we are sincere, honest of purpose and genuinely working in the interests of and for the upliftment of our community.²⁷

It seems, in retrospect, rather profligate to have entered into wagers while the Association's objectives required energetic and sustained efforts at fund-raising, but the emotions generated and the defence of personal reputations seemed to have justified such a dramatic defence of the Association's bona fides.

6.22 After December, 1953, no further editions of the Moslem Teachers 'Association' journal were produced and by 1960 the Association itself was all but defunct.²⁸ But before the M.T.A.'s death it put Muslim Mission School buildings to greater use as centres of informal education for adolescents to counter the pernicious influences of secularisation in the high schools. Thus the president's caveat:

It is also essential that Muslim history be given more prominence in the curriculum than at present. With a sound knowledge of Islam, our young men and women would be given an anchorage in life which will prevent them being blown

about like leaves in the wind or forsaking their Islamic principles and culture.²⁹

In a sense this advice reflected a concern of Muslim educators world-wide that modernisation was exacting a painful price as education moved from the jurisdiction of religious collectives to the State. Worship as the teleological function of traditional education was moving away from the centre to the periphery of the lives of the secularised youth. In the colonial context such modernisation was perceived as part of cultural imperialism and the sacrifice of the values and behaviour norms that Muslims cherish. Because of secular schooling, suggests the following argument, the Islamic identity is being lost by default:

The object of secularism is precisely to vulgarise people's attitude not only to God, but to every aspect of life which acts as a decisive force in the shaping of the destiny of nations. It is born out of human arrogance which promotes the notion that God does not matter; that religion is not relevant in the organisation of human life.

But in the process of banishing religion, many things are desecrated: human life, human freedom, organisation of human affairs, politics, knowledge, and even religious pursuits itself. All these have become cheap commodities, subjected not to higher values but to the whims of those who rule.³⁰

It was recognised by the Muslim teachers that school subjects in high schools taught in the secular context could be revised at the mosques to underscore Islam's identification with the pursuit of knowledge, academic or practical. Therefore their Association had a two-fold purpose in the following programme:

For Secondary and High School students, classes in Religious Instruction, Mathematics and

English will in future be held at the Azzavia Mosque Hall. In addition, courses in First Aid, Photography, Dressmaking, etc. will also be instituted for the students, and a well-stocked library will be placed at their disposal.³¹

While providing tutoring in weak subjects to ensure better scholastic achievement, the youth would also receive the required ideological orientation to resist the secularisation pressures to which they were being subjected. Religious Instruction and the mosque library would fill a void in their formal education.

6.23 Even if the Moslem Teachers Association had a relatively short lifespan it planted the seeds of Islamic resurgence through informal education programmes directed at adolescent students. Other, more virile, organisations stepped into the breach and extended the scope and influence of the Islamic orientation in the Cape Peninsula, a subject that merits a study of its own.

For the present it behoves us to examine the reasons for the decline of the Muslim Teachers' Association, which arose out of the Muslim Mission Schools. viz., that

- 6.23.1 the Association had a limited constituency; it drew its professional membership from the staffs of the 15 Muslim Mission schools in the main;
- 6.23.2 its membership consisted, therefore, largely of primary school teachers whose academic education in most cases did not go beyond Std. 10;
- 6.23.3 the Association's stated objectives were not concerned with the teachers in terms of labour-management norms, but rather with community upliftment and informal education, i.e. as a service organisation with an Islamic orientation;
- 6.23.4 therefore, the choice of name was unfortunate, and to certain political formations, provocative;
- 6.23.5 that the Association's launching should have coincided with

the imposition of the Coloured Affairs Department on the public gave the radical political faction a cause, perhaps even a vindication;

- 6.23.6 the drawing of the Association into the political arena did not allow for its consolidation and the extension of its support base to proceed unhindered;
- 6.23.7 its ideological intent could not be translated into affirmative action for lack of public endorsement and resources;
- 6.23.8 the Association's leadership skills and organisational solidarity were too poorly developed to resist the vilification to those ranged against it;
- 6.23.9 it seemed to espouse an ostensibly religious cause at a level of social interaction where secularism was increasingly associated with modernity and progress, while religion was perceived as the antithesis of social advancement, the Association seemed not to have the charismatic leadership to fire the popular imagination and to involve larger numbers in its success;
- 6.23.10 except for two editions of its journal and booklet of a distinguished visitor's lecture, the Association did not produce a literature to popularise its ideological stance.

6.24 Historically considered, the rise and fall of the Muslim Teachers' Association had much to do with the dual role of Dr Abdurahman as a pioneer of educational opportunity. Abdurahman decried the mission school system but was himself a party to it when he established, and promoted the establishment of Muslim mission schools. Teachers in such institutions were thus predisposed to seek a common cause addressing the schools' disabilities and inadequacies or extending the scope of Islam in education. But Abdurahman also founded secular schools and taught that in the colonial context education and politics were inextricably bound.

Products of formal education's secularisation process viewed political objectives as more meritorious than religious ones. Therefore, when the Moslem Teachers' Association was being censured, one creation of Abdurahman was turning on the other.

- 6.25 Had the Muslim teachers, like their original patron, Dr Abdurahman, acted with discretion by keeping their initiatives "in the interest and education of the Moslem child" in the realm of the religious life, i.e. private and almost anonymous their objectives might have been easier to realise.

Their modus operandi should in the circumstances have been almost conspiratorial in proceeding cautiously and slowly even if the demands of the day stimulated a desire for instant and all-embracing solutions. Abdurahman's history might have shown them the way. But in 1951, eleven years after his death, that history was not yet comprehensively compiled, or what there was had still to be demystified. With regard to school policy the Moslem Teachers' Association seemed content to leave the status quo unchallenged: extend and improve the Muslim Mission Schools, but increase the number of State schools. Thus was Abdurahman's pragmatism vindicated, in their tacit acceptance that the Mission Schools were no more than a palliation for the lack of school accommodation.

Community-initiated modernisation was predicated on resources.

- 6.26 Another Commission of Enquiry into Coloured Education in 1956 came to much the same conclusion. According to their report 37 500 Coloured children were eligible for schooling but could not be accommodated. Even more disconcerting was the pupil wastage between Sub A and Std. VI. Approximately 83% of these children enrolled in 1947 did not reach Std. VI by 1954, due to:

- 6.26.1 poverty and squalid home conditions;
- 6.26.2 late entry into schools because of waiting lists;
- 6.26.3 shortage of qualified teachers and equipment;
- 6.26.4 lack of school accommodation.

- 6.27 Doubling the existing school accommodation would allow for the implementation of compulsory school attendance, but that would necessitate:

6.27.1 an increased allocation of funds for Coloured education and

6.27.2 a gradual phasing out of the mission school system.³²

6.28 An important feature of education policy was emerging: the State was willing to assume greater responsibility for school provision to ensure a universal compulsory school attendance for eligible children, but the mission schools could not easily be accommodated in the notion of compulsion. They had become redundant in the national scheme of things. Yet, the task was formidable if coercion was not to be part of implementation. Mathew Arnold's prescriptions for compulsory education without coercion seemed to have informed the Commissioners' recommendation that mission schools be gradually eliminated. He contended that if compulsory education was to be effected, three conditions must be met:

6.28.1 the law of compulsory education should be applicable to children in all grades of society;

6.28.2 the education provided should be of a kind to evoke the appreciation of parents, and

6.28.3 there should be a reasonable standard of living so that the attitude of parents would not be dictated by economic necessity.³³

Social upliftment and educational expansion were certainly the central concerns of the Botha Commission's Report, but the State was too heavily dependent on its mission school system to allow for a quick and clean break with it.

6.29 In a situation of school scarcity the mission schools with an Islam-orientation were for Muslim parents "the kind to evoke appreciation". Every year hundreds of hopeful parents, especially in District Six, arrived at the three Muslim Mission Schools but found that only those on the waiting lists were to have their children admitted.³⁴ A most intolerable position was thus reached where community initiatives to build schools were not encouraged, but the State would not provide the school accommodation commensurate with the population

Coloured Person's Education Act No. 47 of 1963. By this means the mission schools became the responsibility of the Coloured Affairs Department.³⁶

Lest dissident groups hoped to thwart the State's intention this law also stipulated that "No one might manage a private school at which more than fourteen Coloured pupils were enrolled unless the school was registered with the department".³⁷ For the period 1964 (when the schools were transferred to the Coloured Affairs Department) to 1970 the numbers of children enrolled in the Muslim Mission schools remained more or less static at 5 425. This suggests that no significant expansion of the existing schools occurred and their number was reduced by one.³⁸

Implementation of the Group Areas Act No 41 (1950) as amended in 1957 reduced their number even more.

- 6.30 South Africa's fragmented system of administration allowed the Minister of the Interior to undertake the territorial and demographic rearrangement of the country in terms of the Apartheid ideology while other State departments, especially the educational, had to defer to this potent force in social engineering. Provision of schools and schooling was predicated on the laws related to ethnicity (Population Registration Act) and territorial separation (Group Areas Act). For the years 1955 to 1963, before provincial control of Coloured education was terminated, few educational initiatives were possible in a climate of political uncertainty for even the modernisation of facilities had to await the declaration of the various group areas.

During this period racial zoning plans under the Group Areas Act were being considered: so far as Cape Town was concerned, proclamations reserving certain areas for whites, Coloured, and Indians were issued in 1957, 1958 and 1961. The school boards planned new schools to serve new housing schemes in the undeveloped areas that were

allocated to Coloured people. But, for years, uncertainty caused delays. In the meanwhile, Coloured pupils were permitted to continue utilizing schools situated in white group areas; but no further improvements were made to such schools, and they became increasingly dilapidated.³⁹

That new schools were sited in "new housing schemes" conveyed to all the ideological purpose that formal schooling was thenceforth to accomplish. Only within the parameters of Apartheid would schooling be made available even if it would be free at primary and secondary levels. Operating a mission school on sufferance while awaiting its fate by Group Area proclamation tended to generate its own malaise.

- 6.31 When District Six was declared a white area and 36 000 people were "disqualified" from living in their homes and near their community facilities, a newspaper was moved to this comment:

A national monument to cynicism, self-interest and prejudice is about to arise on the slopes of Table Mountain. This monumental blunder will stand, in the words of the Minister of Community Development 'in close proximity to the central city', with 'a beautiful view' and 'amid attractive scenery'. It promises to be the best-planned, most charming, most luxurious reminder we are likely to see of the avariciousness of Apartheid as it is practised. It will remind future visitors from all parts of the world - and the Coloured community, whose numbers will one day dominate the Western Province - of the cynical planning of the late 1960s for 'separateness with equality'.⁴⁰

District Six was rezoned and renamed in 1966 and, by 1981, R27 million had been spent by the Community Development Board to clear the area for exclusive white occupation. Often the same

day as families were moved out, bulldozers reduced their houses to rubble.⁴¹

- 6.32 Muslim Mission Schools in the area were gradually noting the reduction of the number of pupils. At the Muir Street Moslem Primary School the number of pupils declined from 435 in 1964 to 172 in 1976.⁴²

In the year that the Group Areas Act was applied to District Six the management committee was contemplating enlarging the school. Pressure had been applied on the management because the school had no playgrounds and pupils were obliged to spend their intervals playing in the adjoining streets.⁴² A month later the Physical Education Inspector noted that the area on which instruction was given in the subject was inadequate and the boys and girls could only use the available space in turns.

Boys were taken for athletic practices to the Trafalgar Park about 2 kilometers away.⁴⁴

An inspection in March 1966 pointed to the inadequate sanitary facilities with the toilet per number of boys being 1 to 25, and for girls the ratio was 1 to 16. On 30 August 1966 the manager of Muir Street Moslem Primary School advised the Coloured Affairs Department:

Three houses belonging to the school and the adjacent building cannot yet be vacated to build the required toilets and classrooms. My committee tried to move the tenants but the Rent Board would not allow it. The majority of the pupils live in the immediate vicinity of the school and make use of their home toilets. There is also a public toilet just opposite the school.⁴⁵

That the matter of inadequate facilities was a serious concern is evident from the above, but that another statutory body, the Rent Board, could thwart the management from using the school's property to improve its educational effectiveness

indicates how scarce housing was in the area. Accommodation for families was seen as far more desirable than improving educational facilities. What was unfortunate was that the community had to be faced with such invidious options because another statutory body, the Cape Town City Council, could not provide alternative housing. Because these bodies were functioning in isolation and according to their own priorities and frames of reference, effective action was impossible.

Additional classrooms were obtained by hiring the basement of the nearby mosque and separating the complement of pupils and teachers.⁴⁶

- 6.33 In 1964 the school had a principal and twelve teachers, but as the families were moved from the area the staff had to be reduced.

By 1971 the school no longer had use for the mosque basement, and in 1977 the Regional Director of the Coloured Affairs Department advised the principal that the school would be closed as from January 1978. An agreement was reached between the Community Development Board and the management committee whereby financial compensation was accepted that the school be demolished.⁴⁷

A nother school, even more unsuitable for educational purposes came to a worse end as District Six descended into the "sloth of despond".

- 6.34 An inspection of the Sheikh Joseph Primary School, Frere Street, Cape Town in 1966 revealed:

6.34.1 the school needed repairs urgently; every year this is noted but little is done about it;

6.34.2 there are regular burglaries committed by vandals from the vicinity;

6.34.3 window panes, door locks and the school's fence require regular replacement;

6.34.4 classrooms are small and poorly lit.⁴⁸

- 6.35 On 21 July, 1969 the school was mysteriously destroyed by two fires and the 230 pupils were placed in surrounding schools while the principal and his staff of six teachers were found alternative posts. There was no question of re-erecting the school because it was located in a white area from which the pupils were disqualified.⁴⁹

Subsidies from the Coloured Affairs Department were terminated from 22 July, 1969.⁵⁰ Unlike the Muir Street Moslem Primary School, this school was administered by Mr Sarleh Dollie to whom the Department sent the rental of R17,23 per month. In 1965 the Circuit Inspector urged more fund-raising by the school in order to improve the conditions, but he also noted that the children's parents were generally poor being mostly artisans, unskilled workers and factory workers.

Even if the Group Areas Act had not disqualified the Muslim parents from living in District Six it is doubted if their resources would have allowed for the school's rebuilding as a modern educational facility.

- 6.36 After 1966 the Muslim Mission Schools in the white Group Areas were doomed as their enrolments dropped while buildings were flattened in the vicinity. However, the Rahmaniyyeh Institute, located at the eastern end of District Six, still had an appreciable catchment area as the homes of its pupils were further from the city centre. Survival from year to year depended on how long the hand of the authorities could be stayed.

At one time it was the biggest school in the city with an enrolment of 800 pupils and a staff of 20 teachers; by 1963 its enrolment stood at 130 because the poorer families, usually Afrikaans-speaking, who dwelt in rented dwellings, were the first to be removed and relocated.⁵¹

Abdurahman's intention was that the school should be an English medium school, but its catchment area was mainly Afrikaans-speaking. The school was obliged to conform with

the education policy after the Botha Commission recommended that:

The medium of instruction up to and including Std.VI should be the pupil's home language, in mission as well as in public schools.⁵²

This meant that the school's catchment area had to shift to the nearby Walmer Estate residential area with its essentially middle-class character, and, by extension an area with a lower birth-rate. Those further afield could save the school.

- 6.37 An appeal to the Muslim community's esprit de corps was made in the press to prevent the redundancy of the Rahmaniye Institute.

It is therefore up to all Muslims to rally to the call; that is, to sacrifice and send their children to Rahmaniye. What most people do not know is the fact that when Dr Abdurahman founded the school, he was instrumental in getting a religious instruction teacher on the staff of not only Rahmaniye Institute, but also (afterwards) of Kipling Street Muslim School, Salt River, and the Talfalah Institute, Claremont.⁵³

- 6.38 A deputation from the Rahmaniye Institute in 1974 called on the Administration of Coloured Affairs to seek a special consideration, indeed, a compromise, that would allow the school's complement of teachers and pupils to be transferred to a new State school in the Coloured area of Surrey Estate. They asked only that the new State school be renamed Rahmaniye Institute because Muslim families who lived in the vicinity of the school were relocated there. These families would then be assured of continuity of the school in new surroundings, and former pupils would then have their alma mater accessible to their own children as well. By implication, then, the State's modernisation efforts would, by this

gesture of goodwill, be appreciated by the Muslim community. Change to the very character of the school would also have been conceded by the deputation, viz., that non-Muslim children would also be admitted and that the State's prescribed Religious Instruction syllabus for Christian children would be implemented.

In support of its plea that the name of Rahmaniye Institute be given to a State school in the Coloured Group Area, the manager argued that

The school has served the Moslem community since about the turn of the century and its role in the secular as well as the religious fields has had a profound impact on the community life of Moslems in Cape Town.

The school has turned out a complement of distinguished professional and businessmen, not to mention the number of excellent sportsmen and sports administrators.

Religious instruction has had a very sobering and deterring effect on past pupils despite permissiveness and Communistic influences. The Rahmaniye Institute has been to the Moslems of Cape Town what Zonnebloem Training College and its branches have been to the Christians, and it would be an extremely sad day indeed if the Rahmaniye Institute were to go out of existence.

We have always taught our charges to respect the authority placed over us as stated in the Holy Quran, and we will continue to do so.⁵⁴

Here was a spirited defence not only of a hallowed educational institution but an appeal to education authorities to recognise the value of Islam in shaping the lives of the

citizenry and also to acknowledge religion's influence in maintaining political stability. No success followed this appeal.

The authorities were adamant that State schools could not be associated with a particular religious community's sentiments or its desire to ensure the continuity of a school's ethos in the new Group Areas.

A Group Area-related citizenry had to develop anew and in the process generate a new mental outlook with regard to schools. Reservations are nevertheless conveyed in the letter about a State school's capacity to reinforce in Muslim children their mores and help thereby to maintain social control.

However, it can be appreciated that if the Group Areas Act was conceived by its authors to be a peculiarly revolutionary strategy of social engineering then schools of religious orientation would be unwelcome. This is particularly evident when a religion does not support the social system or the assumptions underlying that system. If religion is to be part of the curriculum its role shall have to be related to domestication.

- 6.39 Responding to the rapid changes in the geographic distribution of the Western Cape's Muslim population occasioned by the Group Areas Act, a Muslim socio-cultural organisation, the Muslim Assembly, came into being in 1968.

This organisation formulated a new Islamic Religious Instruction Syllabus complete with teaching aids and textbooks as well as an inspection system.

A request was submitted to the Administration of Coloured Affairs that this syllabus be implemented in State schools under its control.

On 16 March 1970 a Muslim Assembly deputation was received by the Director of Coloured Education to discuss the principle of an official Islamic syllabus in State schools that would

compensate for the loss of Muslim Mission Schools closed down in white Group Areas.

The Director of Education, Mr Mohr, gave these reasons for being unable to entertain the proposed syllabus:

- 6.39.1 It is the policy of the Coloured Administration to allow only State-controlled schools in future.
- 6.39.2 While a few exceptions will be made for denominational schools to be re-established in the new residential areas such schools will not be allowed to restrict registration to a particular denomination.
A case in point is the Talfalah School which will be re-established in another area, will be allowed a Muslim controlling body, but will not be allowed to register only Muslim children.
- 6.39.3 In the State-controlled schools provision is made for the teaching of Religious Instruction, but only Christian religious instruction is specifically provided for because South Africa is a Christian country.
- 6.39.4 If any parent objects to Christian religious instruction then such a child will not be compelled to be so instructed.
- 6.39.5 A custom has been established whereby denominational religious instruction has been allowed in the past. This custom the Department hopes to continue observing.
- 6.39.6 The Department, therefore, has no objection to Islamic religious instruction in State schools:
 - 6.39.6.1 if the principals can arrange these classes;
 - 6.39.6.2 if there are Muslim teachers willing to do such instruction;
 - 6.39.6.3 if there are Muslim children to be taught in class groups and their numbers justify the arrangement.
- 6.39.7 It cannot be expected that the State should prescribe a particular religious instruction syllabus.
- 6.39.8 The State cannot give permission for a particular teacher to teach Islamic religious instruction, nor can it compel any teacher to do so.

compensate for the loss of Muslim Mission Schools closed down in white Group Areas.

The Director of Education, Mr Mohr, gave these reasons for being unable to entertain the proposed syllabus:

- 6.39.1 It is the policy of the Coloured Administration to allow only State-controlled schools in future.
- 6.39.2 While a few exceptions will be made for denominational schools to be re-established in the new residential areas such schools will not be allowed to restrict registration to a particular denomination.
A case in point is the Talfalah School which will be re-established in another area, will be allowed a Muslim controlling body, but will not be allowed to register only Muslim children.
- 6.39.3 In the State-controlled schools provision is made for the teaching of Religious Instruction, but only Christian religious instruction is specifically provided for because South Africa is a Christian country.
- 6.39.4 If any parent objects to Christian religious instruction then such a child will not be compelled to be so instructed.
- 6.39.5 A custom has been established whereby denominational religious instruction has been allowed in the past.
This custom the Department hopes to continue observing.
- 6.39.6 The Department, therefore, has no objection to Islamic religious instruction in State schools:
 - 6.39.6.1 if the principals can arrange these classes;
 - 6.39.6.2 if there are Muslim teachers willing to do such instruction;
 - 6.39.6.3 if there are Muslim children to be taught in class groups and their numbers justify the arrangement.
- 6.39.7 It cannot be expected that the State should prescribe a particular religious instruction syllabus.
- 6.39.8 The State cannot give permission for a particular teacher to teach Islamic religious instruction, nor can it compel any teacher to do so.

- 6.39.9 No particular Islamic syllabus can be circulated as official circulars, no matter how good it may be.
- 6.39.10 The Muslim Assembly could tell principals of their syllabus and even obtain their co-operation in implementing it.
If such co-operation is obtained the Department would not interfere.⁵⁵
- 6.40. A relevant picture of religion's role in education policy for Coloured people in the context of our present study also emerges from the above definition of State policy, viz:
- 6.40.1 Muslim Mission Schools as institutions of formal Islamic instruction were effectively being phased out of the school system;
- 6.40.2 the autonomy of public spirited Muslims to determine or influence the content of religious instruction was thus eliminated from the school system;
- 6.40.3 the dominant culture's interests in religious instruction would prevail in the school system;
- 6.40.4 if another religious group's interests were to be included it could not be in terms of explicit policy but rather by an administrative arrangement between a co-operative school principal and the parties seeking his co-operation;
- 6.40.5 Islamic religious instruction in State schools would apparently only be allowed as a concession or expedient, but not as the public's inalienable right or as an expression of the freedom of conscience;
- 6.40.6 no longer would special persons be appointed to the staffs of schools to instruct Muslim children in the precepts of their religion.
- 6.41 Reference was made in the Director's response to the case of Talfalah Institute and it is germane to our purposes to look at developments leading to the closure of that school. Since Claremont was also declared a white Group Area and the Muslims of the area were obliged to vacate their homes for expropriation and demolition, the Talfalah Institute also faced closure. The Moslem Education Society, as owners and administrators of the school resolved in 1969 to sell their

property and acquire another site in a Coloured Group Area subject to these conditions:

6.41.1 the new school site was to be fully owned by the management committee in the spirit of the original Trust fund;

6.41.2 the committee undertook to sell the school to the Administration of Coloured Affairs if there was a need to dispose of the property.⁵⁶

6.42 A letter from the Circuit Inspector of Education, Dr R.E. van der Ross, to the Administration of Coloured Affairs conveyed the management committee's wishes with regard to its Islamic orientation:

6.42.1 that the new school the committee would erect be named the Talfalah Institute for all time;

6.42.2 that the new school retain the post of Arabic teacher over and above any other teaching posts that might be created there.⁵⁷

6.43 According to the Deed of Transfer of the land acquired for the new school at Sherwood Park a reversionary clause was inserted allowing for the land and its improvement to be disposed of only to the Administration of Coloured Affairs.⁵⁸

This was in conformity with the stipulations of the Coloured Persons Education Act (1963), but the concession of the Talfalah Institute's committee was to evoke a measure of discontent in the Claremont community, even if the entire complement of teachers and pupils were transferred to the new school at Sherwood Park with the principal retaining his position in an upgraded school.

6.44 Part of the explanation for the decision of the principal and staff to accept the closure of their school while maintaining their own organisational status quo can be found in Merton's hypothesis on "Bureaucratic Structure and Behaviour":

Firstly, the bureaucrat is trained to comply

strictly with the rules but when situations arise which are not covered by the rules, this training may lead to inflexibility and timidity.

The bureaucrat has not been taught to improvise and innovate and in addition, he may well be afraid to do so. His career incentives such as promotions are designed to reward 'disciplined action and conformity to official regulations'. Thus it may not be in his interest to bend rules even when such action may further the realisation of organisational goals. Secondly, the devotion to the rules encouraged in bureaucratic organisations, may lead to displacement of goals. There is a tendency for conformity to official regulations to become an end in itself rather than a means to an end.⁵⁹

Thus if the principal had any say in the fate of the school his participation in negotiations with the education authorities could not have been that of a free agent nor of a disinterested party. Pressures exerted by the reduced enrolment and the communities' powerlessness to contest the removal of families from the area also affected the decision of the teaching staff whose willingness to move en masse to a new location coloured the process of negotiation on the school's fate.

- 6.45 In December of 1971 the last school business was conducted at the Draper Street, Claremont, premises, and the management committee was advised that the old school's rental would be terminated as from 1 January, 1972.⁶⁰

The staff and all eligible pupils were transferred to the new Sherwood Park Primary School subject to the following stipulations of the Administration of Coloured Affairs:

- 6.45.1 pupils of all church connections were to be allowed to register at the new school;
- 6.45.2 the Administration of Coloured Affairs reserved the

right to take over the school at any time as a State school⁶¹

- 6.46 For the staff of the Talfalah Institute the move meant a vast improvement in their working conditions for they were going to a tastefully designed, 24 classroom building complex complete with an administration block. Since the new premises were erected by the Claremont Moslem Education Society, the patrons of the old Talfalah Institute, that body become responsible for the maintenance of the new school. Finance would be derived from the monthly rental as well as the school's fund-raising efforts. State-aid in terms of Regulation H4 of the Administration of Coloured Affairs was transferred from the Talfalah Institute to the Sherwood Park Primary School.⁶²

Further details regarding the transfer of the staff and pupils are given in the Sherwood Park Primary School's magazine:

The late Mr C. Isaacs and the late Mr Hassiem Maged and the then School Committee of 1969-1971 played an important role in the transference of the school to Sherwood Park.

However, the school's name could not be perpetuated at its present site in Fourth Avenue, and the name of "Talfalah" was to be no more. The late Mr Isaacs became the first principal of Sherwood Park Primary School which in 1974 had a staff of 48 teachers and an enrolment of 1400 pupils.⁶³

- 6.47 It can be argued in the light of the foregoing information that the loss of the school's name and the right of its patrons to determine its admission policy constituted a grave loss or reduction of autonomy. Undoubtedly, moving of the school's staff and pupils to more amenable buildings signified modernisation, but the change of name and the concomitant change of the school's pupil composition meant the demise of

the educational institution as an educational facility of the Muslim community. This was done not without an element of duress and in the manifest interest of the State's ideology. But there are also instances where the management of Muslim Mission schools anticipated political events and managed to modernise their facilities with far less freedom and autonomy.

- 6.48 Paarl's Muslim community received notification in 1961 that their mosques and the Muslim Mission School were "affected properties", situated in an area proclaimed for white occupation. Formal protests proved fruitless.

An increasing enrolment compelled the school's management to seek additional classrooms near the school but with the approval of the Superintendent-General of Education. This was denied. His reply suggested "the renting of accommodation in the Klein Drakenstein(Coloured) area."⁶⁴

Accepting their influence as too limited to affect the course of Group Areas implementation, the Paarl Muslim Community resolved to re-establish their school in the proclaimed coloured area. The Administration of Coloured Affairs offered four possible sites for the new Muslim Mission School.

In 1972 the Administration advised that plans for a new Muslim primary school had been approved: 12 classrooms, an administration block consisting of 5 special rooms, office, staff room, etc. Provision was made for an additional number of classrooms to cope with an increase in accommodation demand.

On 17 March 1973, the Administration was requested permission to proceed with construction, but on 5 April, 1973, the Commissioner of Coloured Affairs advised, that:

the Department of Agricultural Credit and Land Tenure is not favourably disposed towards alienation of State land for purposes of creating State-aided buildings, but will only

agree to making available such land for the said purpose by way of a lease agreement.⁶⁵

Not only was the Paarl Muslim community led to believe that they could in the proclaimed Coloured area rebuild their school, but they were even allowed to prepare building plans which were submitted and approved by the Department of Coloured Affairs. Another State Department, however, decided that the land sought for a Muslim Mission School could not be sold for that purpose.

- 6.49 Paarl's Muslim community argued their case for an Islam-oriented school on these grounds:

Whilst the Muslims in Paarl, as elsewhere in South Africa, form an integral and inseparable part of the larger socio-economic fabric of our society, it is in the field of religion and religious instruction that they lay claim to a special tolerance. During the era when the Mission School system held sway, each town with a substantial Muslim population had its own Muslim School or schools at which the teaching of Islamic scripture was integrated into the curriculum. Thus the principles and practices of the Islamic Faith were imparted to each successive generation of pupils. This is still the case at several Muslim schools in Cape Town and suburbs, and in a number of Boland towns including Paarl.⁶⁶

The Group Areas Act and the disqualification of Muslim families from living in homes owned for generations near to their mosques caused untold anxieties about the future of their cultural transmission. They feared the dispersal of their children among inter-denominational primary schools. Children from Muslim families would be disadvantaged because the religious teacher paid by the Paarl Muslim congregation could not serve in an itinerant capacity because of the wide

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dispersal that could result from the closure of their own school. They had a central venue for such instruction in their Muslim Mission School.

6.50 Those who argued that Muslim children dispersed to the inter-denominational State schools might still benefit from an afternoon session at the traditional madressah were answered with these cogent rebuttals:

6.50.1 an additional school conducted with fatigued pupils was not educationally desirable;

6.50.2 afternoon madressah schools showed a 40-50% rate of abesenteeism;

6.50.3 many working parents were not at home to supervise their children's attendance at the afternoon school;

6.50.4 children left with strangers or old people often lacked the required discipline to ensure effective attendance and application;

6.50.5 if the community were to rely only on the afternoon religious schools it would be obliged to hire several venues for only a part of the day;

6.50.6 the ideal was to have the children at one place for one instruction session.⁶⁷

Members of the Coloured Person's Representative Council to whom this memorandum for the continuation of the Paarl Muslim Primary School were submitted for their help and intercession could not bring relief to the Muslim community.

Faced thus with overwhelming forces of the Group Areas Act and the policy of the Administration of Coloured Affairs the life of the school was terminated in May 1974. Its staff of five teachers and the entire complement of 200 pupils were transferred to the brand new State institution. - the New Orleans Primary School. Muslim Mission School education in Paarl was brought to an end.

6.51 Group Areas implementation at Simonstown was to have the same devastating effect on the little town's Muslim Mission School.

An account of their stability as a community was given by their representative that pleaded before the Group Areas Board on 4 August, 1959:

The witness emphasised the strong denominational sense of the Moslems, including the Moslem Indians with the Malays as part of the united congregation. He explained that the Moslems were occupied in Simonstown as fishermen who needed to live as close to their boats as possible, as dock-workers who could ill afford to pay fares from distant places and as citizens participating in all activities of the municipality. He might well have added the small but important part played by Malays in tailoring for the Royal and South African navies, the supply of domestic workers from the community and the shopkeepers which adds a little cosmopolitan variety to Simonstown.

The witness opposed any move to separate the various legally defined groups from each other, but in particular deplored any attempt to separate Indian from the Malay Moslems. The former was relatively wealthy and had contributed generously, as befitted their wealth, to the running of the mosque and other facilities.⁶⁸

By means of the "mosque and other facilities", such as the Islam-oriented school, a stable, forward-looking and generally law-abiding community of Muslims was developed over more than half a century. Such an achievement and the economic value of the community did not influence the Group Areas Board. In 1968 disqualified families were vacating their homes so that Simonstown might be for the exclusive residential use of the white South Africans and various immigrants from Europe.

To refuse obedience to the law meant risking prosecution and forceful eviction.

6.52 What is quite ironical is that a young and motivated principal was appointed to the Simonstown Moslem Primary School in 1965 and the school was geared for growth and improvement of its facilities. An Inspection Report at that time stated:

The new principal has tackled his work with great enthusiasm and everywhere improvements can be seen. He has succeeded with much effort to obtain an additional venue and in that way recommended that a third teacher be appointed to serve the community.

Because of his particular concern for the general advancement of this small Moslem community and its many traditions, the principal has succeeded in getting the respect and co-operation of the parents.⁶⁹

While the Group Areas proclamation hung like the sword of Damocles over the non-white residents of the town the enthusiastic young principal approached his work with much idealism and energy, both crucial factors in one seeing education as a means to social upliftment. Unity of purpose between school and community was especially commended where poverty and neglect were easily noticeable. Observed and inspector:

The school also serves as a unifying factor of the community, particularly because of the links between school and church. The socio-economic conditions are not of a high level and the children appear to be, in a few cases, in need of care.

A purposeful neatness campaign would have great value here.⁷⁰

Before any significant progress could be noted the school's enrolment started to drop as the poorer families were relocated to houses in Slangkop (later, Oceanview). Towards the end of 1968 the Regional Representative of the Department of

Coloured Affairs advised Mr A. Baker of the management committee that the Regulation H4 grant to the school would be terminated on 1 January, 1969. The pupils and principal were to be transferred to the Arsenal Primary School in Simonstown.

Once the Group Areas Board's decision was known and the removal of disqualified people from the town proceeded apace, the community disintegrated.

Another Muslim Mission School was removed from the list of State-subsidised schools, another cultural milestone was obliterated.

- 6.53 Any discussion of the effects of the Group Areas Act on the Muslim Mission schools would in our present frame have to be confined to selected examples. It would not be amiss to review at this stage the insidious influence of this law, in which the disfranchised Coloured people had no share in formulation. It has been shown how more than one statutory body was employed to accomplish the ideological objectives of white hegemony.

Antonio Gramsci has introduced the term, hegemony, into the sociological lexicon to describe how domination of one class over others is achieved by a combination of political and ideological means. Gramsci postulated the State as the chief agent of coercive force for ideological domination.⁷²

State schools in the Coloured areas would by extension serve the cause of hegemony, mission schools could conceivably represent a prospect, however slight, of impeding hegemony. An attenuated religious freedom by way of mosques, but not Islam-orientated schools, was thus permitted to the Muslims. A contingency plan for maintaining Islamic religious instruction as a broad community interest in the State schools gained no official favour. Modernisation was being promoted by the State on its own terms within its ideological parameters.

- 6.54 A lack of unified response on the part of the management

committees of schools in affected areas allowed the piece-meal elimination of Islam-orientated schools in District Six, Claremont, Paarl and Simonstown, Lansdowne, and, lastly, at Elsies River. From their inception each school was a Muslim community response to a particular set of circumstances regarding school accommodation.

Each initiating group of patrons worked in isolation to erect their schools and ipso facto acquired a heightened sense of its autonomy and right to ownership. Except for Simonstown the school buildings were not regarded as part of a religious endowment and their acceptance of a State-subsidy defined them out of that category of established institutions. Subsidisation made the institutions totally dependent and thus vulnerable to the State's pressures. Since schools and communities function as an organic duality, the removal of the latter spelled the redundancy of the former. A community's educational

needs are embodied in the *raison d'être* of a school. Continuity of a school's traditions and peculiar ethos ensures that successive generations of children would be sent there for a type of preferred socialisation. The Group Areas Act and the education policy of the Coloured Affairs Department put paid to a salutary customary pattern of community life.

- 6.55 It was when the Group Areas Act threatened the Muslim Mission Schools that the leadership vacuum Abdurahman left was most keenly felt. No community ~~spokesman~~ commanded in equal measure his vast knowledge of educational matters, his perceptions of legislation, his negotiating skills. Whereas Abdurahman confronted officialdom on the basis of the strength of his immense electoral support and his position on statutory bodies, his political successors in the exclusively Coloured statutory bodies could not obtain the slightest concession.

The Paarl Muslim community sought the help of the Coloured Representative Council and when they failed others avoided this ostensible venue of redress.

- 6.56 A representative of the Simonstown Muslim community had testified before the Group Areas Board only to come away

empty-handed. Each failure at negotiation, or each school that was left standing in the wasteland of demolished houses signified its demoralisation and intimidatory coercion. But it is equally significant that in most cases the education authorities, the Administration of Coloured Affairs, itself did not close a mission school by unilateral cancellation of the H4 rent-grant or the refusal to meet its financial obligation by way of supplies or salaries.

Hostility could not, therefore, be directed at that quarter.

Other State departments, such as the Group Areas Board, the Department of Agricultural Credit, etc. in various ways made it impossible for the schools to continue. Maurice sums up the political impotence of the disqualified people in these terms:

... all the conferences, the committees and the commissions; the delegations, the deputations and the declarations; the meetings, the motions and the memoranda; the pleas, the prayers and petitions; the requests, the recommendations and resolutions - and so through the alliterative alphabet - which had over the years from 1905 constituted the stock-in-trade of the participants, had indeed proved of very small avail.⁷³

Granted the people were being moved from some instances of squalid living conditions to neatly planned and properly serviced "townships", but a great alienation resulted. Those who were disqualified merely on the spurious and untenable grounds of race perceived the relocations, even the new State Schools, as more a retributive step than a socially corrective one.

Socially and politically, the Group Areas Act created more problems than it purported to solve.

6.57 Another Commission of Enquiry into the affairs of the Coloured Community was then launched in 1973. This commission gave

much attention to compulsory school attendance and recognised the value of the mission schools in the Coloured Group areas in this regard. Therefore, the commission urged that higher rent grants be allocated to these State-aided institutions.⁷⁴

Seven years after the Commission presented its report to Parliament it was clear that "realistic" rentals and subsidies were not adequate for maintenance, services, repairs or improvements. Accordingly, the Anglican Board of State-aided Schools in 1983 recommended that parish schools for Coloured children should become properties of the State if parishes were unable to cope with the financial strain. Another grievance was the policy of the authorities not to enter into long term leases that would give the school management security of tenure.

The Anglican Synod was told:

...the Government had in 1981 closed St Phillip's school in District Six with only four days' notice. If the Government had signed leases, it might avoid closing schools without adequate notice or consultation.⁷⁵

For our purposes the effect of Government policy with regard to mission schools is clear: their continued existence will remain an expediency.

- 6.58 As the palpable effects of Apartheid in education, the associations of separate and inferior, were increasingly being felt, concerned parents were in greater numbers looking for private schools to obtain for their children a worthwhile education and indeed a more desirable form of socialisation.

For the Muslim community their state-aided schools held such a prospect until the change in educational control and the Group Areas Act altered the purpose of schools to conform to the current ideology.

A plethora of laws restricted their independence, autonomy and

freedom in their children's education in every institution funded by the State.

Some took advantage of more liberal admission policies of Anglican Church private schools such as St Georges Grammar School, Diocesan College and South African College School. Muslim children were enrolled in some of these superior schools. Others considered such actions morally indefensible and theologically unacceptable.

- 6.59 Although State schools in the Coloured areas of the Western Cape are free and all stationery and books are provided without charge, there seems to be an increase in the number of parents fearing the emphasis on secularism in the local State schools, where Muslim children are exempted from receiving Christian religious instruction. Muslims regard education without a religious content as producing an unbalanced character. Ideally, their children should be at Islam-oriented schools. The only Muslim primary school with the potential to develop into a secondary school as well is the Habibia Educational Institute of Athlone.

This school was founded in 1946 after a substantial tract of land was bought for the purpose in 1940 at a cost of R21 936.

Since its inception the school has maintained a predominantly Islamic ethos by means of Islamic instruction skillfully interwoven with the children's secular education.⁷⁶

Aid from the State is provided for this school by way of the Administration of Coloured Affairs but Muslim children of all communities are admitted.

However, it would be more correct to speak of the Habibia Education Complex because of their institutions that are autonomous and receive no State funding, viz., the Habibia Girls' College, Habibia Madressah and the Habibia Nursery School.⁷⁷

- 6.60 It is the Habibia Girls' College that seems to have set an

example of future Islam-oriented schools if all State subsidies to Muslim Mission Schools should be terminated. Its founders believe that a class of people has emerged in the Cape's Muslim community to make such a school a viable proposition in both economic and cultural terms. Girls, as the future mothers of the community are seen to be most vulnerable to pernicious forces abroad in the community and the motivation for their school is informed by the following perspective:

Islam, being a total and comprehensive system in which there is no separation between religious beliefs and morality on the one hand, and a secular social system on the other, must determine the objectives and influence the content of the entire curriculum, whether it relates to the teaching of literature, history, science, art or any other subject.⁷⁸

6.61 Muslim educationists draw the following comparisons between the Islam-oriented school and that provided by the State:

6.61.1 Schools arise in response to the needs of Muslim society. In South Africa schools established by the State serve political purposes in perpetuating the dominance of whites and the subordination of non-whites.

6.61.2 Schools must reflect the aspirations and felt needs of the Muslim community.

South African State schools are oriented to the labour demands of the economy and to consumerism.

6.61.3 Muslim educational institutions place moral and religious training highest on their programmes for education, per se, is in Islam crucial to the God-Man relationship.

Muslim children in State schools where no Islamic religious instruction can be accommodated tend to be alienated from the traditions of community life and its value system.

6.61.4 Islamic educational systems emphasise a deep personal relationship between the teacher and student for the teacher is the source of both spiritual and academic guidance.

In the State schools the relationship is more impersonal and cursory; the teachers' role is more linked to imparting knowledge and skills than to the moral and ethical which they often exclude from the diagnostic paradigms.⁷⁹

6.62 By implementing the Group Areas Act as a massive exercise in rationalisation for exclusivist ideological ends, the State also attempted a simultaneous modernisation of the reconstituted communities in the provision of State schools and community social welfare and health facilities. In the process it had to deny the re-establishment of community-initiated schools. Islam-oriented schools were by definition disallowed. All schools would be the State's exclusive responsibility in the new residential areas with the ostensibly meritorious intent of extending the opportunities for education and facilitating compulsory school attendance.

An education system so conceived and imposed on authoritarian and paternalist terms would hardly be acceptable nor enjoy the confidence of the affected people. Modernisation can be both a constructive as well as a destructive factor in its political dimensions and educational implications. In Cape Town and environs where the largest concentration of Muslims are domiciled and where the cultural history of Muslims extend over three centuries, the educational modernisation was linked to the Group Areas Act with the following effects:

- 6.62.1 increased secularisation of education and its consequent dangers of cultural impoverishment regarding Islamic values and traditions;
- 6.62.2 the perceived dangers to Islamic cultural identity resulted in many community organisations aimed at cultural preservation;
- 6.63.3 new communities were obliged to establish mosques, schools for religious instruction, creches and Islam-

- oriented community services;
- 6.62.4 new communities have to re-establish community coherence and sentiment for their children's sake and the social structures to engender these;
- 6.62.5 a new community leadership has had to emerge to support the traditional imams whose influence and power have no longer a legitimacy based on custom and history as well as theological considerations;
- 6.62.6 facilities must be created to train and equip the new community leadership at the secondary or tertiary level, and the major cultural movements have indeed established ad hoc institutions at Wynberg, Athlone and Paarl.⁸⁰

Unfortunately, no society can escape modernity's pervasive influences. It can either be mastered by it or destroyed by it, or it can adapt its skills and resources to come to terms with it. This is what the Muslim community seems to be doing.

If it wishes to secure its continued influence in the education of Muslim children the community will have to avoid State funding and increase the number of its private schools.

- 6.63 Private schools can not only exclude the State's ideological constraints but unify communities in defiance of the racial demarcations subsumed in such constraints. Children from Black, Asian and Coloured communities rigidly separated in the State school system might in private schools develop a commonality of interests beyond the academic. Private schools also claim to have the following advantages:

- 6.63.1 in academic achievement based on objective tests, boys from (white) private schools appeared to be better equipped for the tests than their Government school counterparts;
- 6.63.2 in respect of behaviour private school pupils appear better adjusted over a five-year period of secondary schooling;
- 6.63.3 private schools were better served by graduate teachers more settled and experienced than those found in State schools;

6.63.4 greater control is exercised over private school pupils in both the home and the school working in close collaboration;

6.63.5 pupils and their parents have high aspirations;

6.63.6 pupils have a more positive attitude to school work, extra-curricular activities and even religion.

A study conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council on private schools in 1978 brought the above features of these schools' pupils to light.⁸¹ The significance of these findings have not been lost on the protagonists of private schools in the Muslim community. However, the experience of the Black community in this matter will very likely confront the Islam-oriented schools as well, because

children from the most disadvantaged environments need special help in overcoming learning disabilities resulting from over-crowded primary schools employing poorly qualified and over-worked teachers.

Even the brightest children emerge from such backgrounds expecting school to be incomprehensible and come to private schools with poorly developed basic skill and little confidence in speaking to teachers.⁸²

6.64 Part of the problem of disadvantage in the Western Cape is the preponderance of Afrikaans schools in the Coloured areas. Children from Afrikaans primary schools admitted to the English-medium private school could have adjustment problems. A positive attitude towards English as opposed to Afrikaans is more evident in the Muslim community, particularly among that social class most likely to make use of private schools. One can appreciate this preference in the light of this opinion:

They (Coloured people) sympathise to a certain extent with people who speak English; they identify themselves with the more liberal English tradition; the 'gentlemanly' behaviour.⁸³

If English is the language of "gentlemen" then, by extension, it is the language of refinement and social prestige; it would be preferable to Afrikaans with its association of political domination and social inferiority. English is thus the language of protest. Dr Abdurahman's insistence on English is still, therefore, endorsed forty years after his death, as the Muslim community asserts itself once more in the establishment of schools, as agencies of modernisation with cultural transmission as their manifest purpose. Historically, we could read into this tendency a repetition of the English-speaking middle class rejecting the political undertones of public education, as a columnist has suggested in discussing the private school system of South Africa:

During the rising tide of Afrikaner nationalism in the 1930s and particularly after 1948 it was the English-speaking group's turn to feel culturally threatened. This led to more demands for English private school education and further consolidation of the system... There is evidence that, unlike 20 or 30 years ago, intermarriage (of English- and Afrikaans-speakers) usually results in the family becoming English-speaking.

A contributory factor may be a pessimism about the future of Afrikanerdom and a feeling that English may be a safer option - a feeling reinforced by the clear rejection of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction among black South Africans.⁸⁴

Their economic position allowed the English South Africans this opportunity of independence, and so it is that the Muslim community of the Cape Flats is perhaps in a more favourable position to follow the English example.

6.65 As is the case with the English private schools of South Africa, so too, will there be detractors pointing to the elitism inherent in that system. Elitism is quite contrary to the Islamic ethos. An important ancillary body to its management would have to be the fund-raisers who would create

scholarships for eligible pupils unable to afford the service of such schools. According to a spokesman for the Ahmedia Primary School in Durban this problem had been anticipated:

Already critics have dubbed the school "a rich man's school". Cassim Jadwat said that it was very costly to run a private school...a child who would like to attend this school, but could not afford to do so could apply for a bursary to one of the many organisations that cater to such needs.⁸⁵

One such organisation in the Western Cape is the former management of the Muir Street Muslim Primary School which was to sell their school-buildings to the Community Development Board. They have invested the entire proceeds of that sale and use the dividends derived for bursaries and scholarships tenable at the Islam-oriented schools.⁸⁶

Children who for various practical reasons are obliged to attend the State schools are still benefitting from the traditional school system, however.

- 6.66 It should be pointed out that the only Islam-oriented school not officially regarded as a Muslim Mission School is the Habibia Girls' College, a private secondary school opened in 1983. That it should hold a special attraction for religiously observant Muslims is justified by the following observation:

Permissiveness and promiscuity have found their way into high schools leading to drug abuse, premarital sex and the free intermingling of the sexes.

Muslims find themselves virtually compelled to participate in extramural activities such as matric balls, parties and outings where permissiveness is given free reign.

Those who refuse to participate are ostracised or regarded as 'squares'.

This has resulted in most Muslim parents feeling that their way of life is threatened.⁸⁷

The idea of the school was mooted in the late 1970s and several businessmen were persuaded to become donors, and spacious accommodation was found in the Habibia Education complex. No capital expenditure for buildings was therefore required. Although pupils are expected to pay an annual tuition fee of R500 the cost of operating the school over five years has been estimated at R500 000.

In a climate of economic decline the problem of funding haunts the management committee.

- 6.67 Independence and autonomy could well be bought by educational institutions at an unacceptably high price. Despite their liberal State subsidies granted via the Provincial Education Departments, some white private schools have not been able to continue. Jewish private schools have especially become alarmed at the danger to their viability since the cost per pupil is about R2 300 per year, but the Provincial subsidy per pupil is only R140. A Jewish educationist defended the *raison d'être* of their community's schools and blamed inadequate funding for the concern about the survival of their school system:

... the Jewish community needed private schools because it cannot live with the concept of Christian National Education. While the Government sees them as private schools, they admit all children and subsidise those who cannot pay full fees. At present 30 per cent of the pupils are subsidised, and their cost, with increased teachers' salaries and the increase in interest rates, has become an impossible financial burden.⁸⁸

As part of the white community the capacity of this religious minority to operate their own school system without State

subsidation is therefore impossible to maintain. A non-white religious minority would be even more impeded, especially if the tenets of its faith do not allow the raising of mortgages and the paying of interest thereon. Given the socio-economic conditions of the Muslims generally it is self-evident that an Islam-oriented private school would subsidise an even larger percentage of its pupils. Unusual magnanimity and astute business acumen seemed to reduce the prospect of financial uncertainty:

An anonymous donor deserves special mention as he donated a supermarket with goods. This shop has now been hired out by the school and the rent is used for staff salaries.⁸⁹

- 6.68 Private Islam-oriented schools are only a partial solution to the Muslims who have no wish for total assimilation into the mainstream culture. Therefore, the new mosques that have arisen in the townships have all come to serve as venues for informal education programmes but particularly for the operation of the traditional madressah schools.

Attempts have been made to organise these schools (in Arabic, madaris) into a representative body, as a first step in their modernisation.

There are 65 madaris affiliated to the Co-ordinating Council of Madaris whose work and influence extend throughout the Cape Peninsula's Coloured areas as well as Paarl, Stellenbosch and Worcester. Several qualified teachers serving in the State schools serve on the governing body of this Council.

What was said of this type of school is in many cases still true, viz.

Tot hierdie skool word vanselfsprekend uitsluitlik Maleier kinders toegelaat. Die lokaal waar die kinders hierdie onderrig in Arabies ontvang grens aan die masjid en is as klaskamer ingerig. Die lengte van hierdie onderrig tel,

in teenstelling met die vyf ure van die gewone departementele onderrig, slegs anderhalf uur.⁹⁰

Only one-and-a-half hours are available to the madressah teacher and his influence and the Co-ordinating Council proposes to put that time to maximum effect in these ways:

- 6.68.1 the development and sharing of teaching aids and textbooks;
- 6.68.2 reviewing the effectiveness of textbooks and revising them according to changing circumstances;
- 6.68.3 providing in-service training in teaching methods;
- 6.68.4 implementing a standardised graded syllabus;
- 6.68.5 providing guidance on school administration;
- 6.68.6 providing a single examination and certification;
- 6.68.7 organising annual cultural events for the participating madaris.⁹¹

6.69 The Co-ordinating Council has identified a number of common problems associated with the operation of traditional Islamic instruction:

- 6.69.1 the high pupil-teacher ratio, often as high as 1:60;
- 6.69.2 little individual instruction is possible;
- 6.69.3 pupils of various ages and ability are taught in single classes because of the lack of space and staff;
- 6.69.4 teaching methods are largely geared to rote learning;
- 6.69.5 pupils arrive at various times because of extra-curricular activities at State schools;
- 6.69.6 many of the teachers "while excellent practising Muslims" have had no training in the teaching of the subject matter of these schools.⁹²

A diagnosis of this kind indicates a desire to draw closer to the organisational techniques of the State school system and constitutes a move towards modernisation. An increasing clientèle in the madressah aggravates the burdens of its teachers and managers. But this is likely to be the main area of Islam-oriented education whereat the thrust of modernisation is both necessary and urgent.

6.70 Muslim parents qualified to live in Coloured Group Areas are obliged to send their children to schools of the Administration of Coloured Affairs. Parents have the right to elect or be elected to school committees that could deliberate on the way the school meet some community requirements concerning religious practices. One unalterable fact remains: only the Christian religion is permitted as an integral part of the curriculum. Nevertheless, some Muslim parents and community organisations have sought to influence individual schools that their programmes defer to the religious requirements of Muslims and allow for the Muslim pupils' attendance at the madressahs as well.

Religious sentiments of parents in the Western Cape have been accommodated by State schools that

- 6.70.1 permit an early closure on Fridays to allow Muslim boys and teachers to attend that Friday congregational prayers at local mosques;
- 6.70.2 provide modified time-tables on the days when the absence of large numbers of Muslim pupils and teachers is condoned because of Muslim religious holidays coinciding with school days; (this could occur on only two days per year);
- 6.70.3 do not arrange inspections or examinations on days that might coincide with Muslim religious holidays;
- 6.70.4 suspend or modify physical education classes during the Muslim month of Ramadan when the dawn to dusk fast is observed;
- 6.70.5 permit Islam-oriented organisations to operate extra-mural informal religious education classes and activities for Muslim pupils.⁹³

6.71 There are, nevertheless, persons who resent the State's unilateral decision to disallow the re-establishment of State-aided schools with an Islam-orientation. Those who reject the accommodation reached between State schools and the Muslim parents, argue that

6.71.1 the non-denominational State schools are still

unacceptable to Muslims because only Christianity is given curricular provision;

6.71.2 the State schools have been imposed on the Muslim community as part of the Group Areas Act implementation and thus represent the manifest interests of the State;

6.71.3 the concessions cited in 6.70 are no more than ad hoc arrangements which the State is not obliged to observe, supervise, or for which it could be called to account.

6.72 In the final analysis the respect for religious sentiments seems best assured if parents have the option to send their children to schools of a religious orientation. But such schools need to be available as an expression of civil liberty and endowed by the State in the same manner that Church schools (as defined in the Cape Provincial Ordinance No. 20 of 1956) are endowed. Parents have a greater confidence in the school's ethos if it is in accordance with the values they would themselves uphold. Therefore, only schools established and maintained by Muslims with the aid of the State will ensure the socialisation of the young in accordance with Islamic tenets. The State's education system that does not permit this could be deficient and defective.

6.73 CONCLUSION

From 1940 to 1980 the Muslim Mission Schools and their teachers have, in various ways described, come to be shaped by the relentless political pressures from the State. An increasing radicalisation developed as an antithesis to those pressures bringing the Muslim teacher corps into a dilemma of commitment. Their efforts at affirmative action have been outlined as well as the reasons for their failure. Over many of the events and processes of social change in Cape Town, the long shadow of Abdurahman continued to be cast. He had been part of commissions of enquiry in the preceding decades and had called the State to account. The account of greater school provision was to be given in a cynical manner that involved the destruction of Muslim communities in District Six and Claremont, ostensibly as part of urban renewal and

"community development" within the Apartheid context.

- 6.74 New schools in the areas of relocation are widely perceived as a Pyrrhic victory for the Coloured people's political emancipation. Their own input and constructive forces in establishing schools related to community needs was effectively denied.

Attempts by individual schools to reinvigorate their educational function by improved administration or facilities were terminated by the ideological demands of territorial separation. In a climate of despair the ethos of these schools was effectively denied. Attempts by individual school headmasters to enlarge their educational function by expanding their schools' enrolments and staffs were terminated by the ideological demands of territorial separation. In a climate of despair the morale of the leaders was undermined, and evidence of the unfavourable conditions declining into the appalling has been presented. Ironically, it was a Muslim organisation that first asked for Government control.

- 6.75 After the Pandora's box of some of the effects of Apartheid was opened there remained the hope of a resurgence of community initiatives in resisting the onslaught against their cherished beliefs and lifestyle. One of the responses has been the institution of a private school. The pros and cons of this survival strategy have received attention, but a definitive assessment is at this stage impossible.

- 6.76 Whether the remaining Muslim Mission Schools will survive to fulfill their intended function is entirely a political matter. For the moment they exist on sufferance and the Anglican Church has already accepted what seems inevitable.

Churches are nevertheless confident that even in the State schools some reinforcement of Christian mores will continue. Muslim organisations have to contend with their very limited influence on well disposed principals to ensure some instruction in the Islamic religion.

- 6.77 For the foreseeable future traditional madressah class after school hours will continue to be the only formal way of

transmitting Islamic culture. For that reason, among others, there is the need to modernise the system.

Upon success of that system the survival of the Islamic influence in the city and its environs seems to be predicated. The madressah was the first type of Islamic school that operated in Cape Town. Once it is modernised in terms of organisational structure and curriculum it will be the means by which the Islamic influence will prevail.

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CHAPTER 7

EDUCATION POLICY AND ISLAM-ORIENTED SCHOOLS OF CAPE TOWN

- 7.1 An overview of the relations between Muslims and the governments of the Cape with regard to Islam-oriented schools can be divided into three distinguishable historical phases, viz:

- 7.1.1 the Dutch regime
- 7.1.2 British colonialism, and
- 7.1.3 Afrikaner hegemony

In this chapter the nature and effects of relations between the adherents of Islam and the dominant culture will be considered.

- 7.2 During the Dutch regime, when Islam in Cape Town had no more than a cult status, the possibility of cultural transmission by Muslims was predicated upon their socio-political position. Islamic scholars sent to the Cape in exile were the bearers of religious knowledge and values and, ipso facto, the teachers of their deficient young and the socially marginal drawn to Islam's fold.

Schools as educational institutions as operated by the Dutch Reformed Church for the preparation of the young for religious life were difficult to operate in public lest the officialdom be antagonised. Thus the Dutch period was the time for formal instruction to be confined to the homes of "Malay priests". Craftsmen and artisans could impart to boys the skills of an occupation and the behaviour code consonant with Islamic precepts. In this way the Cape's Islamic education was a continuation of the traditional system operating in the Indies.

They (the teachers) more often than not combined other functions with that of education, thus retaining their close contact with everyday life.

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that moral and spiritual guidance was given along side the teaching of various skills.¹

A community valued for its labour in 18th Century Cape Town could hardly have annoyed their Christian employers if instruction so derived enhanced the workers' efficiency and reliability. Tacit encouragement for the efforts of the "Malay priests" who by their instruction contributed to the moral tone of the community might have been more forthcoming. Dutch attitudes were certainly not neutral as long as such instruction was discreet and clandestine, hardly antagonistic.

- 7.3 It was during the British colonial regime that freedom of worship became established for the Cape Muslims and that schools by "Malay priests" are mentioned in writings about Capetonians, or in official documents. (2.27).

Initially the British observed a strict neutrality in conformity with their policy regarding schools conducted by religious bodies in India:

The fundamental principle of British rule, the compact to which the Government (of India) stands solemnly pledged, is strict neutrality. To this important maxim, policy as well as good faith have enjoined upon me the most scrupulous observance.

The same maxim is peculiarly applicable to general education. In all schools and colleges supported by the Government, this principle cannot be too strongly enforced, all interference and injudicious tampering with the religious beliefs of the students, all mingling, direct or indirect teaching of Christianity with the system of instruction ought to be positively forbidden.²

This opinion expressed by Lord William Bentinck, Governor-General of India, subsumed the recognition of religious diversity in India and the need for the secular authorities to

maintain the Pax Britannica on the basis of equitable treatment of religious groups.

- 7.4 At the Cape this principle of secular disinterest on the part of the British Sovereign's representative was demonstrated by Sir Harry Smith, the Governor, who hoped to advance the Muslim community with assistance in provision of schools, much as the Christian community was already being aided.

Muslims and Christians as British subjects might have seen themselves as equal in the concern of the authorities for their welfare. The Bishop of Cape Town's intervention ensured that Christian interest shall prevail. (2.40)

An important principle was nevertheless established: the interests of the dominant class in the Cape Colony weighed more heavily than considerations of equity.

- 7.5 Education policy towards the Muslims of the Cape only took shape with the permission granted to the Turkish Government to establish and maintain a school in Cape Town. That this was entirely an expediency foremost for the preservation of Anglo-Turkish accord rather than a public-spirited act for the educational advancement of the Muslims has been argued in Chapter 3. The latent result of the Turkish school's establishment was an awareness in the community of the State's reluctance to spend the public revenue on Islam-oriented schools as alternatives to, and in competition with, those initiated by Christian missionaries.

That the Turkish Government was prepared to bear the costs of such a school in Cape Town was a strong inducement to the Colonial authorities to allow the school's establishment. In consequence thereof Islamic instruction was brought to a wider audience of Cape Muslims because of the publication of Abu Bakr Effendi's textbook. Except for this gesture of goodwill that treated the Muslims as a special case there was only State subsidation for Christian-oriented schools throughout the British colonial period from 1806 to 1910. Indeed, no

statute related to public education prior to 1905 suggested differential treatment for children of the Cape Colony. But custom that in the 1880s had allowed the young Abdurahman to share a classroom with children of "European descent" was growing toward ethnocentric exclusivism in matters of public schooling. The Colony's most senior education office-bearer had formulated education policy in terms of that custom. (3.60) Legislation to legitimate racial segregation recognised and confirmed the trend of the separate and unequal dispensation in State funding of schools.

Schooling after 1905 with the enactment of the Cape School Board Act came to reflect the distribution of political power in the heterogeneous population. Opportunities for schooling were directly related to race and religion while Church schools were seen to be of better quality than Mission schools, the former for the politically dominant and the latter for those subordinate.

- 7.6 It was inevitable that the dominant class would sacrifice the principle of equity in the disbursement of the public revenue on schooling, that by extension the socially advantaged would be further advantaged and the disadvantaged would have schooling of quality and quantity in stark contrast. The sacrifice of equity brought a decline in standards of social justice and from 1905 the politicisation of education in the public debate. To the excluded non-whites political aspirations were consistently related to their educational disadvantage. Thus it follows that an astute politician like Abdurahman would use political office to address the need for schools for non-whites generally and Muslims in particular.
- 7.7 It was in the sphere of public education that the Christian-Muslim polarity was most pronounced because of which Christian mission schools, the only State-funded schools in the main, were ideologically unacceptable. Perceived discrimination in school admission policies compounded by a curricular emphasis upon Scripture resulted in the traditional madressahs being the only form of schooling for large numbers of Muslim children in Cape Town and environs. This type of education

was largely geared to the religious duties and codes of social conduct, while the market-place and employers of labour sought literacy and numeracy for an increasingly complex economic and social order. Being deficient in these skills the children of the madressahs were less "modern" than those exposed to the formative influences of mission schools.

Modernity appeared to them synonymous with Christianity and Europeanisation, and its concomitant changes were considered incursions into the Islamic faith. The early colonial modernisers too, on their part, made no secret of their iconoclastic zeal. Statements are plenty to depict the subjugated Muslims as uncivilised people and their religion false, destined only to disappear with the spread of Christianity and its vehicle, European civilisation.³

It was not difficult for those wishing to ameliorate the social condition of the Cape Muslims to identify their dilemma:

7.7.1 they could remain tradition-bound, sullenly steeped in their cultural isolation from the mainstream, holding themselves back from modern institutions such as the mission schools of the churches; or

7.7.2 they could function within the constraints of the State's education policy and establish their own "denominational" schools thus qualifying for the State's subsidisation.

7.8 Community leaders such as Neamatollah Effendi had castigated the Muslims for their "backwardness" (4.20) and had hoped to trade off their votes for the prospect of affirmative action by the political parties of the day.

This was a vain hope till Abdurahman seized the initiative to establish the Rahmaniyyeh Institute in 1913.

The city councillor could exact from the education officials several important concessions by cogent and persuasive argument that apparently characterised his in camera negotiations. It was expedient for both Abdurahman and these officials that a cultural minority was getting special treatment, when he created significant precedents that others might take advantage of in getting Muslim Mission Schools in other areas.

- 7.9 For the Cape Education Department it meant that community resources were being marshalled to provide school buildings to relieve the pressures for increased school accommodation. For Abdurahman the public figure it meant obtaining an increase in public revenue for education. For qualified Muslim teachers there were new opportunities of employment in the State's service.

The State seemed involved in the modernisation of education for Muslim children because these Muslim Mission Schools symbolised a union of the Islamic and western educational traditions. It was a kind of modernisation that to conservative elements in the Muslim community did not imply subversion of Muslim beliefs nor the sacrifice of their social identity.

- 7.10 The Cape Education Department's subsidisation of Muslim Mission Schools presented Muslim teachers in these schools an opportunity to build upon the culture base laid in the homes that the children brought to the educational encounter.

This represented recognition of the anthropological principle of "culture perspective", the screen through which people filter and interpret their experiences. An elaboration of the culture perspective system will elucidate this point.

In its most comprehensive sense, the perspective system is synonymous with world view. This is the system of thought and feeling that explains the nature of the universe. It makes meaningful to man such natural phenomena as the seasonal

rhythms of nature, earth, and heaven, and the origin and destiny of life.

It provides the rationale for explaining success, failure and tragedy. It identifies things and their attributes and expresses relationships between them through categorization. In essence the world view provides the orderly system through which the aspects of experience are identified and interpreted.⁴

Once established the Muslim Mission Schools represented a union of two forms of cultural transmission, a synthesis of two world views, which Abdurahman himself personified for the people of Cape Town. (4.46)

- 7.11 English and Arabic were to be accommodated in the curriculum; the former to provide a vehicle for effective function in the social order and the latter to convey the corpus of values and precepts shaping the Muslim social identity. Abdurahman's concern about both has been cited by way of his personal letters. (4.54 and 4.73) He hoped that the schools he managed would bring to its charges education with an Islamic orientation. By this interaction Islamic knowledge could move to the world of secular education and modern pedagogy to the process of imparting Islamic values. Their success as educational institutions would vindicate the State's subsidisation.
- 7.12 Schools alone are nevertheless relatively weak vehicles for social change. Only when well supported by a surrounding community whose imagination has been fired and which is driven by an impulse for change and innovation can they as institutions be part of a mutually rewarding relationship. Although Abdurahman's managerial weaknesses have been mentioned en passant in Chapter 5 his worst failing seems to have been to confine the affairs of the schools to a coterie of subscribers.
- 7.13 That Abdurahman did not allow for popular elections to the committees of management generated a growing indifference about the welfare of these schools. The community's attitude became, essentially one of helping the fund-raising efforts

when called on to do so if their children attended the schools, an understandable response to Abdurahman's paternalism. He had by virtue of the State's subsidisation to give to the authorities the account required for continued support, but to the Muslim community at large he is not known to have given account. The State's education policy imposed no such obligation on him. Abdurahman's management style seems symptomatic of leaders of subjugated people in other parts of the world where Muslim communities were being "modernised".

Though Islam strictly enjoins the principle of consultation and consensus (which the Quran calls "Shura") in matters of public interest, the élite in "modern" Muslim states neither institute modern democratic systems of public participation nor observe the fundamental Islamic norms of Shura.

They impose themselves as a self-styled class of rulers who owe allegiance neither to modern norms (of accountability) nor to the Islamic Sharia, (the legal system).⁵

It was a crucial flaw of the State's education policy during this period that it permitted mission schools to be private property applied for a public function which its own derelictions would not permit it to remedy, viz. schooling facilities. Bureaucratic arrangements within the ambit of public education policy placed mission schools in a twilight zone of being a public matter for some purposes and a private matter for others.

Such an ambiguity of status was thoroughly exploited by Abdurahman the politician for whom the position of school manager constituted a locus of political power, especially useful at election times or when returning political favours in making appointments. Only a change of education policy towards mission schools could ensure that Abdurahman's example could not be emulated. Such a change was to come some ten years after Abdurahman's death when Afrikaner hegemony was giving effect to its "Coloured policy". In the interim the

Muslim Mission Schools carried on routinely while inadequate State subsidisation was reflected in the poor maintenance of their buildings.

- 7.14 The period 1940 (when Abdurahman died) to 1964 (when the Central Government took over Coloured Education) was one of relative stagnation compared to the decade preceding. Managers who succeeded Abdurahman were engaged in a holding operation bringing little imagination into the management of the three schools, and were continuing to exclude a broader based representation. Matters came to a head when the matter of Rahmaniyyeh's management was aired at a public meeting (4.60) and the Cape Supreme Court ruled in favour of the elected committee.

As part of the "Mission School System" subsidised by the State the Muslim primary schools were treated no differently in terms of existing legislation from others in matters of subsidies and school supplies. But there was an appreciable decline in the quality of their facilities. This became a concern of the Moslem Teachers' Association, (1951).

- 7.15 Outdated and inadequate State financial support ineffectively challenged by a politically impotent community compounded the effects of indifferent and, at best, unimaginative and functional management.

A stalemate existed whereby the school inspectors noted the poor maintenance of buildings placing the onus for improvement on the management; the managements noted the inadequacy of subsidisation and placed the onus on the State.

No leadership arose in the Muslim community to extend the political-cum-educational successes that Abdurahman had achieved, no similar voice rose in the local statutory bodies where he had served or spoke for the schools as he had done.

An Islamicised modernism, overtly apolitical, manifested itself in the short-lived Moslem Teachers' Association (6.23), but they became defunct before making a significant contribut-

of modernisation was not entertained. The State's position had been unequivocally stated to a deputation of the Muslim Assembly (6.39) in 1970.

To understand why the Muslim community was obliged to fall back on its own institutions to achieve its educational ideals we need to elucidate the State's policy regarding non-Christian minorities in the schools of the Coloured Group Areas.

- 7.18 The Group Areas Act (1950) was intended to reinforce the Population Registration Act (1950) and to divide the country into racially homogeneous collectivities.

Although a massive resettlement exercise this residential segregation also intended to develop and extend the State school system, increase accommodation and implement compulsory school attendance. In these schools tuition would be free and later free books were also provided. Already in 1956 the Botha Commission anticipated implementation of the Group Areas Act and had linked educational improvements with residential segregation.⁸

Ostensibly to obviate community resistance to enforceable compulsory school attendance being associated with denominational advantage, the mission schools in white areas were denied re-establishment in Coloured areas.

Those already in existence would eventually be phased out of the public school system for Coloureds. (6.39) The policy was not specifically aimed at any religion. Thus with the enactment of the National Education Policy Act No. 39 of 1967 it was evident to educationists in the Muslim community that in the State schools would be reflected the religious bias which the law intends. (cf. 7.16)

- 7.19 South Africa's National Education Policy Act. No. 39 holds the following points of interest for this study:

7.19.1 the law reaffirms the Christian nature of the

Afrikaner nation holding the reigns of political power;

7.19.2 the Christian principles that inform the education policy of the Afrikaners are by this law legitimated as a means to ideological ends.

To emphasise these features of the law the first general policy clause states categorically that education, in schools maintained, managed or controlled by the State using the public revenue shall have a Christian character.⁹

7.20 Given the common, State-controlled education system of the Coloured areas, it follows that Islam-oriented schools could not be accommodated for other than reasons of expediency. The fate of the Talafalah Institute of Claremont is a case in point. (6.45) Within the curriculum of these State schools only Christian corporate worship and Religious Instruction were permitted.¹⁰

Muslim parents would not find in the new Coloured areas a school where the socialisation commenced in their home could be continued in the programme of values, education.

Although the current official attitude allows for ad hoc internal arrangements for worship and religious expression (6.39.6) the right to Islamic religious instruction during school hours is by the education policy denied.

7.21 In effect the State's education policy would create this glaring anomaly: parents, regardless of religious persuasion would contribute to the public revenue funding the schools and associated administrative machinery, but in terms of services rendered Muslim parents would receive less for their tax-money than those of the dominant religion. This is a cause of resentment in areas where Muslims constitute a significant part of the demographic profile.

These options remain open to Muslim parents:

- 7.21.1 creating an autonomous chain of community-funded Muslim private schools providing both formal education and religious socialisation for their young within an Islam-oriented pedagogic context, (cf 6.59);
 - 7.21.2 participating in the State school system but modernising and increasing their religious education facilities at mosques and community centres, (cf 6.49 and 7.13);
 - 7.21.3 arriving at a modus vivendi between the school's curricular objectives and the Muslim community's religious instruction objectives by excluding or exempting Muslim children from the prescribed corporate worship and religious instruction;
 - 7.21.4 creating a Muslim parents' committee at State schools to sponsor and supervise the services of an Islamic instructor as an extra-curricular activity of the school.
- 7.22 Kimball contends that an education authority that disregards the effects of cultural variation makes a farce of educational ideals in a democratic society and subverts the function of education.

Individual needs of pupils would not be understood and empathetically addressed without taking home socialisation into account. A teacher operating in terms of ethnocentric assumptions tends "to convert her students to her way of life and thinking, and the evidence indicates that this is usually not very successful".¹¹

Such an educational encounter might well on occasion result in school-community polarisation and a pupil-teacher dissonance while sharing a crucial semantic space. Kimball's view is amplified in the following statement:

Children from sub-cultural groupings other than those of the teacher face a difficult problem of adjusting, if they do, to the demands of the

teacher, and she, in turn, in their ways of behaving and thinking. The consequence is often a stalemate in which the teacher is frustrated and generalises her experiences through invidious stereotypes, and the students withdraw or become disengaged from the objectives of the educational system.¹²

- 7.23 An awareness of this "stalemate" that resulted in the withdrawal from or refusal to attend at Christian mission schools, perhaps even informed by his own experience, could have induced Abdurahman to establish a primary school for Muslim children in District Six. He lived in a society that was increasingly being polarised in terms of nebulous ethnocentric concepts such as "civilisation" and the "colour-bar" derived from "invidious stereotypes". All the more reason why he accepted the awesome challenge of modernising a marginal community by way of education. (5.6)
- 7.24 The letter from the Rahmaniyyeh Institute's manager to the Commissioner for Coloured Affairs (6.38) suggested at the time that the opportunity to send his child to an Islam-oriented primary school is of grave concern to a Muslim parent. The end-products of such schools have proven to be assets rather than liabilities to the mainstream culture. Parents perceive in the dualism that the National Education Policy (1967) imposes a bifurcation of their children's education into two disparate and mutually exclusive socialisation in a racist context while the religious schools represent socialisation for a non-racial community. This dualism cannot be conducive of producing a well-rounded personality. An Islamic scholar argues against a disparate secular and religious socialisation when he notes:

Since its inception under colonialist administrations, the secularist education system has assumed tremendous proportions, elbowing out the Islamic system from the field. Islamic education remains, for the most part, a private affair devoid of access to public funds. Where public

funds are made available, demands for secularisation are imposed in the name of modernism and progress. This usually consists of bifurcating the curriculum into contrasting - nay, opposing sections - one Islamic and one modern.¹³

A local expression of this view has been mentioned above (7.16) and the implementation of the National Education Policy Act (1967) has tended to reinforce this impression. Viljoen concedes that the policy of Christian National Education embodied in the National Education Policy Act will not find endorsement in dissenting communities because it is central to the survival of Afrikanerdom:

Nou het dit egter tyd geword vir die Afrikaner om sy C N O beleid so breed to begin span dat dit moontlik huisvesting aan mede -landburgers van ander christelike denominasies bied. Miskien soets soos 'n Bybelse patriotiese onderwysbeleid.¹⁴

An attempt must be made to allay the fears and remove the reservations of other, non-Afrikaner, Christians with a commonly acceptable "Biblical patriotism" incorporated in the education policy. The a priori position is self-evident: a national education policy can be implemented with the revenues derived from people of all religions, but shall first attend to the Afrikaner's aspirations and persuade other Christians to consensus thereafter. A corollary to that thesis is that once in a position of power, presumed to be divinely ordained, Afrikaner churches with the State's support will not have to work at recruiting members but the schools of the State could increasingly enlarge the churches' congregations. The interests of the churches and the State would be synonymous.

- 7.25 When Abdurahman obtained the State's subsidisation for Muslim Mission Schools he was making a significant political statement: the contribution of religiously committed people to the

public arena could not be construed as a nuisance or a threat.

Islam has had an influence on public life in Cape Town from the beginning, ever aware of its differences with the mainstream culture, ever vigilant of its corporate behaviour as a salutary social force.

He exacted the principle of equity from the bureaucrats of his day and was in a position to defend those gains that made the Muslim Mission Schools a reality.

Only without the articulate input of Muslims like Abdurahman into the debates on public education policy is it possible for a Viljoen to deliberate as if only Christians populated the land and kept the wheels of its industry moving.

Muslims have always been there and the idea that their marginality removes them from the educational scenario in Cape Town seems rather idle.

- 7.26 Since the impact of Afrikaner hegemony started to be felt and political rights were effectively denied to "Coloureds" Muslims have formed various alliances to preserve and extend Islam's influence. The State's education policy has made these alliances major new actors in the public political discourse.

If a dialogue towards consensus, as suggested by Viljoen, between the Afrikaners and non-Afrikaner Christians were to be widened to involve Muslims as well, then the initiators of the dialogue have a special responsibility, for restraint, for civility, for affirming the right of the other person to have a different premise for his contribution, even a different world-view.

Ethnocentrism that presumes the manifest error and sinfulness of non-Christians will not make for any productive and mutually edifying encounter.

- 7.27 It is vital that a distinction be made between religiously based values in the public school and the role of institutional

religion. About the latter there can be head-on clashes and open-ended religious warfare. It is important that this difference never degenerate the course of public discussion in search of a *modus vivendi*, the coexistence of different religious adherents within the schools. If the schools are to reflect the social order then the priority seems to lie there.

A responsible dialogue as defined in 7.26 will soon indicate the need for South Africans to formulate a coherent, morally grounded public philosophy. Out of the exploratory encounters of the opposing sides will first have to emerge the vocabulary to debate the moral issues dispassionately and outside the contexts of institutional religions. Schools will not be immune from the effects of such debate nor the merits of points of agreement. It would be tragic indeed if such debates are not permitted or at all possible; they are indispensable in all educational establishments which are *ipso facto* market-places for ideas.

- 7.28 Viljoen's suggestion of an education policy based on a Biblical patriotism, ('n Bybelse patriotiese onderwysbeleid) implies that non-Christians are per definition unpatriotic. By extension then the acknowledgement of the Bible as the only religious source is a pre-condition to patriotism.

This distinction is crucial for the Muslim community who have helped to build the foundations of their country's prosperity. For Muslims are not just a cultural minority in this country but one with a history as long as that of the Afrikaner. As long as there was a rational, ethical approach to government they enjoyed the right to worship and to transmit their culture. In their travels through South African history there were countless hazards on the landscape. but none so considerably demeaning as a national education policy foisted on them, unilaterally, in a period of political emasculation. It follows logically, that given these conditions in the schools, cultural imposition and denial of their own schools as a matter of civil liberty, theirs would be a deficient patriotism.

The relationship between Muslim communities and State schools would be entirely a utilitarian one. A pattern of relationship that once existed between the Muslim community and the mission schools of the 19th Century will in various ways accompany the implementation of the National Education Policy Act in racially separated and ideologically biased schools.

- 7.29 However, the Muslim public's confidence could be regained in recognition of and respect for their own values within the school context.

A satisfactory relationship between conscientious Muslim parent and the State school is predicated upon a compromise that removes the partisanship of the State in religious matters within the State school context.

Clause 3.9 of the National Education Policy Act provides for the involvement of parents in the formal education process.¹⁵

In execution of their responsibilities as citizens Muslim parents have the right to election to school committees and education-related statutory bodies.

A reasonable pre-condition for such participation would be an incorporation of the equity principle in deliberations, the identification of areas of consensus with a view to their enlargement.

The acid test of meaningful participation by cultural minorities in the formal education process or the broad administration of the schools lies in their capacity to hold the system up for scrutiny, to subject it to challenge and accountability and to require from it rational justification for its acts and omissions. An additional safe-guard would be to allow for redress from the independent judicial bench if rights are not observed, for example, if Christian corporate worship is enforced or exemption from Christian religious instruction is denied.

- 7.30 Viljoen contends that where the National Education Policy is applied education shall have to have a Christian character and postulates further:

Hierdie beginsel is afdwingbaar op alle terreine van die skoollewe behalwe binne die formele godsdiensonderrig periode en by plegtighede waar daar van die bywoners verwag word om aan bepaalde christelike godsdienstige rites te voldoen.

Die bedoeling is om hier die bepaalde kind teen indoktrinering van 'n bepaalde onderwyser in 'n bepaalde skool wat 'n bepaalde christelike geloofsoortuiging bely, te beskerm. Aan die ander kant egter, wil dit alle kinders die voorreg laat deel om in 'n christelike pedagogiese atmosfeer onderwys te ontvang.¹⁶

Thus the principle of a Christian character is enforceable on all levels of school life except during formal religious instruction period when children need to be protected from "indoctrination" by a particular teacher of a particular religious persuasion. Yet he wishes all children to be privileged by being taught in a Christian atmosphere. The implied malaise and belligerence towards minor Christian sects, not to mention, non-Christians is noteworthy.

Therefore, it seems inevitable that a public debate on the merits of this National Education Policy will come to the conclusion that in its present form this policy is neither promotive of a positive national sentiment and not remotely conducive to educating the youth for a tolerant society, one allowing for a diversity of religious expressions. Muslims and other cultural minorities can by this policy find no common cause with the State schools as at present directed where the religious partisanship make their children feel pariahs in their own country. In reaction they will create their own schools where they have the means thereto, hoping that way to remain citizens of their country and citizens of their souls.

- 7.31 Muslims will understandably insist on Islam-oriented schools for the socialisation of their children steeled by the conviction that their value system is as meritorious as those of other religious groups, and as much promotive of the social good. While the Muslim child's training through Islamic instruction is primarily moral, it does not neglect to prepare the individual for family life as a parent along the code of Islamic private law.

It could be useful for present purposes to list some objectives of the Islam-oriented school and the Quranic precepts on which they are founded.

In a nutshell, the Islam-oriented school intends to make of its charges persons true to the pledge made in each of the five daily prayers:

"My prayer, service and sacrifice, my life and death are for God".¹⁷

- 7.32.1 to develop the child's personality into a distinct one shaped by the precepts of the Quran and in emulation of the attributes of the Prophet Muhammad (Quran, Ch. V, verses 45 and 46);
- 7.32.2 to develop the child's rational faculty (Quran Ch. XV11, verse 36);
- 7.32.3 to excite in the child a desire to understand and master his environment according to Islamic values (Quran Ch. XLV, verse 13);
- 7.32.4 to instil an awareness of the Islamic culture through study of Islam's development (Quran Ch. 111 verses 137 - 141)
- 7.32.5 to develop within the child an emotional attachment to, and an involvement in, Islam as a way of life (Quran Ch. 111, verse 103);
- 7.32.6 to train the child in the reading of the Quran and use of the Arabic language; (Ibn Khaldun states in the "Prologemena": It should be known that instructing children in the Quran, which is the symbol of Islam,

provides the child with a firm belief in Islam, and its articles of faith. The things one is taught in one's youth take root more deeply than anything else. For the basis of all knowledge and the first impression that the heart receives, is, in a way, the foundation of all scholarly habits).

- 7.32.7 to emphasise the child's role as a social being with duties towards God, towards himself and his fellow men (Ch. XXXV, verse 11);
- 7.32.8 to train the child's moral judgement in terms of acts that please and displease the Creator and habituate him in truth, sincere and honest actions (Quran Ch. LVII verse 19);
- 7.32.9 to imbue the child with the Islamic concept of brotherhood and train him in co-operation, generosity and sacrifice towards that ideal (Quran Ch. XLIX, verses 9 and 10);
- 7.32.10 to develop in the child a sense of self-discipline that he may be purposeful (Quran Ch. LXVI, verse 8);
- 7.32.11 to give a child a sense of moral aspiration and a desire for excellence beyond those examples in his environment (Ch. 1V, verse 135).¹⁸

Implementation of the above aims in schools allow Muslims to make their children beneficiaries of an enduring Islamic culture rather than part of a transcendent ethnocentrism that Apartheid education connotes. There could be a future orientation as they become part of the non-racial counter-culture.

- 7.33 The foregoing list of objectives are broad and general and would constitute the minimum for adoption or to serve as guidelines for the primary level at which much of the Islamic education in Cape Town's Muslim Mission Schools and the mosque schools (madressahs) is directed, and which the secular school programme (as a separated activity) would permit.

At the secondary level of secular education when the State schools' curricula become specialised and more demanding in

terms of time, many Cape Muslim children are obliged to forego formal religious training.

However, that minimum programme is more comprehensively clarified in the "General Bases of Education" of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a state in which Islam informs the national education policy.¹⁹

It can be seen then that Muslims have an education policy of their own which they would prefer to incorporate in the curriculum of schools, even if they are obliged as a cultural minority, to establish and maintain such institutions themselves. Their position vis-a-vis the National Education Policy Act (1967) is, therefore, similar to that of the Jewish community and the *raison d'être* for Islam-oriented schools thus rests on the same argument that the South African Board of Jewish Education has advanced:

The Jewish community is one in South Africa which needs private schools, because we cannot live with the concept of Christian education.

The Government has no quarrel with us because it believes people should perpetuate their cultures and their traditions. And we, as taxpayers, have as much right to assistance as anyone else.²⁰

- 7.34 In conclusion it can be said that the political position of the Muslims of Cape Town and environs has over the centuries determined the treatment their schools received from the Government. For the first two centuries in the Cape Colony the schools in the homes of priests operated beyond the concern and interest of the authorities, who were aware of their salutary social effect. During the British regime the Islam-oriented schools came to the attention of Christian missionaries and the principle of equity on the part of the State towards Muslims as British subjects was denied in the provision of schools. Abdurahman ensured that the principle was returned to the administration of State subsidies for

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mission schools when he registered the Rahmaniye Institute as a State-aided school.

The period of Afrikaner hegemony linked the provision of schools with the implementation of Apartheid. Only State schools were permitted in the Coloured Group Areas and those mission schools already there would eventually be phased out.

The implementation of the National Education Policy Act and its effects on the Muslim community has compelled the establishment of private schools or a conditional acceptance of the State schools. Muslims have their own educational ideals and seek the return of the equity principle to their schools on the same terms extended to other cultural minorities in the land of their birth.

- 7.35 Apartheid, the means to the end of preserving Afrikaner Hegemony, thus conformed to the theoretical model of Antonio Gramsci in that the dominant class using force and consent could impose educational modernisation on its own terms.

The needs and concerns of the subordinate Cape Muslims were shaped and accommodated by the political leadership of the dominant whites.

Those very needs for schools were shaped by the intellectual leadership of Dr Abdurahman who, in the days of political participation, had access to the decision-making process. Thereafter the National Education Policy Act (1967), as Douglas Killner observed, attempted "to define the limits of discourse by setting the political agenda, by defining the issues and terms of debate and by excluding oppositional ideas"²¹

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CHAPTER 8

FINDINGS AND PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- 8.1 The purpose of this study was to demonstrate that the Muslim Mission Primary School was the institutional end-product of a process of resisting cultural assimilation and the associated sacrifice of Islamic cultural identity.

Schools as agencies of socialisation have been the focal interest. On the one hand there have been the schools initially intended as instruments of civilising and domesticating the heathen including the Muslims. On the other were the clandestine pioneer schools in the homes of Free Blacks where Islam was passed on as an alternate belief and value system, both as a protest to complete domestication and as a statement of cultural autonomy. (vide 2.16)

- 8.2 Since economic and ecological factors ramify throughout the entire social and cultural fabric, the traditional Islamic schools were adequate and appropriate to the needs of Muslims during the almost two centuries of Dutch hegemony when social changes were almost imperceptible, except for changes in administrators.

Thus history has determined that from the earliest days two forms of schooling and socialisation of the young would be established and expanded in Cape Town. Each represented a particular cultural heritage that the protagonists of each sought to preserve and transmit. Here Christianity and Islam were forced by economic interdependence of their adherents into a modus vivendi as they developed into a super-ordinate and a subordinate relationship. Here they shared a common geographic space but Islam's adherents found their dignity and worth best defended by resistance of a common belief system as was developed in North America by the European colonisers.

- 8.3 British political control in the 19th century also brought British cultural imperialism. By that time the number of Muslims had grown to the extent that they had a clearly

stratified society and a distinct social ethos reinforced by the influence of mosques and the traditional madressah schools. (vide 2.27)

Evangelists responded with alarm and determination to restrict the growth of Islam by establishing Christian-oriented schools with the financial support of the State. Mission schools, therefore, became associated with evangelisation of those who were not "of European descent". Muslims, in the main were not so descended, nor, for that matter, were the majority of "the lower social orders". In Cape Town the descendants of slaves and exiles and the union of indigines and European settlers came to be customarily described as "coloureds". Mission schools were, ipso facto, "coloured" schools from the start and the few impoverished European children in them were soon directed to the Church schools and State schools. (vide 3.68)

- 8.4 Political expediency has, therefore, placed the Muslim community within the under-class typified as "Coloured" as if this was a comprehensive label for a homogeneous social entity. Erroneous impressions and coarse generalisations were inevitable.

Histories of education have thus treated the Muslims of Cape Town as part of a larger aggregation subjected to the same laws and shackled by the same political disabilities. When Muslims established "Mission Schools" they were assumed to be extensions of the "Muslim Church" similar to other denominational schools.

From the administrative perspective of the State this would be correct. Closer scrutiny would reveal their origins and rationale to be due to a different set of socio-political circumstances and community aspirations. (vide 3.58)

To suggest, as almost all the white ethnocentric histories of education seem to do, that Muslims qua Muslims initiated no affirmative action in public education is thus misleading. This study has shown that they were anything but passive

recipients of an ostensibly altruistic schooling. Because of their strong cultural heritage and their attempts at cultural transmission they were sensitive to the measure of dominant class self-interest in Mission schooling.

Imams or "Malay priests" conducted schools presenting preparation for an alternative type of adulthood. Only changing economic conditions were to relegate the schools to a declining social prominence and compel the emergence of a new Islam-oriented school.

- 8.5 What is self-evident to cultural historians of Cape Town is that these pioneer Islamic teachers were cultivated men of social and political stature, seminal figures who merit further research interest. (vide 2.9)

Historians of the education process in Cape Town have still to extrapolate from the Dutch records of slave and political exile migrations to the Cape information about the backgrounds of the initiators of the early Islam-oriented schools. Within our present frame of reference the pioneer teachers of the Muslim children have had to be cursorily treated. Their contribution is mentioned as a prologue to the eventful years Islamic education moved from the privacy of homes to the public venues; from the voluntary and part-time teachers to the first officially recognised teacher funded by a foreign state. (vide 3.38)

- 8.6 However, the preceding two hundred years, the formative period of the Cape Muslim community, were crucial to the survival of their culture in an alien and inhospitable social environment. Indonesia, while not today recognised as a "Mother Country" had some of her abler sons wrenched from her to languish here in exile. That country's contribution remains to a great extent a closed book, but the contribution of the Ottoman Empire to education in Cape Town has in this survey received its due consideration.

- 8.7 A doctrinal conflict among the Cape Town Muslims in the 1850s brought their religious needs to the attention of the Colonial

officials. Preserving the Queen's peace dictated that an outside authority be brought to obtain a harmonious social order. In the history of Islam-oriented schooling a new era was ushered in.

Abu Bakr Effendi, special emissary and teacher from the Ottoman capital, attempted to rationalise the Islamic curriculum and standardise the corpus of Islamic knowledge. Cape Muslims would thus be elevated from a mere colonial curiosity to an exemplary part of the colonial citizenry; in matters temporal and spiritual, a credit to Queen and Sultan respectively. Effendi's role was, by the same token, a modernising one.

- 8.8 It was more than coincidence that Abu Bakr Effendi should arrive at the time when a British constitutional initiative was undertaken; when the Muslims were compelled to change from their simple authority systems to that of the secular authority of cosmopolitan criteria. (vide 3.46)

If Effendi's reports to his principal in Constantinople could still be traced, they would throw much light on the social conditions he encountered at the Cape.

Attitudes of officials towards the Muslim community probably were described in such reports and governed the execution of his assignment. At a time when the moral tone of the populace was a greater priority than preparation in skills, the school of the Turkish teacher was a useful political expedient.

- 8.9 Traditional Muslim leaders in Cape Town maintained an entente with the dominant culture, a tacitly agreed distance that dictated an apolitical stance which was advantageous to the paternalist colonial administration.

Upon that social distance the influence and authority of Muslim traditional leadership was predicated. But schooling was increasingly becoming a political matter as the State imposed

itself on the process. In the popular mind that imposition was no less than subtle cultural assimilation. All that the Muslims had accomplished in cultural terms was too dearly won and held to be sacrificed by unqualified acceptance of the Christian mission schools. Effendi had helped them take Afrikaans as their key to unlock the doors of Islam as a regulatory force in their lives. Denominational schools were largely English oriented in both teaching medium and the a priori assumptions about religion's place in their curriculum. Muslims, nevertheless, did not discount the potential economic advantage provided by the skills that denominational mission schools offered. A minimum dosage of mission schooling was all they were prepared their children should take. From that negative disposition developed a socio-economic deficit that a new generation of leaders wished to address.

- 8.10 Paternalism was not only a feature of the dominant culture's relationship with those who were non-European; it was also a feature of the Muslim social organisation. Religious leaders, some trained in Mecca and Egypt, built around them collectives of adherents making the late 19th century a period of mosque proliferation.

An organisation emerged purporting to rise above factional divisions that the socio-cultural interests of the Muslims might be better served. A cry for more schooling opportunity did not galvanise the community to affirmative action because by act and omission the South African Moslem Association had alienated the traditional leaders. Neamatollah Effendi was to find the way to irrelevance paved with good intentions. A similar, but more particularist organisation, would later emerge and establish a school that could reconcile community needs with State education policy.

- 8.11 The Cape Malay Association, ideological successor to the South African Moslem Association assumed the same apolitical stance of the traditional leaders at the same time that Abdurahman was promoting a greater political consciousness.

M.A. Gamiet, president of the Cape Malay Association sought political patronage from the triumphant Nationalist Party. Educational opportunities were promised but white political opportunism scored a signal victory. (vide 5.45).

- 8.12 What did emerge from Gamiet's overtures to Dr Malan, the former editor of *Die Burger*, was that an editorial colleague of Malan, I.D. Du Plessis, would bring to Afrikaans literature the genre of Cape Malay interests and folklore.

It was the Cape Malay Association that urged the Central Government of the Union to take over school provision from the Cape Provincial Administration. Three decades later I.D. Du Plessis was to supervise that process as part of Apartheid's grand design. Schooling would play an important part in the social uplift programme with which residential segregation was accomplished.

- 8.13 Abdurahman, the modernist, whose political direction Gamiet had spurned, was politically and intellectually too mature to experience *schadenfreude* when the lack of schooling was not to be eliminated by Malan's good offices.

Aware of the growth of the city he helped to govern, Abdurahman sought extension of opportunity at every level for the inclusion of coloured people in the economy. In that way he would reduce unemployment and under-employment that reduced thousands of urban dwellers to squalor and poverty. Schools were recommended as the first rung on the ladder of social and economic ascent. Impatient with official dereliction he had set about establishing the Rahmaniyeh Institute, lighting one candle while cursing the darkness. Illiteracy had to be reduced to increase economically productive skills. Although he recognised mission schools as the bane of colonial education, Abdurahman compromised so that Muslim children might get a modicum of secular education in a school with an Islamic ethos. While Neamatollah Effendi denounced them as the backward part of the population, Abdurahman did something about the modernisation of the Muslims. Using every lawful

form of protest and negotiation the Moslem Education League's chairman in 1913 set an example that others would follow with alacrity.

Forty years later there would be 15 Muslim Mission Schools in the Western Cape.

8.14 Abdurahman returned from Britain he came into a tradition bound Cape Muslim society. His initial diagnosis was that the social malaise he encountered was caused by general poverty. Poverty was linked to illiteracy which in turn gave rise to political impotence and social marginality. A study of Abdurahman's political philosophy or the appropriateness of his political actions in his own time remains to be done. Modernisation of education in Cape Town would not have occurred without Abdurahman's political vision and commitment. Publicly he would not separate the fortunes of the Muslims from those similarly disabled in the political field. Privately, he served a process of changing Muslim society with its closed and rigid structures. Once the first Muslim Mission School was in operation, Muslims were relatively less isolated, less peripheral to the concerns of those who wielded political power. (vide 5.115)

8.15 An enormous fund of energy and a charismatic leadership style allowed Abdurahman to establish simultaneously the Rahmaniyyeh Institute and the Trafalgar secondary school. Although he never publicly stated his intentions in education beyond the desire to see more children attending school, he managed a complex and interrelated series of changes that a traditionalist society could be modernised.

DR. A. ABDURAHMAN'S SEMINAL ROLE IN MODERNISING ISLAM-ORIENTED SCHOOLING

8.15 Abdurahman has to be seen against the historical background of South African education when the enforcement of the white hegemony after Union (1910) became increasingly pronounced. School provision for a community that was politically excluded

became increasingly pronounced. School provision for a community that was politically excluded became a crucial consideration in his life as a political figure. He wished them to be drawn into the process of social and economic change that in its turn compelled modernisation of educational institutions, a future orientation. All Abdurahman's efforts at founding schools promoted solidarity, and in the socio-economic sphere, a sense of identification with the dominant culture, thus destroying the psychological and social core of the culture of urban poverty.

A protagonist of increased educational opportunity, Abdurahman could not move much faster than the community in which he functioned. He had first to create a smoothly functioning organism out of perceptive people in the Muslim community. A measure of circumspection was essential if Abdurahman did not want to lose electoral support from non-Muslims.

- 8.16 Schools with an Islamic ethos yet part of the public school system and providing the same curriculum were to Abdurahman the route by which Muslim children could be guided to the cosmopolitan criteria wherein personal association replaced the constraints of reactive ethnocentrism. The traditional Muslim schools, the madressahs, were once effective socialising agencies of a sub-culture, but by the early Twentieth century it was clear to the growing Muslim middle-class that socio-economic progress demanded their modification. Thus it was the Indian and Cape Muslim middle-class, the mainstay of Abdurahman's political support, that was drawn to him in founding Islam-oriented primary schools. (Vide 5.95)

People of power and influence were directly or indirectly put to good account by Abdurahman so that his educational objectives might be attained as can be seen from the letter to Dr Jameson (4.63) or his negotiations concerning Schotsche Kloof (5.88)

- 8.17 A commentator on Abdurahman's career has noted that he founded "secular schools for Moslem children" (5.6), but the Rahmaniyeh Institute was administratively considered a

"denominational" or "mission" school. Abdurahman in 1913 succeeded in obtaining their share of the educational disbursement for the Muslim taxpayers within the current school-funding system. Rahmaniyeh was thus not a "secular" school, but an Islam-oriented school making an equal claim with Christian-oriented schools for State aid. By creating the Rahmaniyeh Institute, Abdurahman the City Councillor, struck a practical compromise between the dominant and the subordinate cultures so that an economically depressed and educationally disadvantaged community could be given some hope and a sense of worth.

As a product of the English educational system he tended to exhibit a typical colonial authoritarian leadership style. In the meeting of the Moslem Education League as in all public gatherings he must have been a formidable force, spelling out the objectives and needing only consent to proceed. Consensus was o f t e n not recognised, encouraged or sought. (5.37)

That he functioned optimally in small committees functionally related to his objectives is borne out by the trust deed of the Schotsche Kloof Institution, (5.71).

Thus he managed the schools with authoritarian efficiency, increasing the disenchantment with his leadership as the wearying years of his life in politics drew to a close. In Cape Town, the Rahmaniyeh and Schotsche Kloof Institutions were not operated as grassroots institutions with popularly elected school committees. They were subsidised by the Cape Province and tended to function in isolation governed by unknown committees of private subscribers.

Parents were only called upon to donate school funds and the community's active involvement was severely limited in administrative matters. Perhaps this practice was not significantly different to that of other Church schools, but it could account for the neglect and poor maintenance that became characteristic of most "mission" schools, (vide. 6.20)

Nevertheless, the Rahmaniyyeh model was widely emulated in Muslim communities lacking school accommodation. Buildings were acquired or erected without the State's capital expenditure and a functional school arose to solve the basic literacy and school accommodation problems of the State.

- 8.19 Managership at three Muslim Mission Schools allowed Abdurahman a potent position of patronage in the allocation of teaching appointments. For a politician seeking elected office in the City Council this public service proved a distinct advantage. He held the positions of manager till he died in 1940, not seeming to have groomed an obvious successor. Judging from the Supreme Court judgement of 1952 regarding the minutes of meetings of the Moslem Education League it also appears that such material was not available to guide the court. It would not be unreasonable to infer, that perceived sensitivity to adverse criticism compelled Abdurahman to be surreptitious. Although in the latter part of the 1930s there were a dozen Muslim Mission Schools in operation, the various managers did not have a need for a single representative body for their corporate interests, nor was a conference of headmasters apparently desirable. Abdurahman's management style seemed also to have been imitated by other managers whose exaggerated notions of autonomy and independence account for the relative isolation in which the schools functioned. It can be appreciated that the cultural minority will not sacrifice the important concessions individually negotiated and maintained only a cursory and functional relationship with officialdom.

Muslims were in a minority and some fears and prejudice called for circumspection, (vide, 5.14).

- 8.20 A seasoned politician like Abdurahman was keenly aware of the political implications of his educational exertions on behalf of the Muslim community. He showed an ostensible evenhandedness to mollify his detractors who might have called him "sectarian".

While establishing the Rahmaniye Institute he pressed publicly for the upgrading of the Trafalgar School into a high school. In Claremont his exertions on behalf of the Talfalah Institute were balanced with a quest to have the Livingstone Secondary School established.

Abdurahman had a manifest duty to serve the interests of his culturally plural constituency. If he failed, or showed himself too partisan, he risked his electoral success and the patronage that went with public office.

- 8.21 One cannot avoid the ethical question: Was Abdurahman sincere in establishing the Muslim Mission Schools and aiding and abetting those where he was not directly involved? Was Rahmaniye not perhaps a vote-catching ploy by a wily politician? The evidence seems to be inconclusive, for he was simultaneously a self-seeking politician and a champion of the neglected and the deprived, (vide, 5.4).

His was a life of contradictions. While railing against Mission Schools, he strove to bring his own into existence obtaining from well-disposed whites substantial financial support, (vide, 4.61).

His home was open to persons of every religion in the city for he was serving a culturally plural constituency, but he wore his fez to denote his Muslim origin and cultural association.

Although "westernised" by his education and intellectual inclination, he seemed not to have been alienated from his roots. By his educational initiatives and his record as a public representative he exhibited an holistic approach to addressing their cultural deficit and their poverty. If it was votes that he sought, then he did not in the short term obtain them from the poor whose children streamed to the primary schools he founded, or for whom he opened doors of employment.

- 8.22 In opposing illiteracy by founding schools for "western"

education he sought out and involved a variety of benefactors of all colours and creeds. Only a significant political position could make this possible as he called up old political debts from retired prime ministers to humble grocers.

In a political system that allocated education to an apparently indifferent organ of government, Abdurahman obtained money for the Schotsche Kloof school from another in which he was allowed a more effective voice. (Vide, 5.89)

- 8.23 Although it was never publicly stated by himself, Abdurahman harboured a special affection for the Muslim community, whether "Indian" or "Malay" as contemporary custom ascribed them. Perhaps he would have liked other Muslim children to develop their potential in the manner that he did. Unfortunately, a hardening racism had closed the route by which he had travelled as a child in Cape Town. Privately funded, Church-sponsored schools which he attended were not accessible even to his own children. He then used the available means, "mission schools", to obtain his educational objectives for others. But an institution of higher learning, like the University of Cape Town, that sought financial support from all taxpayers in the Cape Town municipality was not to be allowed a similar exclusivism.

Without Abdurahman on the Cape Town City Council the admission of Harold Cressy to that university could not have occurred.

- 8.24 Just as a change in the educational system's admission requirements prevented other Muslim children from climbing the same educational ladders in Cape Town as Abdurahman did, so a change in the system of public representation prevented later political leaders from accomplishing as much as he had, (5.122).

As an equal member of the Cape Town City Council and the Cape Provincial Council, Abdurahman's constituency had access to the agencies of local government that could redress their grievances or advance their aspirations.

Without this political status Abdurahman's efforts at establishing "Muslim Mission Schools" might have been easily frustrated by a political system that had no need of his constituency's support. When the process of political separation of the population was intensified and the communities were scattered the destructive forces could prevail because the capacity to resist had been attenuated.

Thus no public debate attended the closure of the Muslim Mission schools in the white Group Areas. What Abdurahman had accomplished for Muslim educational advancement as a civil liberty linked to a common franchise, became, with the Apartheid social order a bureaucratic gesture of magnanimity, (vide 6.39).

- 8.25 Consequent to the Botha Commission's Report (1956) provision of schools for Coloured children became predicated upon the implementation of the Group Areas Act. Significantly, the one school with an Islam-orientation that came into being as a State-aided school was located in Elsies River, a Coloured Group Area. Being founded by Indian businessmen this school for "Coloured and Indian" Muslim children had a limited prospect for growth because:

- 8.25.1 only Coloured persons could buy property in Coloured areas;
- 8.25.2 an administrative body of Coloured persons was politically more desirable for an institution aided by the Coloured Affairs Department;
- 8.25.3 the State's policy was not to allow the growth and proliferation of denominational schools in the Coloured areas.

- 8.26 Those Muslim Mission Schools that were established after the death of Abdurahman were in the main founded by Indian businessmen concerned about their children's cultural identity. They preferred, and were financially capable of, establishing schools in peri-urban areas of Cape Town, (Wynberg, Athlone and Elsies River) where their children might be educated and

socialised in institutions over which they had control. Documents relating to the origin and development of these schools have been brought into account in this dissertation. But the matter has not been exhaustively considered thus leaving a field for further research. Indeed, Abdurahman's association with the aspirations of the Indian community of Cape Town awaits the attention of other scholars researching the city's cultural and political history. Indian businessmen of District Six were actively involved with Abdurahman in founding the Rahmaniyeh Institute and the Schotsche Kloof school. A precedent was thus set for other Indian social collectivities to follow. In this study only the initiative of the Morba Society in Wynberg received attention. But such societies provided a similar cultural base for the schools of Elsies River and Athlone as well.

- 8.27 The overriding consideration in the establishment of Muslim Mission Schools has been shown here to have been the lack of official exertion in providing school accommodation for Coloured children. Church initiated schools were the main educational opportunities for those whom the political dispensation excluded. Muslims perceived in this a danger to their cultural identity, their norms and values.

Muslims regard the inculcation of values and observance of the Islamic mores within the formal education process as promotive of God-consciousness. This, in turn, characterises the public behaviour of people in a way that distinguishes them from other religious groups in plural societies.

By extension, a State policy that regards Islam as "alien" and concedes Islam-oriented schools as an expediency, tends to put constraints on cultural transmission. Therefore, the salutary influence that Islam might have on the public order and the moral tone of the community is implicitly denied.

Muslim educators were, understandably, to become concerned about the formidable social problems within their communities if Islam-oriented schools had a limited influence or prospect

of growth and development.

- 8.28 Conditions of poverty and cultural deprivation leading to various forms of depravity among the youth were to be the ostensible concern of the Moslem Teachers' Association. Within this organisation were brought together Muslim teachers serving in the Muslim Mission Schools. Unrelenting political opposition allowed a short life to what might have become an agency for heightening public awareness about and involvement in these schools. (Vide 6.17).

A more inclusive study of the Moslem Teachers' Association as part of the Islamic resurgence in Cape Town in the 1950s needs to be done. They, too, had a modernising role in promoting by means of bursaries the extension of formal education among the Muslims. Their programme of informal education proved a model which other cultural groups later developed upon.

IMPLICATIONS FOR STATE EDUCATION POLICY

- 8.29 Application of State education policy in the Coloured Group Areas seems to suggest an increased secularisation of education as a sine qua non of modernisation. But the effect of excluding religious influence by denomination schools has been a diminished identification of the community with the schools. Attitudes to State schools are entirely utilitarian and doubts about the bona fides of the schools per se do not evoke public confidence.

- 8.30 The question also arises whether State schools could educate children in a value-free manner. Socialisation in South Africa's ethnically divided schools tends to be dominated by the dominant culture. Muslim children learn that people's lives are structured around the events of the Christian calendar and feast days related to Afrikaner history hold a special significance.

Therefore, links between the Muslim home and the State school could be affected by the dissonance between these two important agencies of socialisation.

- 8.31 There is a rich lode to be mined by researchers into the nature and role of formal education in culturally plural societies such as obtains in Cape Town and environs. A social policy of racial discrimination has ensured that subcultures of the dominant group have had their religions and languages treated with more consideration and respect than those within the disfranchised or subordinate communities.

Cape Muslims have over the centuries demonstrated a determination to uphold, apply and transmit to successive generations their own beliefs and value system. Official consideration of their peculiar cultural needs was predicated upon their subordinate political status and so their schools were not seen as entitled to the same financial support as that given to other cultural minorities such as the Greek, Portuguese, Jewish or even the Chinese community of Cape Town, each of which founded schools for the socialisation of their young within a preferred context.

Like other religious collectivities of the Mother City Muslims constitute a subculture with its own educational ideals and have established schools to preserve that culture associated with Islam. Their schools were also modernising agencies whose founders aspired to move their community from the periphery to the centre of the socio-economic system. Abu Bakr Effendi and Abdurahman illustrated by precept and example that the religious and civic lives of Cape Town's Muslims need not be mutually exclusive, but complimentary.

- 8.32 The State's interests would be served by recognition of the country's diversity of religions and cultures that seek expression in schools which could co-exist competitively and yet harmoniously with those that the State provides.

Given the costs of operating such schools it is clear that the State's financial support is not likely to be spurned and thus the State's control cannot entirely be excluded with regard to the basic curriculum of intellectual skills and the uniformity of standards associated therewith. It is in the sphere of education in values that alternatives to the dominant culture

need to be recognised and the participation of local communities actively encouraged, even to the extent of founding schools with a particular religious orientation. Although valid arguments have been offered for the elimination of denominational schools and the improvement of the State school system, the political climate in which this was done, i.e. by way of implementing the Group Areas Act and the attendant authoritarian attitude of the State has generated a negative attitude to State schools. Empirical evidence for this phenomenon in the Muslim community has still to be obtained, but the establishment of private schools for Muslims and the improvement of existing traditional madressahs are indications of a process of alienation reflecting on the State's school provision policy.

8.33 Islam's salutary influence on the moral tone of the broader community and the stability of the family unit as the primary socialiser and educator, seems to be sacrificed in the functional State schools of the Western Cape's Coloured and Indian Group Areas. A truism that current State education policy on religious influences in schools seems not to recognise is that schooling completed means that education has been begun and has not concluded. In a society of cultural plurality an individual's growth in social maturity is predicated upon recognising and respecting other value systems.

8.34 Schooling that does not prepare individuals for further learning, at least in respect of the right of other religious communities to their beliefs and folkways, has failed, regardless of the ways in which its successes may be measured.

Abdurahman aspired to a society in which the children from the various religious communities might come together in the high school and the university to interact towards a synthesis of a tolerant society. He indentified himself with the establishment of Islam-oriented schools mainly because the school provision system of his day placed the Muslim community at a disadvantage. It appears from his negotiating successes that he argued cogently that Muslims be allowed to help themselves.

He lived at a time when religious ignorance coloured official attitudes and his Rahmaniye Institute would show that fears about a State-funded Islam-oriented school was unjustified.

- 8.35 However, whether the future options for transmitting Islamic culture are narrowed to the sphere of private schools or modified traditional mosque schools, a challenge lies before the Muslim community and its teachers. In a plural society such education proceeding from the conceptual base of Islamic norms and values needs to seek consonance with the diverse social forms of South Africa. The significance and meaning of dissonance need also to be taken into account in their educational encounters.

Community structures have been drastically affected by the uprooting entailed in implementing the Group Areas Act. Social objectives may have to be reached by other routes than State-funded Islam-oriented schools. Hence community leaders need to deliberate on the diverse patterns of the social processes, organisations, structures and institutions which could balance the forces of change and the will to preserve that which is held dear. In the broader social context the links between Islam-oriented institutions and the mainstream culture can only be retained by the manifest relevance of the former to the latter. There lies a challenge in preserving the cultural distinction of the Muslim community and their still being an effective part of the social order, aspiring to mutually tolerant relationship between the superordinate and subordinate cultures.

- 8.36 South African universities have over the past three decades developed their opportunities and facilities for the study of Islam and the Arabic language. This is clearly a recognition of the role of the Muslim community in the national life, and of Islam's influence in international relations, world history and culture and general. It is for these reasons that Islam-oriented schools might still qualify for the financial support of the State that a clientèle might be produced to ensure the viability of such university specialisms and that a

leadership echelon of the local community be trained.

For three centuries the Muslims of Cape Town have been part of the population yet a cultural minority seeking to come to terms with the cultural ecology. The disposition to be worthy and productive citizens was never absent and in a literal sense they helped to build the Mother City. A reciprocal goodwill in the schooling policy will redound to the credit of their country.

8.37 In conclusion, then, it has been demonstrated that the Muslim Mission School was part of a long process of Islamic cultural transmission by a politically subordinate and socially marginal community, but in particular the evidence presented also showed that:

8.37.1 from 1860 to 1980 the school provision policy of the politically dominant group was intended to reproduce the exercise of power and the superior social status of whites by way of segregated school systems;

8.37.2 the public school system for Coloured people of which the Muslim community formed a part was predicated on their politically inferior status, and they were, ipso facto, excluded from a meaningful participation in the formulation of education policy;

8.37.3 for as long as a degree of participation in common statutory bodies was permitted there was a convergence of their broadly educational and political and social grievances;

8.37.4 only Dr A. Abdurahman's political position afforded him the influence to negotiate various educational improvements on behalf of the Coloured community;

8.37.5 the resistance of the Muslim community to the loss of their values and beliefs entailed in the curriculum of the church-sponsored mission schools for Coloured children resulted in their being educationally disadvantaged;

8.37.6 the philanthropic initiatives of Hajee Sullaiman Shah Mohammed to establish an Islam-oriented school at

Claremont failed because of the greater need of the Muslim community for primary schools in the more populous parts of the city;

- 8.37.7 Abdurahman, the city councillor, had a better grasp of the political realities and preferred to establish an ad hoc body to bring into existence the first Muslim Mission School in District Six;
- 8.38.8 this school alleviated the lack of school accommodation, but also constituted a statement of modernisation of Islamic cultural transmission setting an example for others to emulate;
- 8.37.9 the Rahmaniyyeh Institute was, by virtue of Abdurahman's persuasive negotiating skills, the first instance of State-aid given to a school with an Islamic orientation thus creating a precedent for similar schools elsewhere in the Western Cape;
- 8.37.10 Muslim Mission Schools represented a compromise between the Muslim community and the State whereby the former provided buildings to accommodate the eligible children and the latter, by subsidisation, ensured control over the education process;
- 8.37.11 a legal fiction had to be invented whereby Muslim Mission Schools were administratively considered "denominational" schools but in concept and intention they were unlike the schools that churches established for Coloured children;
- 8.37.12 the Muslim Mission Schools were in fact the Muslim community's attempt at a single, more efficient school combining inculcation of norms and values with cognitive training, providing for modernisation while preserving the Islamic culture;
- 8.37.13 Muslim teachers were no longer confined in their career options to the very few State or Board schools that did not demand membership of a church as a condition for employment or promotion;
- 8.37.14 the Muslim Mission Schools provided a reason and an organisational base for the emergence of the Moslem Teachers' Association, a precursor of Islamic cultural organisations motivated to combat some of the undesirable social features of cultural alienation that

secular schooling entails;

- 8.37.15 the Group Areas Act and the erosion of political rights resulted in the closure of several Muslim Mission Schools because State education policy does not permit the re-establishment of "dominational" schools in the areas of population relocation.

THE FUTURE OF THE ISLAM-ORIENTED SCHOOL

- 8.38 It seems axiomatic that the mission schools, per se, were no more than part of a phase in the evolution of South Africa's education policy while resources of the State were marshalled towards the consolidation of white hegemony.

A change in political emphasis by the ruling party reflected in the creation of separate residential areas and separate education departments has resulted in increased provision of schools for Coloured people and obviated the need for religious bodies to erect buildings and seek State aid for denominational schools.

This has ostensibly allowed the State to implement a compulsory education programme whereby religious affiliation would no longer be a factor in refusing a particular child's enrolment.

It is equally self-evident that the increased provision of schools by the State is indeed a reward of the taxpayers for their contribution to the public revenue. However, while the State's increased involvement in school provision would, within the context of Coloured political development, seem commendable, in the national context the State's total exclusion of schools with a religious ethos seems patently unjust. Religious bodies in the dominant white community not only enjoy the civil liberty of establishing and maintaining with the State's aid their own private schools, but they would not countenance any arbitrary decision to terminate or curtail that right. They have advanced cogent arguments for preserving their existing schools particularly for the sake of cultural transmission.

Muslims, if given the same political status in the land of their birth, could advance a similar and equal claim. Ours will indeed be a tolerant society if the parents' right to select the most desirable school for the socialisation of his child is recognised as a civil liberty. In such a society the Islam-oriented school will after three centuries have earned its right to exist and to contribute to the moral tone of the people.

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<u>Correspondent</u>	<u>Addressee</u>
1. Effendi, Neamatollah	Sayed Ahmed Zohdi Pasha Minister of Education Constantinople 27 September, 1899
2. Abdurahman, Dr. A.	Secretary, Graaf Trust 16 July, 1912
3. "	Form letter to miscellaneous donors 19 July, 1912
4. "	Mr Ali Azhar Cape Town 29 July, 1912
5. "	Dr Leander Starr Jameson Cape Town 3 September, 1912
6. "	Mr A. Toefy Claremont 9 August, 1912
7. "	Mr E. Elliot Secretary Cape School Board 29 October, 1912
8. "	Mr John X Merriman Stellenbosch 23 January, 1913
9. "	The Editor South African News 24 January, 1913
10. "	The Superintendent-General of Education Cape Town 29 January, 1913
11. "	The Superintendent-General of Education Cape Town 17 February, 1913
12. "	Mr E. Noordien Salt River 3 March, 1913

13. Abdurahman, Dr. A. The Superintendent-General of
Education
Cape Town
26 March, 1913
14. " S. Amoes
Kimberley
10 April, 1913
15. " Sir Lionel Phillips
Cape Town
14 April, 1913
16. " G. Fakier
Cape Town
1 May, 1913
17. " Prof. F. Clarke
South African College
Cape Town
12 May, 1913
18. " Mr A.T. Hennesy
Cape Town
2 July, 1913
19. " Mr I. Jackson
Cape Town
17 July, 1913
20. " Mr Duse Mohammed
Fleet Street
London
12 August, 1913
21. " The Superintendent-General of
Education
Cape Town
15 October, 1913
22. " Mr Vermeerset
Marist Brothers College
Cape Town
29 October, 1913
23. " Mr Abdul Aziez
Simonstown
31 October, 1913
24. " Mr H. Latief
Paarl
9 December, 1913
25. " Mr John X. Merriman
Stellenbosch
17 December, 1913

26.	Abdurahman, Dr. A.	Claremont Committee Claremont 24 December, 1913	Moslem	Education
27.	"	Sir Thomas Muir Cape Town 18 January 1915		
28.	Shahmahomed, H.S.	Registrar University of Cape Town 19 August, 1923		
29.	Pomeroy, A.W. Acting Superintendent-General of Education	H.B. Manuel Manager Simonstown Moslem Primary School 18 September, 1923		
30.	Town Clerk, Cape Town	Secretary Schotsche Kloof Institution Cape Town 22 May, 1936		
31.	Abdurahman, Dr. A.	The Town Clerk Cape Town 21 January, 1937		
32.	Town Clerk, Cape Town	Minister of Health Pretoria 15 June, 1937		
33.	Secretary of Health	The Town Clerk Cape Town 12 July, 1937		
34.	Maged H.H. Manager Talfalah Institute Claremont	The Commissioner of Coloured Affairs Cape Town 21 August, 1969		
35.	Van der Ross, Dr R.E. Circuit Inspector of Education	Director of Coloured Education Cape Town 30 September, 1969		
36.	Commissioner of Coloured Affairs Cape Town	The manager Paarl Moslem Primary School 5 April, 1973		
37.	Jakoet, E., Gamieldien, S. & Adams, A. Rahmaniyeh Institute	The Commissioner of Coloured Affairs Cape Town 6 August, 1974		

INTERVIEWS AND MEMORANDA

1. Adams, A. : Ex-Principal, Muir Street Moslem Primary School and Rahmaniyyeh Institute, Cape Town
2. Albertus, E. : Ex-teacher, Habibia Kokanie Institute, Athlone, Secretary, Moslem Progressive Society
3. Bawa, E.A. : Valedictory Address for the retiring Principal, Mr A. Orrie
4. Davis, S. : Ex-resident of Simonstown
5. Effendi el Emjedi, H.N. : Grandson of Abu Bakr Effendi
6. Effendi, Neamatollah : Notes of the son of Abu Bakr Effendi; Chairman, South African Moslem Association
7. Karriem, K. : Principal, Salt River Moslem Primary School
8. Karriem, Mrs. F. : Ex-teacher, Worcester Moslem Primary School
9. Latief, F. : Ex-principal, Paarl Moslem Primary School
10. Keraan, Y. : Manager, Strand Moslem Primary School
11. Galant, H. : Principal, Sherwood Park Primary School; Ex-Vice-principal, Talfalah Institute, Claremont.
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13. Orrie, A. : Ex-principal, Rahmaniyyeh Anglo-Urdu School, Wynberg
14. Pietersen, S. : Executive Director Muslim Assembly, Athlone
15. Rahim, S.M. : Executive Member, Cape Randerian Society
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17. Scello, A. : Ex-principal, Salt River
Moslem Primary School
18. Toefy, E. : Principal, Habibia Kokani
Educational Institute,
Athlone
19. Vahed, A.R. : Ex-manager, Paarl Moslem
Primary School
20. Wentzel, Mrs. G. : Niece of Dr A. Abdurahman

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