

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

THE AFRICAN ADULT EDUCATION MOVEMENT IN THE WESTERN CAPE
FROM 1945 TO 1967
IN THE CONTEXT OF ITS SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

VOLUME 2

A dissertation
presented in fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

by

DAPHNE MAY WILSON

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CHAPTER SIXTHE CAPE AFRICAN NIGHT SCHOOLS FROM MID 1958 TO THE END OF 1967 AND THEIR COLLISION COURSE WITH GOVERNMENT POLICY, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE IMPACT OF THE MAJOR POLITICAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS OF THESE YEARS ON THEIR EXISTENCE, TEACHERS AND PUPILS

6.1

INTRODUCTION

At the commencement of this thesis I examined first the combination of political social and economic circumstances before tracing the early years in the nineteen-forties of the adult African education movement in the Western Cape because the latter could only be properly understood in the light of that background. In the second stage however, when the Association was already established and had entered a period of vigorous growth up to 1957, because background events hovered mostly on the periphery of night school activities I examined contextual and external influences only after assessing the actual development of the CNENSA from 1950 to 1957.

Now however a look at the Association entering the third and final period of its existence reveals that its abstention from political involvement was demonstrably no proof against the impingement upon the movement of the intense polarising forces now fomenting the whole of the South African society. In particular, it was no defence against a government bent on rigid group area demarcations, that was increasingly suspicious of the Association's motives and its participants and that was fundamentally opposed to its integratory procedures or its elevation of blacks above the lowly status to which they were restricted by the growing network of oppressive laws and practices.

For these reasons I will once again vary the order of procedure as I embark on this new chapter. At first, for the formal completion of the record, I will present Figures 3 and 4 with brief accompanying explanations to show in chronological sequence, the final years of the individual schools and the reduction in total numbers of

participants compared with the growth period in the nineteen forties and fifties. Next Figures 5 and 6 showing the pupil attendance patterns of the schools that continued after 1957, will be used as a reference focus. In particular this focus will serve as a means for charting a path through the volume of correspondence and some of the CNENSA tactics employed to stave off the threats of closure of the schools outside the African townships for as long as was possible.

After following this latter review with a brief overall update on the academic programmes continued to be offered in the schools, I will then examine the real animus of the movement, the remaining and extraordinary vitality in certain of its components, the wide range of people it drew into its orbit, and the implications of the school closures, in the light of major contemporary events and increasing government autocracy which were such crucial factors in these final years of the movement's existence.

6.2

BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE OF THE STEPS TAKEN IN THE ELIMINATION OF THE ASSOCIATION'S SCHOOLS AFTER 1957

Figure 3 provides the factual record of the time sequence in which the Association lost its schools at various intervals over a period of ten years. Only the small one-teacher school at the Brooklyn Chest Hospital was not a direct loss. In this case, as previously mentioned, when the Association lost its subsidy in 1958 arrangements were made for a satisfactory transfer of sponsorship to the Cape Town City Council so that this now viable and well patronised little school could continue.

In 1958 all of the four township schools passed out of the Association's direct control and two of them, Langa Senior and the Simonstown Night School, mainly through lack of teachers, were not resuscitated at all. The same fate may have befallen the junior night schools in Langa and Nyanga but here, although unsuccessful in obtaining government subsidies to help pay their teachers (despite strenuous efforts in this regard on the part of Vigne, the new CNENSA Chairman) the local African School Board now required by regulations to organise any township classes set up for African

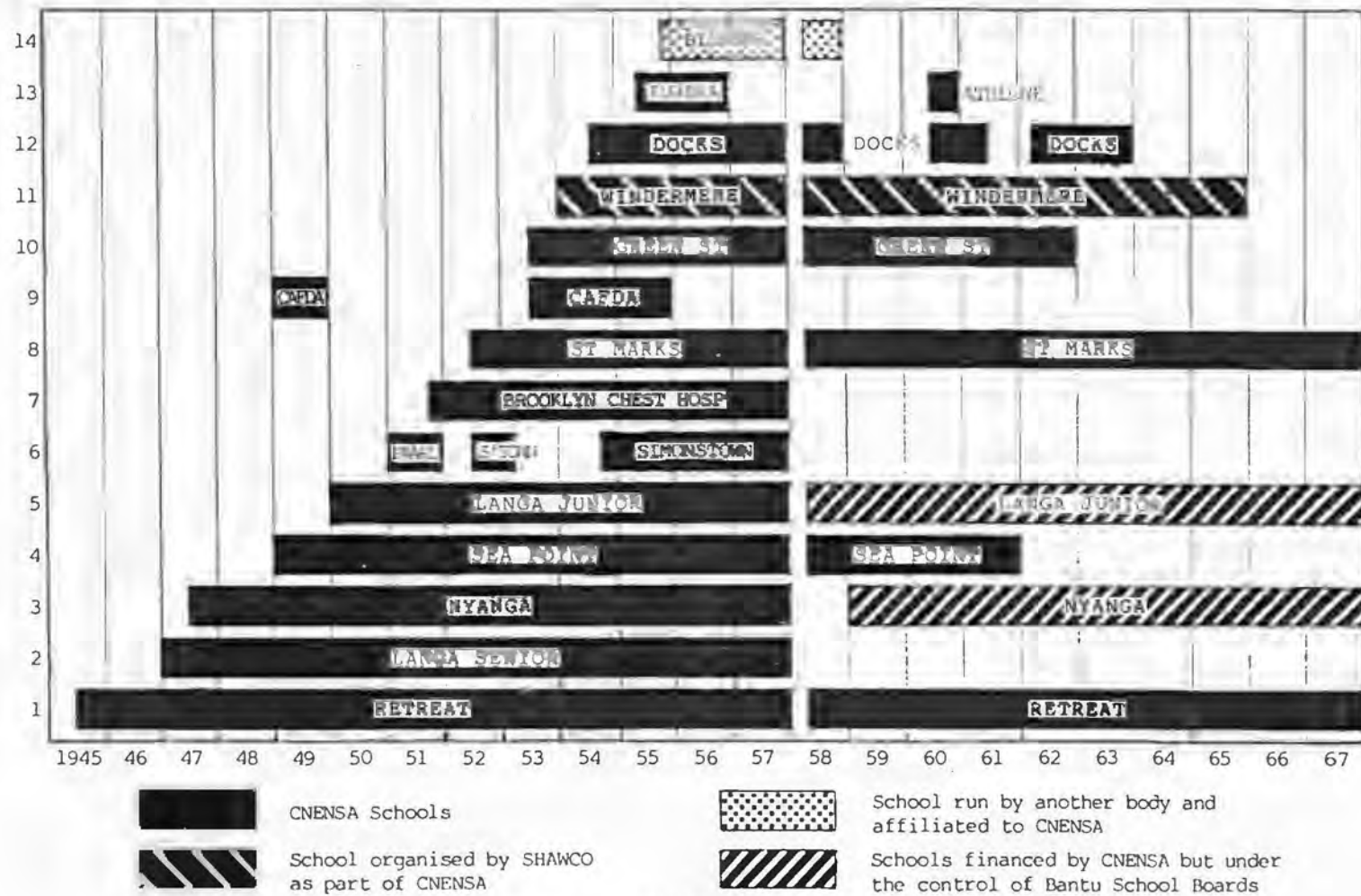


FIGURE 3

Expansion in CNENSA 1945 - 1957 and Decline and Closures 1958 -1967

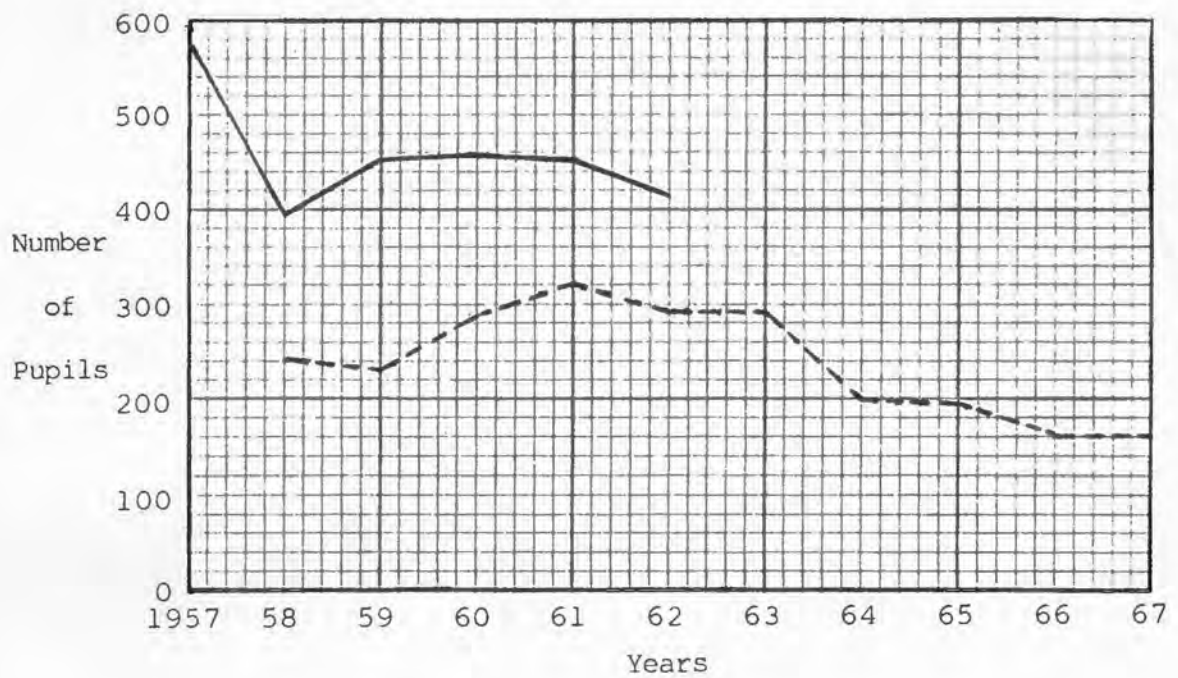


FIGURE 4

Average Annual Pupil Attendance for Period 1957 - 1967

- - - Schools directly run by CNENSA
excluding Langa and Nyanga
- Total including Langa and Nyanga

adults, did eventually manage to find Africans to replace the former white volunteers and to have the Langa and Nyanga schools officially registered. (The Nyanga school however did not reopen until 1959 because of the tardiness of the School Board's Secretary in forwarding the necessary application to Pretoria [Vigne, 1959b]).

The Association then committed itself to fund-raising to pay 2/6 a night per teacher (supplemented by 2/6 per night per teacher from pupils' contributions) to keep these two schools operative, and the two former principals, in the first of a steady series of CNENSA "liaison officers", initiated the practice of visiting Langa and Nyanga regularly once a week, issuing text-books and keeping open lines of communication between the Association and the new operators (Vigne, 1959b). In addition the new African principals and some of their teachers attended the CNENSA Co-ordinating Committee meetings. Thus although the 1957 regulations brought about the demise of the eleven year old Langa Senior night school and of the Simonstown primary classes as well as depriving the other two township schools of a free non-racial access to willing and experienced teachers, at least some semblance of some of the former classes were salvaged for another decade: the personal links as outlined above and the cross current of ideas in the co-ordinating meetings continued almost to the end.

Commenting on these two schools in his Annual Report in 1960 as Chairman, Randolph Vigne stated:

"The new link between the Association and the African townships is a very valuable one for our work, and I am very glad that it is a strong and continuing one. The schools at Nyanga and Langa are healthy and live institutions. Breaking up parties and film shows were held there at the end of last year. Other activities, we hope, will be organised during this year as well. Although the Association's relationship with these schools is quite unlike that with schools outside the African areas, they and we feel we belong together and we are grateful for this."

(Vigne, 1960b)

In Figure 3, to indicate that these schools although theoretically no longer affiliated to the Association were nevertheless in practice still part of its umbrella movement as just described, the bars representing their existence have a shading different from that representing the other CNENSA volunteer staffed schools.

One other of the Association's schools (affiliated since 1955) that shows no continuance on Figure 3 shortly after the 1957 regulations was the Bishops Night School. The Headmaster of the Diocesan College, Mr H.J. Kidd, wrote to the Association in September 1957 for advice; he was then feeling that the new rules "make it difficult to see how we can possibly conform with their terms" (Letter: 30/9/1957, Kidd). However in October that year the Association's secretary cum "Manager" applied for a permit from the Group Areas Board for Bishops as for the other schools and in the same month forwarded to the local inspector Mr Kidd's completed application for the required registration of the Bishops Night School. Eight months later a letter from the local Inspector informed her that "the Registration of Night Schools in the European Areas is in order viz. that of the Diocesan and YMCA Night Schools"* (Letter: 21/6/1958, Insp. of Bantu Educ.).

After 1958 no more applications were made by the CNENSA on behalf of Bishops for its re-registration. It lasted a few more years. In 1962 after all the CNENSA schools had been inspected by the Department, the Secretary for Bantu Administration informed the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner that as the Bishops Night School was in a white area it would have to close but to enable the persons concerned to make other arrangements it could continue for one more year until 31 December 1963 (Letter: 23/5/1962, Sek. Bantoe-admin.).

Figure 3 also shows the new Athlone school being extremely short-lived in 1960, the Sea Point school closed in 1961, Green Street in 1962, the Docks School in 1963 (after having been closed twice previously at the end of 1958 and again in 1961), Windermere in

*The YMCA school referred to was not affiliated to the CNENSA. Run in Rosebank Methodist Church Hall by the DCT YMCA Student Association for about forty blacks since 1952 it was eventually ordered to close in 1960 because it operated in a white group area [Cape Times, 1960].

1965 and St Marks and Retreat in 1967. These closures (all imposed by the Government) need to be seen in the light of government policies and external events so will be more extensively considered later but for the present with reference to Figures 5 and 6 I will briefly refer to the respective sizes of pupil attendances and the circumstances affecting them to clarify the situation in the individual schools after 1957.

6.3

PUPIL ATTENDANCES: 1958-1967 AT THE REMAINING CNENSA STAFFED AND OPERATED SCHOOLS

Figure 4 has highlighted the considerable drop in overall pupil attendance after the initial effect of the 1957 regulations and the resultant continuing drop as school after school was closed. Figure 5, in which the average annual attendance figures of individual schools are plotted, helps to provide an attendance picture for the remaining schools that continued to be directly staffed by volunteers in the Association whilst Figure 6 provides a similar picture for Langa and Nyanga Night Schools. With scant information on attendances for the year 1957 the numbers given for that year are the best estimates that can be made under the circumstances and as will be seen there are gaps with regard to attendance averages at the two township schools during the period under review. These graphs now call for individual comments.

6.3.1

Sea Point School

Figure 5 shows that after dropping steadily from an average attendance of 50 a night in 1958 to 30 by the end of 1960 (the year of the PAC disturbances) there was a sharp plunge in attendance at this school the following year to an average attendance of only twelve. One practical reason for the initial reduction in attendance in 1959 was a simple requirement by the Baptist Church for the classes in its small hall to switch from the accustomed Wednesdays to Thursday nights (CNENSA Minutes, 16/8/1959) but the major factors behind this downward trend were the Group Area removals of the Coloured people from Tramway Road and the corresponding closure of

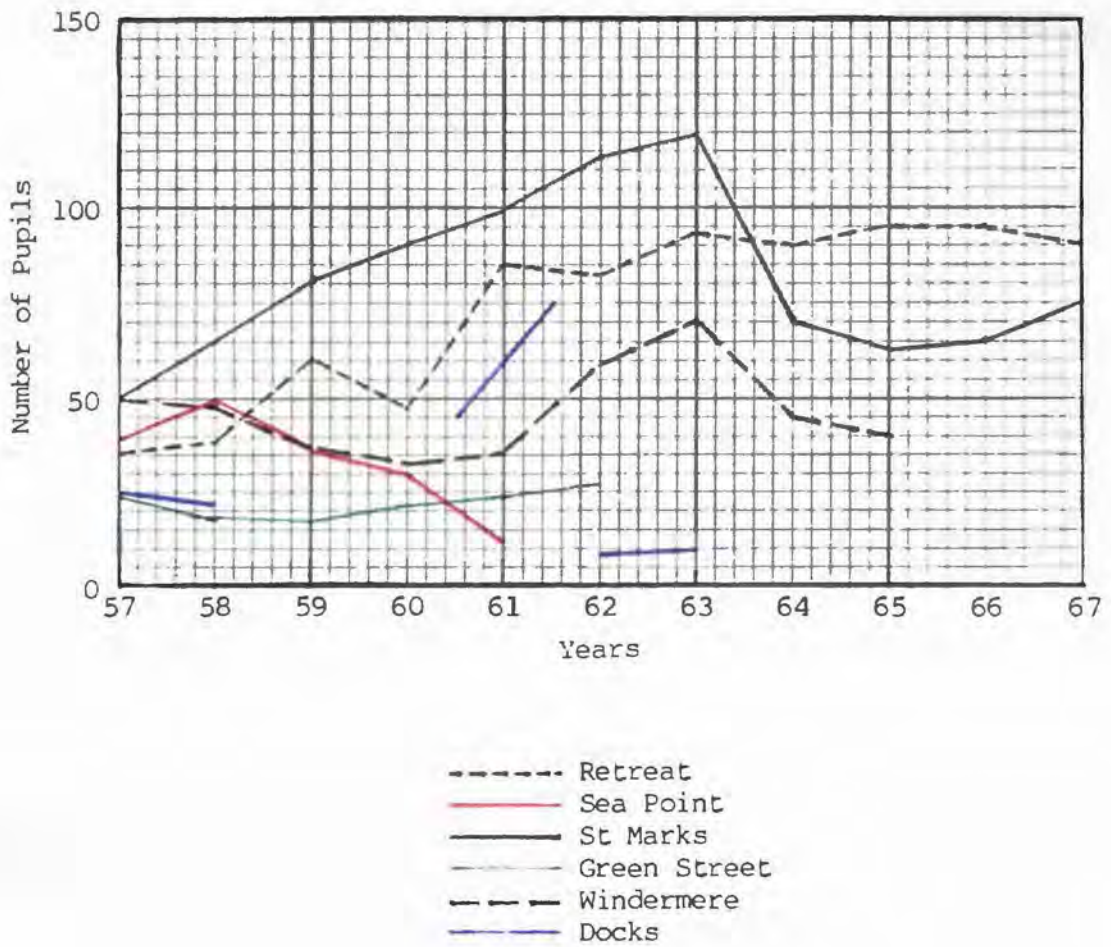


FIGURE 5

Average Annual Pupil Attendance at Individual CNENSA Schools
other than Langa and Nyanga for the remainder of the
Life-span of each school

the Baptist Church's day school for coloured children (CNENSA Minutes, 28/2/1962).

A step that ironically helped further to reduce attendances occurred when the Sea Point Night School, which had always complained of over-cramped quarters, gained permission in 1961 from the Holy Redeemer Church in Kloof Road nearby to use its hall as additional accommodation and to this new venue moved its coloured pupils for whom the 1957 regulations controlling the conduct of African night classes were not applicable. But this division was probably also carried out as a result of an instruction from the Regional Director that "only Bantu pupils may be enrolled at the school and pupils of other races must be excluded" (Letter: 12/5/1960, Regl. Dir Bantu Educ.). However this left the Tramway Road School with only 11 pupils and had a demoralizing effect on both pupils and teachers. Six months later the permission to use the Kloof Road Church Hall was rescinded and the pupils were then advised to attend the Green Street School (CNENSA Minutes, 28/5/61 and 8/11/61).

Although attendances subsequently picked up and Sea Point had twenty-five African pupils presented with prizes at a combined Sea Point and St Marks close-of-year function at the end of 1961, renewed difficulties for the organisers occurred in 1962 owing to uncertainty over the continued use of the Baptist Church; in fact later that year, now without congregation or day school pupils, this building was finally put up for sale (Wilson, 1962b). Thus when the final and expected government order came for the Sea Point Night School to close down at the end of 1962 (Letter: 14/7/1962, Insp. Bantu Educ.) the night school, so heavily hit already by the removal of the coloured community from Tramway Road, had already been seriously weakened and in fact with no venue in which to operate had not reopened at all in 1962.

6.3.2

Green Street

This school, conducted in the Friend's Meeting House had of necessity always been limited in size but as can be seen in Figure 5 the attendance during the period 1958 up to when it was ordered to close

by the Department of Bantu Education in 1962 (Letter: 14/7/1962, Insp. Bantu Educ.) showed a steady increase. The closure of the Sea Point Night School at the end of 1961 had helped to fill Green Street to capacity with additional pupils and a further stimulus to its growth occurred when Mr Gordon Searle, CNENSA Treasurer, and a former experienced Principal of St Marks, ran the school in its final year (Wilson, 1962b). The instruction to close Green Street as in the case of Sea Point came after investigation by a Pretoria Bantu Administration official in March 1962 into the sitings of the various schools vis-a-vis the Group Areas Act. The Green Street and Sea Point schools, sited in a "white group area", were not to be tolerated and it was stated: "Daar is reeds aandskole in Langa Bantoewoongebied en die Bantoes kan daardie aandskole bywoon" (Letter: 23/5/1962, Sek. Bantoe-admin.).

6.3.3

The Docks Night School

Some comment is needed on the markedly contrasting types of attendance in each of the two short bursts of existence of the Docks Night School following upon its first closure at the end of 1958. This school had received temporary registration that year while it was being decided by the authorities in what manner the new regulations applied to it. The Docks School of course differed from all the others in that it was neither conducted in an African township nor in a so-called white area. The classes were held in the Recreation Hall of the compound for migrant African Dockers employed by the South African Railways and Harbours and the one and a half year long protracted closure in 1959 and early 1960 revolved first around a question of management responsibility, the Government refusing to accept the CNENSA as manager of the school, the employers, the SAR and H, refusing to accept responsibility for it themselves or to allow a senior employee to represent them as manager (Vigne, 1959b), and the CNENSA executive refusing to give up on finding a solution to the problem!

/ A Group Area permit was the next obstacle to hold things up once it had been settled the Association could run the school as the representative of the SAR but after an exasperated telegram from the

CNENSA to Pretoria followed by the suggestion that the school could operate pending registration (CNENSA Minutes, 27/3/1960) this latter idea was accepted although on a strictly temporary basis. Figure 5 shows the rapid rise in attendance in this twelve month period from mid 1960 to June 1961 when the school was given a new lease of life by a staff of 14 teachers and a new principal, Mrs Alice Ackerman, a professional teacher with many years of experience in teaching Africans.

A curt order to close the Docks School in June 1961 emanated this time from the office of the System Manager of the Railways. The letter gave no reason and simply stated:

"It is desired to advise that approval can no longer be given of the educational classes being conducted at the Compound, Table Bay Harbour, and classes must cease forthwith.

(Letter: 1/6/1961, Syst. Mgr SAR)

In the face of such a blow to a thriving school of some 70 dock labourers a statement was given to the press by me as CNENSA Chairman and the resultant wide coverage by the local daily newspapers elicited a response from Mr T.V. More, the System Manager, that the school had been closed because "it was considered undesirable for white women to enter the compound area" (Cape Times, 1961). One newspaper lampooned the decision with a heavily inked banner headline - "NO DAMES IN DOCKS"! (Post, 1961)

Some nine months later, after meetings with both Mr T.V. More and the Secretary for Bantu Education, Mr F.J. de Villiers, permission was given to reopen the Docks school provided (a) only "bona fide residents of the Table Bay Harbour Compound are enrolled" and (b) "only the services of Bantu teachers are utilised" (Letter: 12/2/1962, Gen. Mgr SAR). Thus Mrs Ackerman's former volunteer staff of seven women and seven men (Letter: 23/1/1961, Bryson) who had been waiting hopefully for a chance to resume their work were no longer permitted to teach at the school. This new restriction not only meant an added financial burden for the Association in substituting paid staff but reintroduced the almost insoluble problem of procuring enough African teachers who were willing to travel nightly to the

Dockyard from the townships. As Figure 5 reveals pupil attendances were now at an all-time low and when in July 1962, on appeal from the CNENSA, the government relaxed the ruling so as at least to allow white males to teach at the Docks "for a period of one year" (Letter: 19/7/1962, Gen. Mgr SAR) the Association's strenuous efforts failed to revive really adequate attendances.

By May 1963 "Docks had a teaching staff of 6 and an attendance of 10 but not always the same students. Overtime work or just fatigue were responsible for much irregularity in attendance" (CNENSA Minutes, 12/5/1963). Also by this stage African workers were being brought into work in the Dockyard from outlying areas only for short intervals (Wilson, 1964a). This frustrating situation continued through to November 1963 and was further aggravated not only by overtime demands on the labourers and by their transient residence but by the additional fact that now (under the Bantu Laws Amendment Act) "Africans were being replaced by Coloured workers" (CNENSA Minutes, 10/11/1963). Thus as in the case of the Sea Point Night School the enactment of government policies likewise drained away pupil participation from the Docks school to the point where it was no longer practical for the Association to continue operating it. (Presently these external influences with regard to all the schools will be more closely examined.) The Docks Night School by dint of endless representations had succeeded in being "registered" up to the end of 1963. By then, with the attendance figure less than 10 the Association made no further attempt to apply for re-registration for 1964 for this school which had at one time been so vibrant.

6.3.4

Windermere

The Windermere School was run by a UCT Education Management Committee elected annually and responsible to the SHAWCO Board of Management which funded it. However two of its representatives (usually the Principal and one other) regularly attended the CNENSA's Co-ordinating Committee meetings. The links with the Association, strongly forged in the beginning through former CNENSA teachers, Raymond Ackerman, Fay Anolick and Bernie Pogrund (SHAWCO EMC, 15/10/1953) were maintained throughout the existence of the school,

the Association's Secretary not only acting as official "Manager" as required by the government after 1957 but also handling on the school's behalf, all the tedious paperwork involved in obtaining the required group area permit and annual registration certificates. In addition in 1958 for a short period the Vice-Chairman of the Association, Mr. Wolfgang Fricke, helped out at Windermere by taking over the administration of the senior school (SHAWCO Annual Report, 1958) and attending the meetings of the Education Management Committee which, although chaired by a member of the UCT staff, consisted mainly of students involved in the Windermere Night School.

The attendance figures for Windermere plotted on Figure 5 are derived from the best available figures appearing mainly in the SHAWCO Annual Reports but also from the Management Committee meetings and from the CNENSA minutes. From these sources come explanations for the prevailing pattern of attendance. Some of the poor attendances were commonly attributed in 'self-criticism by the student organisers to the perennial problems of teaching inexperience, unreliability of many of the volunteers and the difficulty in finding teacher replacements towards the end of the year when university students had to prepare for their own examinations. In 1959 problems arose over "the inefficiency and lack of interest" of paid teachers specially employed to cope with the lower classes with the result that all the pupils in the two sub-standards and Std 1 stopped attending; in addition severe incidents of "hooliganism also broke out at the school that year culminating in an eruption which could have led to bloodshed had it not been for the tactful handling of the situation by the night organiser in charge" (SHAWCO Annual Report, 1959). The manner in which these problems were gradually addressed and to a large extent overcome in 1962 by a team that had already gained experience the previous year is reflected in the markedly improved attendance for that year with continued improvement in 1963.

Probably the major reason for a fall in attendance from 1957 to 1961 was the forced removal of African families from Windermere to Langa and Nyanga, the consequent loss of many students and the unsettling effect it had on those remaining (SHAWCO Annual Reports). The year for the lowest attendances was 1960. That year with the staging of the PAC Anti-pass protests and stay-away in March, the spread of

unrest across the Peninsula and the declaration of a state of Emergency, the Windermere School (held in the Windermere Methodist Primary School) was itself at one time the scene of attempted arson (Selzer, 1962: 5) and was closed for the whole of the first term.

In 1963 the government instructed the Windermere Night School and Continuation Classes to close "in view of the fact that the Windermere Bantu Community School has closed down" (Letter: 3/7/1963, Insp. Bantu Educ.). After a special combined meeting of the Education Management Committee with the CNENSA Chairman and Secretary a letter to the Inspector of BED in Port Elizabeth signed by Professor T.W. Price, Chairman of SHAWCO's Board of Management, pointed out that the Windermere Night School had no connection with the Bantu Community School, not even occupying the same building, and was well able to continue its activities (Letter: 14/8/1963, Price). The closure was eventually deferred after the Bantu Education Department had asked the Windermere Night School to substantiate its claim that the twenty African students in Stds 8 and 10 from Nyanga and Langa had no alternative but to attend the Windermere School (CNENSA Minutes, 8/9/1963).

Clearly by this stage the removal of Africans from Windermere was almost complete and (at a time when young saboteurs from the African Resistance Movement were being brought to trial) another query emanated from the BED in 1964, not only with regard to the necessity for Windermere to continue but also the Retreat Night School "in view of the fact that most of the Bantu families have been removed from those areas" (Letter: 10/11/1964, Dir Bantu Admin.). Again the attempt to force closure was temporarily delayed but the drop in attendances at Windermere in 1964 and 1965 reflect the unsettled situation. In 1965 the Windermere Night School for African adults was finally instructed to close, having already been virtually strangled by the application of Group Area removals and tighter restrictions on African labour and general mobility.

6.3.5

St Marks

The graph on Figure 5 representing pupil attendance at St Marks Night

School in District Six shows a steady increase from an average of 50 a night in 1957 to close on 120 in 1963. More Africans started attending this school in 1958 when Vigne was its principal (CNENSA Minutes, 6/7/58) and in 1962, with 50% of its pupils Africans in classes from Sub A to Std 8, it started opening on a fourth night each week (CNENSA Minutes, 26/8/62). The programme was streamlined through most of this period providing basically for two nights of instruction in English, one in Afrikaans and one in Arithmetic. Accommodation was plentiful but classes were regularly tormented by troublesome street urchins.

A jarring note against this pattern of healthy expansion in 1961 occurred when the Port Elizabeth Inspector of Bantu Education suddenly instructed the Association that St Marks and the Green Street Schools were to close forthwith in August (in the midst of the year's programme), until Group Area "occupation" permits had been obtained (Letters: 30/8/1961 and 31/8/1961, Insp. Bantu Educ.). However, within days, responding to the Association's indignant telephonic reaction through me as Chairman directly to the office of the Minister of Bantu Administration in Pretoria, Mr de Wet Nel authorized the issuing of the long withheld occupation permits; but these were only to be granted until the end of 1962, and this concession was accompanied by the warning that during that year all the Association's schools would be thoroughly investigated by officials from Pretoria (Wilson, 1962b).

St. Marks attendance continued to improve and when at the end of 1962 the Green Street classes in "white" Cape Town were duly closed many of these pupils moved over to the District Six school and contributed towards its peak attendance in 1963 (Wilson 1963b). By 1964 however Figure 5 shows a sharp drop in the average attendance and as in the case of Windermere there are direct references in the records to African removals from the vicinity to the townships as being direct causes for the disappearance of former pupils (CNENSA Minutes, 8/9/1963 and 8/11/1964). The state's policies behind these population removals and their bearing on the closure of the schools will be examined in greater depth later, but it is to be noted at this stage that the Government was becoming increasingly confident that these night schools would simply fade out of existence through sheer lack

of pupils. For example, in a letter to the Association the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, in forwarding Group Area Permits for the St Marks and Retreat Schools in 1963 states:

"The Bantu families presently residing in these localities are being moved to the Bantu Townships and the necessity for night schools in these areas will probably fall away in the near future."

(Letter: 2/5/1963, Chief Bantu Aff. Commr)

In actual fact the need for the schools certainly did not fall away. African pupils continued attending both St Marks and Retreat; in 1965, it is recorded that there were 42 African students at St Marks and 59 at Retreat (Letter: 24/9/1965 Sec. CNENSA). In the final two years 1966 and 1967, St Marks although reduced in size and operating three nights a week instead of four, continued to provide instruction to integrated classes from Sub A to Std 8 and to put students through external examinations. It also continued to retain the enthusiastic support of many of its experienced teachers including the Vice-Principal of the St Marks day school who had turned down the offer of a paid position at one of the new night schools, run by the Coloured Affairs Department, in order to continue his volunteer teaching at St Marks (Wilson, 1966a).

In the end, Pretoria, impervious to all appeals, and intent on limiting to the maximum the presence of Africans in white areas after working hours (SAIRR Survey, 1963: 124-126) issued its orders to St Marks (and to Retreat) to close; even then the Association did not accept these instructions without a struggle, the nature of which will be dealt with later.

6.3.6

Retreat Night School

The average attendance of 35 at Retreat up to the end of 1957, is a rough estimate. That year had been a difficult one for this night school. It was then still predominantly staffed by University students but at the AGM in March, Lipshitz the Chairman, had described it as the "step child as far as the University is

concerned" and the severe shortage of teachers had led to a reduction of weekly teaching nights to two (Lipshitz, 1957). Retreat's Principal, Mrs Prescott, who had been organising the school since 1955, was overseas for four months during 1957 and from April until mid-September there were no reports at all on Retreat at co-ordinating meetings and no report on progress for the remainder of the year except for the slight information that "attendances had dropped considerably during the 'flu epidemic but were improving" (CNENSA Minutes, 15/9/1957). Back in 1955 and 1956 the average attendance had been about 26 and 38 respectively and in 1958 when the school began a term late notices were sent out to 40 past pupils of the school (ibid: 26/3/1958).

Teacher shortages were much relieved by 1958 by the transfer to Retreat of some of the volunteers who had been teaching in Nyanga or Langa in 1957, myself included. Shortly afterwards in the mid year when Mrs Prescott was unable to continue I was asked to run the school and to try to build it up. From then on for the next nine and a half years I remained as Principal of Retreat.

In 1958 the largest concentration of pupils was in the substandards whilst only one or two pupils were in each of Stds 4, 5 and 6. Before the year was over the numbers improved sufficiently to warrant operating a third night of classes each week. Early in the sixties, although the substandards remained large, there was a swing towards the senior classes (ibid: 27/3/1960), a development which became steadily more pronounced each succeeding year (ibid: 8/3/64) especially as the number of candidates successful in one or more external examinations increased. Ranging from Std 6 to Matric the number of such successful examination entrants increased from three in 1959 to twenty-four in 1966 and the school began to build up a reputation for this kind of achievement. As the number of pupils (African and Coloured) increased so did the staff (by 1967 the latter consisted of 56 teachers a week) and an enthusiasm was generated that kept both teachers and pupils continuing at the school year after year. It was estimated that in 1962 of the then total staff of 40 at Retreat, 23 of the teachers had taught at the school for several years (Wilson, 1962a). By 1967 this nucleus of permanent volunteers was much larger.

The surprising thing was that the steady average attendances ranging from 85 in 1961 to 95 in 1967 were maintained despite the removals of Africans from the Blouvlei location and Retreat area in the early sixties and despite too, serious diminution in classroom space from 1963 onwards; in the latter year the Presbyterian Church first reclaimed the McNab Memorial Hall for theological use only and later appropriated a small outer classroom as habitation for a newly installed caretaker. In 1964 in view of these difficulties (14 classes in three remaining classrooms!) and because by then other facilities were available to coloured students, only Africans were admitted as new pupils after the initial three week period of registration (ibid: 8/3/1964). With all the difficulties involved in trying to obtain group area permits alternative accommodation was out of the question.

In summing up then, the graph depicting the attendances at Retreat from 1957 to 1967 shows a fairly rapid rise by the end of 1961 except for a drop in 1960, the year of the PAC protests. Thereafter there were steady, over-capacity attendances, more than which it would have been virtually impossible to accommodate in the very limited classroom space available. Unlike Windermere and St Marks the school did not exhibit a drop in attendance commensurate with the forced removals of Africans from the district. The proximity of the railway line facilitated commuting but above all it was the keenness of the students (augmented by that of the teachers) that maintained the high attendance figures. With such determination all manner of difficulties were overcome. Many examples could be cited but I will mention two. One of the students, who attended Retreat from Std 3 until he had achieved a full Std 8, when moved from Blouvlei to Nyanga overcame the distance problem by riding a moped to night school (Sishuba, 1988). Yet another, Gilbert Kawi, a young man who some years previously had sustained serious injuries in a car accident, for four years, from 1963 to 1967, attended classes regularly in a wheel-chair until he reached and passed Std 5.

6.4

PUPIL ATTENDANCES 1958-1967 AT THE LANGA AND NYANGA NIGHT SCHOOLS

Figure 6 gives graphs for the two night schools in Langa and Nyanga:

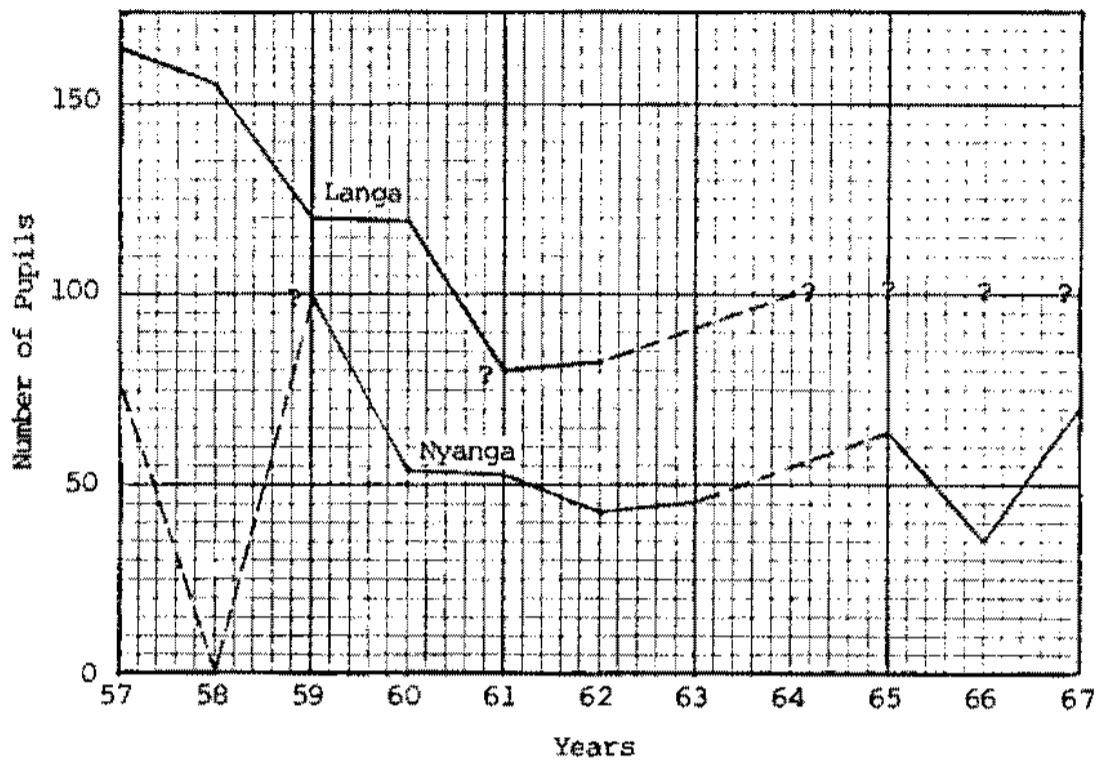


FIGURE 6

Average Annual Pupil Attendance at Langa and Nyanga Schools for the period 1957 - 1967

these were the schools the CNENSA was obliged by the new regulations to hand over in 1958 with all their material assets to the Cape Peninsula Bantu School Board and school committees brought into existence under the Bantu Education system. The graph for the Langa Night School highlights the marked drop from the average attendance of about 170 a night in 1957 to an estimated 80 by the end of 1961. Before the new restrictions Langa Junior had always been the largest of all the schools operated by the Association. In the case of Nyanga, where no classes took place in 1958, after an uncertain high enrolment attendance in 1959 figures likewise plunged but subsequently maintained a level not too much below the average for 1957. Using related evidence I have indicated possible estimates on Figure 6 by question marks where more reliable figures were not available in the records.

For both of these schools it is clear that the two major stumbling blocks crippling potential attendances lay in (a) lack of funds and (b) difficulty in procuring reliable qualified teachers.

With regard to funds the 1957 regulations had stated that "the school board shall be responsible for financing the night schools and continuation classes, including the payment of teachers employed for such schools or classes" but did add that it could apply for partial subsidies in respect of rent, electricity, water, sanitation and towards the salaries of teachers "calculated at such amount per teaching hour as the Minister may from time to time lay down" (Maree, 1957b). On the strength of this provision in the regulations and urged on by the Association, the Rev. Mr Ledige, Chairman of the Cape Peninsula Bantu School Board, applied for subsidization of teachers' salaries in 1958 (Letter: 12/11/1958, Vigne). Although a few days later the Regional Director of BED wrote that it was unlikely that subsidy would be given at that stage (Letter: 15/11/1958, Regl Dir Bantu Educ.) the Director of Bantu Education, Mr F.J. de Villiers in an interview with Vigne early in 1959 agreed that the school board "would be well advised to apply again for a subsidy" (Vigne, 1959a). However despite many applications over the next few years (CNENSA Minutes, 1960-1964) and despite suggestions from BED's chief information officer that subsidies for primary night schools (in the African areas) would "almost always be granted" (Vigne, 1959b) no

subsidies were ever forthcoming from the government for the teachers employed at these two night schools during the period 1958-1967. In fact funds allocated for African adult education were being drastically decreased nationally until by 1967 no subsidies at all were given for this purpose. The following figures illustrate this process:

Subsidies for African Night Schools and Continuation Classes
(in African areas only)

1958-1959	R46 000
1962-1963	2 000
1964-1965	1 000
1966-1967	0

(SAIRR Surveys, 1962, 1964, 1966)

To help keep these two schools functioning the Association contributed 2/6 per teacher per evening and it was agreed that the balance of a teacher's nightly payment of 5/- was to be made up by the Principals concerned from small monthly fees paid by the pupils (CNENSA Minutes, 26/4/1959 and 19/6/1960). Where the CNENSA directly staffed its schools, in the case of its small number of assistant paid African teachers, the Association paid 5/- a night. As a result of representations from Mr Magwa (the Principal of the Nyanga Night School) for similar payments for the teachers in the township schools a special CNENSA sub-committee was appointed to meet with him in July 1959 to discuss this matter (ibid: 19/7/1959). The following month it is recorded that at Nyanga the teachers were being paid 5/- a night and the students were paying a monthly fee of 2/- (ibid: 16/8/1959) but whether or not the Association had at this stage increased its monetary commitment is not clear. In any event, it should be mentioned in passing, the financial burden on the Association, now operating without any subsidy itself and with at least half of its hard earned funds expended annually on Langa and Nyanga, was a heavy one and it had constantly to extend its fund-raising activities.

The other recurring problem vitally affecting pupil attendances at these two schools was the scarcity of teachers. From 1958 to 1967 there were six different principals at Langa and five at Nyanga. The

Langa principals were Dempsey Loate (1958), Alfred Fanga (1959-1960), Mr Pakati (1960-1961), Mrs Priscilla Kobus (1962-1963), Mr Mgijima (1964-1966) and Mrs Noxolo Ndumbini (1967). Running the Nyanga Night School for similarly short periods were Messrs Magwa, Mafu, Kouba, Mgobo and Mabowe. The chief complaint all these principals had in common concerned staff shortages, particularly regarding reliable and qualified teachers. The students themselves who were contributing towards the salaries complained about some teachers coming late or not at all (ibid: 28/2/1962). The pay was so nominal that many of those who taught did so as a service to the community, thus in Langa in 1962, when pressure was put on teachers by the Bantu Education Department through the school boards, to produce detailed records and schemes of work as for a day school, there was much resentment and one teacher resigned (ibid: 26/8/1962).

Ostensibly at any rate, these were the main factors behind the fall-off in average attendances; however despite decreased size and the inevitable problems the classes were much in demand and the principals and Liaison members reported on many periods of smooth running and occasionally on Std 6 external examination successes. For example at the end of 1963 Mr J. Seni and Mr C. Sikhambule qualified for the Std 6 certificates; this achievement helped to launch Sikhambule on a three year course in Natal to become a minister in the Ethiopian African Church (Cape Argus: 1964a).

The 1960 drop in the Langa graph on Figure 6 could be attributed to the PAC anti-pass campaign and the related disturbances during which the school closed and many of the students went back to the homelands (CNENSA Minutes, 19/6/1960).

For the first few years after the 1957 regulations took effect the Principals from the two schools together with accompanying members of staff attended the Association's Co-ordinating Committee meetings very regularly and gave reports on progress. However in the middle of 1962 and again in 1964, the Department increased its pressure on the school board and respective school committees to take a more active role in running these two schools although the Association insisted on continuing to pay the teachers individually and to maintain the right of its liaison members to visit the schools

regularly to ensure its funds were being put to good use (Wilson, 1962b and CNENSA Minutes, 26/4/1964). Possibly because of this new shift towards greater school board participation in the affairs of the Langa and Nyanga Night Schools the Association after 1962 received less detailed information on attendances as evidenced in Figure 6 and certainly from mid 1964 to the end of 1965 (when however the co-ordinating meetings were no longer held so accessibly in Cape Town) there was a period of about 18 months when neither school principal or representative attended to present their reports (CNENSA Minutes, 9/8/1964 to 25/11/1965 inclusive). Liaison however was still cordially maintained, the Association continued to help organize end-of-year prize givings at both schools and in fact after the last of its volunteer schools was closed down in 1967, much of the remaining CNENSA fund while it lasted, was still being used for several more years to pay teachers (75c a night) at these township night schools (CNENSA Records, 1969-1972).

6.5

TUITION OFFERED

All the schools continued to provide classes in the same manner as in the fifties. In the primary classes the subjects taught were still Xhosa in the substandards and English and Arithmetic from Std 1 to 6 except that now there were more requests for tuition in Afrikaans. As previously mentioned when the St Marks school ran classes four nights a week, it had a basic division of two nights for English, one for Afrikaans and one for Arithmetic. There are also references in the records to Afrikaans being taught at the Docks School, Sea Point, Nyanga and Windermere but difficulty often arose in finding teachers for this subject.

Under the Bantu Education system of course junior classes up to Std 6 in the day schools were taught in the vernacular. At the Langa Night School a principal, Mr Mgijima, reported that the pupils preferred to be taught through the medium of English and that this was "permissible" (CNENSA Minutes, 9/8/1964) and in another reference to this contentious matter, Mr Magwa, (who as well as being one-time principal of the Nyanga school was also Vice-Chairman of the unpopular School Board) reported that under Bantu Education students

were expected to write examinations in the vernacular but no Xhosa text-books were available; he further reported that he would try to get lists of the Xhosa terminology, especially for subjects like Physiology and Hygiene (ibid: 28/2/1962).

As far as the primary classes run by the CNENSA volunteers were concerned, these were always conducted through the medium of English except for the teaching of Afrikaans and in the substandards where beginners were first taught literacy in Xhosa by African teachers before learning to read and write in English in Std 1.

I used to teach senior English but as an aid towards teaching literacy in English, soon after taking over the running of the Retreat school I was inspired by a friend's success with a literacy experiment to try to devise something similar for Retreat. For this purpose appropriate illustrated cards were produced to introduce the adult beginner immediately to short sentences with accompanying sketches. The sets were graded from using single vowel sounds in many different forms to doing the same for a variety of diphthongs but always expressed in illustrated meaningful short sentences. This combination of the "look and say" with the phonetic method proved a success and after the first two sets of cards and a period of six weeks the class undergoing the experiment was encouraged by being able to read a simple story which had been based on the vocabulary thus mastered (ibid: 26/4/1959). This system was still in use at Retreat two years later and was commended by Mr Davidson from the Battswood Training College when he was invited to visit the school (ibid: 28/5/1961).

This widespread use of English was no doubt another thorn in the flesh for a government that was determined to replace it by means of the vernacular in all the BED Lower and Higher Primary Schools. In 1965 when Pretoria granted "the reregistration of the St Marks Combined Higher and Lower Primary Native Night School" one of the stated conditions was that "Bantu Teachers be used as far as possible and that the vernacular be used as a medium of instruction" (Letter: 25/2/1965, Sec. Bantu Educ.). Needless to say this condition was simply ignored.

The schools providing for senior classes were Retreat, St Marks (up to Std 7 or 8) and Windermere, but occasionally other schools such as Nyanga and the Docks School assisted secondary students. Nyanga in 1966 had one Std 10 student (CNENSA Minutes, 26/9/1960) and after having had seven candidates pass English and Xhosa in the Std 6 National examinations that year, it attempted to run several senior classes in 1961 under Mr Dunywa. This experiment was short-lived however through shortage of qualified teachers and an attempt by the school principal, Mr Magwa, to get permission from the Secretary for Bantu Education for white secondary teachers to teach in Nyanga failed (ibid: 19/2/1961).

There was a considerable demand among African adults in the sixties for assistance in furthering their secondary education and as Africans were being systematically moved to Langa and Nyanga from areas like Cape Town, Athlone, Windermere, Retreat and Simonstown so this demand for senior classes in the townships intensified. At the Langa Night School as in Nyanga the need was also raised (ibid: 23/3/1961); in 1962 six teachers from the Langa High School were keen to start secondary "continuation" classes but the CNENSA committee at that time did not want to sponsor any further undertaking until the junior classes were running satisfactorily (ibid: 28/2/1962).

Then in 1965 in Langa this matter was brought up again. Not being able to find the necessary teachers on their own the Langa School Board wrote to me as Chairman of the Association asking for help in launching secondary night classes for adults in Langa (Wilson, 1966a). This request coincided with the government order to close down SHAWCO's Windermere School on the pretext that the Africans had been moved from that area, and the Inspector of Bantu Education, Mr J.T. Heyns, (contrary to the policies of his department), had suggested that the SHAWCO students should instead run secondary classes in Langa. The SHAWCO Education Management Committee however, still hoping to continue classes at Windermere for coloured students asked the Association to organize the new project (Letter: 9/11/1965, Chmn CNENSA). Supported by Mr. Heyns the Langa School Board duly submitted their application to the Bantu Education Department, and Mr. Heyns optimistically wrote to me as chairman suggesting that once the outcome of the request was known the matter of venue could

then be discussed.

Carrying the proposal further, in a subsequent interview with the Secretary of the Department of Bantu Education Mr van Dyk, I supported the suggestion that the school lost in Windermere should be replaced by a secondary one in Langa and staffed by white volunteer teachers. The result was predictable. Mr van Dyk would not even consider the proposal, stating "that it was not in accordance with government policy and was unthinkable" (Wilson, 1966a).

Thus it was inevitable that with no facilities available in Langa for African adults in secondary classes, and after the loss of the Windermere school such students should start coming in increasing numbers to Retreat and to St Marks. The latter went up to Std 7 only in 1960 and 1961 and thereafter to Std 8 but Retreat offered classes up to Matric in a fairly wide range of subjects that, according to student demand, included in some years Biology, Latin, Maths, Bookkeeping, Geography, Physiology and Hygiene and always English and History.

It will be recalled that in the fifties faced with the daunting task of trying to prepare students for external secondary examinations in only a limited number of hours a week and using frequently unreliable and untrained volunteers, the Association had entertained possible solutions to the problem, firstly by handing over the responsibility for senior classes to the Cape Town Technical College and secondly by centralising their own efforts at a venue in the Mowbray - Woodstock area. When neither scheme could be implemented it did its best to satisfy the irrepressible demand for writing external examinations by eliminating as many of its own structural weaknesses as it could. However although there had always been sporadic successes, and at St Marks and Retreat in particular in the sixties there was a steady increase in the number of candidates passing one, two or occasionally three subjects a year, these successes were hard to achieve and there were many failures.

At Windermere with its academic year lopped off at both ends, commencing only in March when the university students had returned from the summer vacation and terminating in September when they left

off to prepare for their own examinations, the difficulties had been even more aggravated. The substitution at Windermere of the girls from the Cape Town Teachers' Training College as teachers for the last quarter of the University year from 1960 onwards (SHAWCO Annual Report, 1961) was a partial solution, but Windermere in its annual reports frequently bemoaned its poor senior school examination results. For example in 1961 from Stds 6, 8 and 10 a total of 12 pupils wrote 28 subjects of which only five were passed and then only with "E's," the lowest of the pass symbols (ibid. 1961: 39).

The following year, in 1961, in an attempt to overcome such poor results, Windermere decided to revise its system of teaching. Dr P. Kunene was Acting Chairman of the school that year as well as being one of its teachers; also the hard-working Educational Management Committee, which was responsible for running the school and which in 1961 had "met for upwards of two hours every Sunday evening for the duration of the school year", was again in harness (ibid: 1961). (It included in its team Rick Turner and Stephanie Kemp both of whom for other reasons were later to come before the public eye.) The new method based on a condensing of the normal school syllabus in "correspondence courses" and involving "tutors" rather than teachers was quite frankly introduced as a means for achieving better examination results and it was admitted "that although this does not provide the pupils with a broad education, it does enable them to obtain a certificate and thereby improve their financial position." At the same time this narrow form of education was supplemented on Friday evenings by the showing of educational films (ibid: 1962). In practice the examination results at the end of 1962 were really no better than before but their teachers consoled themselves as follows:

"Impressive individual results in a school of this kind, even if they were obtainable, are probably much less important than the acquisition by all concerned of a little knowledge of the three R's. Our pupils are assisted by the awareness that we take a close personal interest in them; an interest and friendship which they warmly reciprocate."

(ibid: 1963)

For many years the Association had been able to prepare both its

African and Coloured pupils for the National Examinations of the Department of Education, Arts and Science and their entries had been handled by the Cape Town Technical College. After 1961 however this practice was no longer allowed for African candidates. The Department of Bantu Education then took over all examinations for private African students, substituting its own syllabi for Stds 6 and 8 while for the time being, in Std 10, continuing to use the syllabi and examination papers of the Department of Education, Arts and Science (Secretary for Bantu Educ. 1961). This further curtailment of freedom of choice did not however deter the students from continuing to strive for official certificates and for those night schools with both African and coloured pupils, it meant doubling up on classes where there were different set-works in the two different syllabi.

Probably the most essential ingredient for success in a voluntary run night school was to have always, on every school night, a full complement of good teachers. This cardinal rule, important as it was for all the classes, was of critical importance for those pupils struggling against great odds to master academic requirements at the secondary levels in only a few hours a week. Fortunately as the CNENSA continued to gain a hold on the affection and support of Capetonians the securing of reliable and appropriate volunteer teachers became one of the outstanding achievements of this period. At the commencement of a year, once an assessment had been made of the reasonable academic requirements of those who had registered in the senior classes it was then possible actually to select reliable volunteers with the necessary skills to provide the tuition required. Vigilance on the part of night organisers to draw upon "reserve" teachers in case of need remained vitally important but both St Marks and Retreat during these years became cohesive units in which very many of both the teachers and the students were perennial participants and it was not uncommon for students to progress annually from one standard to the next.

I found at Retreat that achieving a hard core of regular participants helped to infuse in the school a seriousness of commitment that attracted both experienced professional teachers and a growing number of senior secondary pupils. Many retired, but still active teachers became involved. During the 1960's Retreat had on its staff the

former principals of Rondebosch Boys and Kimberley Girls High Schools, the principals of Micklefield and a High School in Bonteheuvel as well as a large number of qualified teachers and others whose professions equipped them for teaching such subjects as Mathematics, Book-Keeping, Biology and Physiology and Hygiene at the senior level. As already mentioned Retreat had the added disadvantage of a reduction in class room space at the very time when it was achieving its highest average attendances. The holding of several different classes in one room however did not detract from the enthusiasm of either teachers or pupils but seemed to cement further the bonds of endeavour shared by all. And when the interest of one's subject held sway one became quite impervious to what went on in neighbouring groups!

Successes or failures in examinations certainly did not constitute the main criterion for passing judgement on the achievements of a CNENSA night school but before leaving this generalised treatment of the tuition offered in the schools, it is possible through extant records of the external examination results in Stds 6 to 10 at Retreat in 1966 and 1967 to have an idea of the scale of the pass rate in these classes during these final years when this school had reached its peak of concentrated and combined endeavour. In the Retreat Night School "Continuation Classes" in 1966, of the 30 students (10 African and 20 coloured) who wrote 53 subjects in Stds 6 to 8, 24 achieved passes in a total of 24 subjects. Thus 80% of the entrants had some success and there was a 45% success rate in individual subjects. In 1967, although there were more entries including 13 for Std 10, as far as can be gleaned from pass lists the results were not as good. Out of 47 entries (22 African and 25 coloured) writing a total of 108 subjects in Stds 6 to 10, (but some subjects entered privately) 29 students constituting 62%, passed one or more subjects in a total of 32 subjects thus giving a 30% success rate in individual subjects (CNENSA, 1966 & 1967). The following year it was claimed (Cape Argus, 1968) that 40 students had had some examination successes, but that figure included successful pupils from St Marks together with those from Retreat.

In 1962 when Retreat started entering its candidates for the higher grade of English instead of the lower there was a drop from the

"spectacular results in Std 6 of 1961" but the school persisted in most classes with higher grade English. Another stumbling block to outward success was the fact that on occasion the English "A" examination papers of the Bantu Education Department of Std 8 level were of a very high standard according to one of Retreat's professional teachers, in fact higher than that of the equivalent paper set for whites (Wilson, 1963a).

Behind the impersonal statistics were of course many cases of human interest and personal achievement. Reference has already been made to early examples and to the progress of Nomsa who subsequently became an overseas trained specialist pediatric nurse. A brief review of a few other outstanding case histories in this final period of the Association will help put into some perspective the considerable influence the night schools had on the lives of many students.

Neighbours of Nomsa's in Retreat before they too were obliged to move from Blouville to Nyanga West were two labourers from the Transkei with their families, Michael Kelembe and Julius Sishuba. Both of these men became closely associated with the Retreat Night School for sustained periods. Sishuba, employed as a cleaner in a hospital, attended the night classes for eight years starting in Std 3, achieving distinctions in Geography and English in Std 6 and finishing with a Std 8 certificate. He said he would have continued with his studies if the Night Schools had not been closed. Although before his retirement in 1986 he had not risen above the rank of a messenger in the Administration of the Groote Schuur Hospital (no doubt largely due to extreme paucity of job opportunities for Africans) his general knowledge and fluency in oral and written English gave him stature in the community and particularly as an elder in the Seventh Day Adventist Church (Sishuba, 1988).

Kelembe, a milk delivery-man by day and for six years a valued teacher of Xhosa to the sub-standards in the Retreat Night School, was determined to raise himself and his family above the harsh constraints on the life of a labourer. Although equipped only with a Std 6 certificate when he first settled in Retreat, through private study and coaching from night school teachers he achieved a mature age Matriculation exemption by 1962 at the age of 39. With the

financial support and the continuing encouragement of the Association he then graduated at Fort Hare with a BA degree and subsequently qualified as an attorney (Wilson, 1969). Soon thereafter, frustrated with his powerlessness as a legal man to redress the severe restrictions imposed on the township communities by harsh legislation, he returned to the Transkei where he eventually became a town magistrate.

Cuthbert Joyi at Retreat also obtained a mature age Matriculation exemption and he proceeded to study law through UNISA (Wilson, 1964a). Goodwin Bingwa, a janitor at a Kenilworth block of flats, after qualifying at St Marks in Std 8 English on the higher grade (Wilson, 1964a) entered the Std 10 class at Retreat and passed English and Xhosa in 1965 (Wilson, 1966a). Another Retreat student, Gladstone Nguta, after studying in the Std 10 class in 1967, went on to train at a theological college in England.

Among the final batch of 1967 students at Retreat was Edward Xonti who passed Std 8 Arithmetic with a "B" symbol and also Biology and Social Studies. These results added to his three successes of the previous year gave him the full Junior Certificate. Xonti's teachers, as often happened with keen students, had given him extra lessons in their homes over weekends. He had come to the Retreat Night School at the age of 22 in 1966. In an interview (1988) he told me that he had had to leave Healdtown High School in November 1960 when his mother could not afford to pay his fees and that had been the end of his formal day school education. His story epitomizes the waste of talents of so many similar intelligent young people. With the closure of the Night Schools he had lost heart in trying to continue his studies and when interviewed 20 years later was still a labourer and still lived in the same shared small room in the Langa flats to which he had moved eighteen years previously (ibid).

There were two other secondary students who merit special mention, Irene Skenyana and Brian Mhlongo. Both aspired to becoming medical doctors. Irene Skenyana came to the Association in 1965 for help in improving her 1958 Matriculation Mathematics and English symbols to qualify her for admission to study medicine (Wilson 1965a). This aim she achieved and in due course fulfilled her ambition by graduating

as a doctor from the Wentworth School of Medicine in Natal.

Unfortunately I do not know what eventually became of Brian Mhlongo of Guguletu, the other medical doctor aspirant, but he was probably the most brilliant student the Association had ever encountered. He had matriculated at Langa High School at the age of 16 after an outstanding school record but had never been taught mathematics. The following year in 1964, to remedy this situation and because he wanted to study medicine, he approached the CNENSA for assistance and in a remarkable feat mastered enough of the science of maths within eight and a half months of concentrated study to pass the matriculation examination with a "B" symbol. His teacher, Mrs Ethel Hudson who gave him free private coaching, said of him: "I have been teaching for 34 years and have never encountered a brain like Brian's" (Cape Times, 1965a). His outstanding achievement attracted public attention and financial assistance to enable him to study medicine and it is reported that at Wentworth Medical School in 1965 he continued to make brilliant progress (Wilson, 1965b).

Since the middle 1950's under Bantu Education the emphasis had been on lower primary education. Statistics called for in Parliament in 1961 revealed not only less than 800 African Matriculation candidates nationally but a marked decline in the numbers of those achieving school leaving certificates or matriculation exemptions. The total percentage of passes in both these categories had dropped from 46,1% in 1956 to 17,9% in 1960 and in the latter year only 28 pupils had obtained matriculation exemptions (SAIRR Survey, 1961: 234). The Government's enforced switch (mentioned earlier) for secondary African candidates in Stds 6 and 8 in 1961 and 1962 respectively from the National syllabi and examinations to those prescribed by the Department of Bantu Education was one of its tactics in dealing with such results and of course another /disastrous step in depriving Africans of a national unitary education system.

6.6

THE SCHOOL CLOSURES IN THE CONTEXT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY AND RELEVANT CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

In initial comments on the closures of the seven volunteer schools of

the CNENSA between 1960 and 1967 it has already been noted that undoubtedly the major contributory factors were the removals of Africans from "white" or "coloured" areas to the African townships or back to the rural areas. Behind these removals lay successive stages of implementing the Group Areas Act, a deliberate policy to separate the various races (separate Departments established for Coloured and Indian Affairs as well as African) and an obsession for trying to remove all Africans from the Western Cape.

Not only was the influx of Africans into the area more tightly controlled than ever by the Bantu Laws Amendments Acts (No 76 of 1963 and No 42 of 1964) but Mr Blaar Coetzee's stated ambition for reducing, stopping and then reversing the flow of African labour to the Western Cape (SAIRR Survey, 1964: 167-168) was to be further promoted by the creation of a Special Committee in 1964 for this purpose, by the concept of industries to absorb migrant workers on the Ciskei border, by the removal to the homelands in 1963 of African business men and professionals classed as "unproductive" in terms of South Africa's labour needs (Ballinger, M. 1969: 464), by an embargo on "non-essential" new African businesses in the townships (SAIRR Survey, 1963: 148-149), by plans for replacement of even the strictly limited "single" African migrants by coloured workers (SAIRR Survey, 1967: 172) and by the creation of the Transkei State and citizenship rendering "Transkeians" foreigners in South Africa (Ballinger, M. 1969: 467). In 1965 and the first six months of 1966 it was calculated that 71% of African workers recruited by labour bureaux went to the Western Cape on a short-term migratory basis (SAIRR Survey, 1966: 139-140). Yet despite all these government efforts "to stem the tide", the African population in the three Cape Town African townships of Langa, Guguletu and Nyanga increased to 99 217 in 1966 (SAIRR Survey, 1966: 167).

A number of government imposed restrictions dogged the remaining years of the CNENSA's schools but contrary to government expectations, except in the case of Sea Point and Docks which were indeed brought to a standstill by prevailing policies, such restrictions were not able on their own to annihilate the other schools. The government's line of thinking which was repeated several times to the Association in 1963 was first clearly enunciated

in 1962 after Bantu Administration in Pretoria had sent a Mr Vermeulen in March to investigate the circumstances of all the CNENSA schools. Subsequently the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development, while ordering Sea Point and Green Street schools in white group areas to close nevertheless permitted St Marks, in an area not yet proclaimed, and Retreat where there was still a day school registered with the Department of Bantu Education, to continue temporarily. This was in the expressed belief that soon the population removal schemes would make them redundant anyway. This conviction in the case of St Marks was articulated as follows:

"Met die oog op die geaardheid van die omgewing en die feit dat die Bantoe-aandskoliere mettertyd, namate die verskuiwing vorder, uit die skool sal verdwyn, is die Departement bereid om aan te beveel dat die skool voortgaan solank as die huidige toestande voortduur en ander faktore wat die sluiting van die skool vir Bantoe gewens maak nie navore tree nie."

(Letter: 23/5/1962, Sek. van Bantoe Admin.)

Apart from being diametrically opposed to the integrated night classes the government was also deeply suspicious of what took place in the schools and feared that they were centres for the propagation of communist ideas (Vigne, 1959a). No doubt for this latter reason it constantly insisted on being provided with the names and addresses of both teachers and pupils when applications were made for the annual registrations.

While there is no direct evidence that any of the CNENSA schools were closed because of left-wing participants (although according to Mr Fricke the Special Branch once visited the CNENSA office and inspected its records (SHAWCO EMC, 4/4/1962)), and while it is clear that the Association's personnel, even political activists like Randolph Vigne, still believed in keeping the affairs of the Association outside the political arena (Letter: 1/10/1961, Vigne), yet it is very likely that some of the outside political activities of its members as well as its close connections with many NUSAS students staffing Windermere would have been noted; these factors may have confirmed the government in its long conceived plan to eliminate African adult night schools, especially those run by

English speaking white liberals and radicals. In any event as already mentioned, the demise of the Association was seen by the government as the natural corollary of the implementation of its total apartheid policy.

The above comments regarding political activists and NUSAS require some clarification and in the process will not only explain how close to the wind the Association was sailing in pursuing its course but at the same time, will reveal the clearcut external reactions of many of the volunteers who were staffing the schools, to an increasingly repressive regime.

6.6.1

The Involvement of the Contact Liberals with the PAC and the Transkei.

In mid 1958 Randolph Vigne, a publisher and an Oxford graduate, replaced Maida Lipshitz as Chairman of the Association. He also became Principal of the St Marks Night School. At the same time his close friend, Patrick Duncan, took over the editorship of "Contact", the newly launched mouthpiece of the Liberal Party but largely financed by Duncan, and Vigne soon became his literary editor and author of "Sam Sly's Column" in this paper.

Although as already mentioned Vigne believed in preserving the Association's political and religious neutrality he was determined that the Association should not be cowed by government dictatorial rules. An early 1958 article in Contact by an anonymous writer prior to Vigne's take-over as Chairman gives evidence of the earlier precautions taken by the CNENSA not to appear confrontational in its manner of coping with the new frustrating regulations and the delays in obtaining registrations. The article reported spokespersons in the CNENSA office busily complying with detailed requirements and saying: "Please don't quote us as wanting to start a campaign against the government. The delay might be due to usual departmental reasons. After all, regulations have been published providing for night schools in European areas..." The reporter then ended somewhat wryly that the Association's next step towards ending the deadlock would be to write a personal letter to Senator Verwoerd (Contact,

1958).

Private criticism of this appeasing attitude emerged more explicitly in 1961 when Vigne, standing for the Liberal Party as a candidate in Constantia in the General Election had been prominently billed in his election manifesto as the former Chairman of the CNENSA and reacting to the Association's sensitivity about this political connection, had written to me as follows:

"Though I am heartily against the attitude of subservience to the Bantu Education Department which was displayed by the Association before I became Chairman, I agree with you that there should be no room for doubt as to the genuineness of the Association's divorcement from politics in any form. If my formal resignation from the Association will assist in clearing up such a doubt, I hope you will make it known to the Department."

(Letter: 1/10/1961, Vigne)

In my reply I stated emphatically that we would hate to lose him as a "subscriber-member"! (Letter: 3/11/1961, Wilson).

Vigne brought with him on to the new Committee in 1958 more Liberal Party members, among them Brian Bishop' (who headed first the Docks school and upon its first closure at the end of 1958, the one in Sea Point), David H. Philip and later James Currey and Neil Ross (CNENSA Minutes, 1958-1960). Joe Nkatlo, a former 1952 Secretary of the ANC(WC) (Cape Times, 1952d), banned in 1954 and later Vice-Chairman of the Liberal Party in the Cape (Gerhart & Karis, 1977: 118) had already appeared on the Co-ordinating Committee in 1957 (CNENSA Minutes, 20/10/1957) and as a close colleague of Vigne's now became more involved and at one time ran a lunch-hour reading room project for the Association at the Green Street School (CNENSA Minutes, 26/10/1958 to 27/3/1960).

Concurrently with his two year term of office as CNENSA Chairman from mid 1958 to mid 1960, Randolph Vigne was prominent in Liberal Party politics, in helping to run the newspaper "Contact" and as the main forerunner in bringing Liberal Party support to the newly formed PAC.

As Chairman of the Sea Point branch of the Liberal Party he had played an active role in two successive elections in that constituency when the Liberal Party had fielded Gerald Gordon in the Parliamentary elections of 1958 and Patrick Duncan the following year as candidate for the Provincial Council. Joe Nkatlo too had been part of Duncan's election team (Driver, 1980: 167-168), introducing a new note as a black in public support of a white candidate in a whites only election. The 1959 Sea Point campaign in which much public discussion and argument took place, came at a time when the Cape Liberal Party was largely controlled by the more radical "Contact" Liberals and the Party as a whole was moving more to the left; Duncan forthright in his total condemnation of the colour bar, refused to pander to white prejudice and the party seemed to be gaining black support (ibid: 168).

Vigne through Nkatlo was building up important contacts with Africans at this time. During 1959 he met Nana Mahoma, a young black Africanist studying at UCT who had been deputed by the PAC along with other Africanists to build up a PAC organisation in and around Cape Town, recruit "task forces" of young blacks and gain support from sympathetic whites (Gerhart & Karis, 1977: 66). Vigne was subsequently to describe himself as "number one white pal" to the PAC from 1959 (Driver, 1980: 165). So deeply was he impressed by what he learnt about this organisation and particularly from two African labourers, Mlokoti and Matros who were Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively of the PAC Nyanga Committee (ibid: 179) that he sent a personal report to a Liberal Party executive meeting in February 1960 trying to motivate that Party's support for the PAC's plan for its anti-pass campaign in March and for the PAC in general. With this sympathetic support from the Chairman of the Sea Point branch of the Liberal Party and the latter's contacts among Africans it was probably not coincidental that the PAC was recorded as having done organising work in Sea Point (as well as Worcester) by one of the 31 PAC leaders, Ralph Mbatsha. This evidence of PAC activity in Sea Point came out during the trial after the 1960 disturbances when Mbatsha's Diary was used in the case against the PAC (ibid: 174).

According to C.J. Driver (1980: 173), outside of the PAC only a few of the Contact Liberals like Vigne, were prepared for the extensive

African demonstrations that developed in Cape Town hard on the heels of Sharpeville and that culminated on the 30 March 1960 with the march of 30 000 into the centre of the city. Vigne and Nkatlo in particular helped to condition the Liberals and particularly Patrick Duncan towards support for the PAC. "Contact" gave full cover to the events as they unfolded and hasty Cape Liberal Party executive meetings were held to explore means to support the campaign. Harry Brodie who had not yet emigrated, writing to me later about those tension-filled days gives further insight into the involvement of Vigne, himself and other Liberals in Sea Point, as follows:

"We (he and his wife) were very close to Randolph Vigne in the Liberal Party at the time of Sharpeville, for example we were all high up on the list of Cape Provincial Executive members who were liable to be arrested (because to our concern, several prominent Johannesburg members had been arrested). Because of the government's nasty habit of arresting people at 2 or 3 am ... everybody - or a lot of people anyway - slept at our house at No. 9 Ave Normandie, Sea Point... As a slight complication we had a young African sleeping in the servant's room whom we knew was "on the run" from the police. How could we have declined to give him shelter? We got him away afterwards, via assistance from Pat Duncan. Randolph was one of those with us in those few days."

(Brodie, 1986b)

As it happened no Cape Town Liberals were detained in this period (Driver, 1980: 179). However at the Cape Liberal Party Executive meeting called in Sea Point on Sunday 27 March, just before Monday's Day of Mourning when 90-95% of African workers in Cape Town stayed at home (Ballinger, M. 1969: 431), it was decided that in the event of the Party being banned the ban would be ignored and the Liberal Party would spend the next few days raising money for the PAC (Driver, 1980: 179).

It has already been noted that in Cape Town during the 1950's the major ANC campaigns had received only token support; now with the breakaway of Africanists to form the PAC a very different situation developed in this region. Referring to the crowds that gathered in

Nyanga and Langa prior to the Anti-pass demonstrations Collingwood August who lived in Nyanga and was a sub-editor of "Contact" expressed amazement in his diary at the large numbers of "peasant-type demonstrators" who would normally have taken little interest in politics. He added: "They are the migrant labour and they are the hardest hit by the pass laws. But it is still surprising and a revelation that at last a political call that appeals to them has been raised" (Lodge, 1983: 216).

Before leaving the country in April 1960 Collingwood August, Vigne's editorial colleague, also recorded in his diary that two days before Sharpeville, PAC men were able to enter the Cape Town Docks and with the tacit consent of the watchmen, distribute leaflets and persuade the dockers to stay away from work (ibid: 216). The Docks Night School at that stage was still closed but only weeks later, Vigne in his Night School capacity wrote to CNENSA members that permission had at last been obtained for the Docks School to be reopened (and that plans to open a new night school in Nyanga West had had to be shelved during the anti-pass campaign) (Vigne, 1960a).

C.J. Driver (1980: 181) denies the argument that the Liberals persuaded Kgosana, the young PAC student leader at the head of the 30 000 in Cape Town on 30 March to negotiate with the police and turn back his men, thus surrendering power; he claims that although Duncan had played an intermediary role in the demonstration in Caledon Square on the 25 March no Liberals were directly involved in the later extremely tense situation. Be that as it may what was particularly significant about the Liberals in the aftermath of the State of Emergency proclaimed on the fateful March 30 and after the passing of the Unlawful Organisations Act in April, was that this organisation and the "Contact" Liberals in particular lost no time in entering the temporary political vacuum created by the banning of the ANC and PAC and the detentions of so many leaders; they started to work among migrants in the reserves, particularly those who were in political opposition to the concept of the so-called independent homelands as put forward by the "Promotion of Bantu Self-government Act" of the previous year and to recruit African members into the Liberal Party. They, and Duncan in particular, saw in the spectacular support given by the masses to the PAC anti-pass campaign, in the

ability to act non-violently in huge demonstrations and in the Africanists' refusal to be dominated by members of the Communist Party much hope for the future (Driver, 1980: 167) and many of them shared at that time the optimistic PAC belief that its strategies could achieve change in South Africa by 1963 (SAIRR Survey, 1964: 14).

There was much work to be done and it is not surprising against this background to see Vigne at the Association's AGM in May 1960 shedding both the Chairmanship of the CNENSA and the Principalship of St Marks to concentrate on political work as National Deputy Chairman of the Liberal Party. After Duncan and Neil Ross (another of the Liberals on the Night Schools Co-ordinating Committee) had blazed the trail in establishing the Liberal Party as an influence in the Transkei in the latter half of 1960 (Driver, 1980: 186-188) Vigne and other Contact Liberals carried on their initial Transkeian work. This was particularly after Duncan, soon after being banned, had escaped to Basutoland in May 1962 with the assistance of Vigne and Hjul (ibid: 207-208). Vigne now increasingly under government surveillance was refused a passport to attend a literary conference in Uganda in 1962 (SAIRR Survey, 1962: 22), was himself banned in February 1963, and, in terms of his Transkeian involvement, was charged in 1964 on two counts of contravening the Transkei's emergency regulations.* (Cape Argus, 1964b). His role in the African Resistance Movement will be referred to presently.

Before considering both the development of underground movements in 1961 as final desperate responses to bannings and repression of the ANC, PAC and a small group of radical liberals, and the espousing of sabotage later that year by wings of all these groups I will first round off my review of the 1960 involvements of the more radical Liberals with the PAC and assess their possible influence on government attitudes to the CNENSA. So far the external political connections of a number of the Association's participants with this new significant African liberation movement have been noted and in particular in their concentration in the Sea Point, Docks and Cape

* Some years later Vigne published a 26 page booklet entitled "The Transkei - A South African Tragedy".

Town area. Could such connections have hastened the closures in the early 1960's of the Docks, Sea Point and Green Street Schools?

There is no concrete evidence that such activities caused or even hastened a process that in any case was being implacably pursued in the continuing implementation of the Group Areas and Bantu Education Acts and the ruthless attempts to remove the very presence of Africans, even in their heavily circumscribed ghetto-like lives, from the Western Cape. However in addition to special reminders to the Association to submit the names of the teachers at the Sea Point School to the Bantu Education Department in both 1960 and 1961 (Letters: 27/5/1960 & 21/3/1961, Insp. of Bantu Educ.) there was also a deliberate probing by the Bantu Affairs Commissioner into the affairs of the CNENSA in November 1960. The Association was then required to furnish information specifically on who were its members, what the names were of those running the schools, what the objects of the Association were, who was in charge of the Docks school, what the names were of the Docks teachers and what type of pupils attended the Docks school (Letter: 8/11/1960, Sec. CNENSA). By this stage non-political Mrs Ackerman was organising the Docks School, Brian Bishop was no longer Principal of Sea Point, nor did the names of Randolph Vigne and Joe Nkatlo feature on the Co-ordinating Committee but those of Neil Ross and James Currey did. The latter was on the Editorial Board of the newspaper "Contact", jointly founded the magazine "New African" in the early 1960's with Vigne, Neville Rubin and others (Driver, 1980: 201) and later, as a close friend of Vigne, was to help the latter to escape the country in 1964 (ibid: 254).

6.6.2

The Involvement of NUSAS.

Apart from the Liberal Party another organisation closely associated with many members of the CNENSA and which became increasingly outspoken in the 1960's against apartheid and in particular the iniquities of "Bantu Education" was NUSAS. In 1961 Leftwich, then President of NUSAS was invited by the Cape Western Branch of the SAIRR to deliver a paper on "Bantu Education - What Price Indoctrination?" (Leftwich, 1961) at the same meeting at which I had

agreed to speak about the Cape Night Schools, whilst in 1963 his successor Jonty Driver produced a pamphlet based on correlated policy resolutions of NUSAS, entitled "Bantu Education - Education or Indoctrination?" (Driver, 1963).

NUSAS in fact was tireless in researching and writing about the appalling conditions in African education but through government bannings and silencing of many of its outspoken members it was restricted in the publication of its findings. One such report was that of Peter Saffery of Rhodes University assisted by Johann Maree and others, on the significant all African "Cingo" Commission published in 1963; in his conclusion Saffery stated that the "Commission recommends either modification or the abolition of many, if not most, of the measures outlined by Dr Vervoerd in 1954" (Saffery, 1965). The clampdown on NUSAS activities in 1964 when many members both of NUSAS and the Liberal Party were detained was extensive and the study of Transkei education was apparently discontinued because of intimidation (Letter: 30/7/1965, Vice-Pres. NUSAS).

NUSAS had first become non-racial with the affiliation of Fort Hare in 1945. In the following years there were many internal wrangles as progressive students "forced the always hesitant leadership stage by stage into a more uncompromising stand against apartheid" (Forman: 1954). There followed disaffiliations, reaffiliations, a short-lived effort to set up a new union and in 1954 various compromises between the conservatives and the "democrats"; that year for the first time an African was included on the executive (ibid). Moreover as the build up of the apartheid regime developed, a succession of events served to stiffen the resolve of NUSAS to oppose and counteract the educational depredations of the government wherever possible. Among these events were the Bantu Education Act of 1953, the Extension of University Education Act and the College of Fort Hare Act in 1959, the creation of four other "tribal" colleges in 1960 and the banning of NUSAS from black campuses.

Although the direct ties with the CNENSA had considerably weakened since the 1940's when as already mentioned the schools under Brodie were sometimes labelled the "NUSAS Schools", NUSAS continued to

retain an interest in the Association. It had conducted a survey on the night schools in 1952, had exhibited the work of the CNENSA at its annual conference in 1953 (CNENSA Minutes, 28/7/1953) and had only relinquished its right to separate representation on the CNENSA Co-ordinating Committee in 1954 after SHAWCO's Windermere school was launched and the latter's principal regularly represented this UCT student-run night school at the Association's meetings. The last official NUSAS representative was Neville Rubin in 1954 who later in 1959 became the President of NUSAS and thereafter shared a number of educational concerns with Randolph Vigne. In 1960 during Rubin's Presidency students from all over the country attending the NUSAS Congress in Cape Town helped out at the Windermere Night School during their visit, and it was hoped that "the ideas and interest implanted in students from many other NUSAS centres will bear fruit in the form of a spread of the Night School idea" (SHAWCO Annual Report, 1960).

For NUSAS students of course the support some of its Cape members gave to the CNENSA was only one small part of the energy devoted to several other wider and more ambitious educational schemes. These included bursaries, the South African Committee for Higher Education (SACHED) launched in 1960 and the Committee for Adult Educational Training (CADET). CADET was intended to establish a pre-university pilot training college in Bechuanaland. There were also plans to start a Literacy Campaign for which an initial exercise in the eastern Cape was conducted in 1964; during the course of this latter project the teachers and pupils at Ngangelizwe Night School near Umtata, Transkei, were interviewed by a NUSAS investigation team over a period of two weeks (NUSAS, 1964?).

As NUSAS struck out against discrimination in all its forms, particularly in its condemnation of Bantu Education, so it became more and more a target for government attack. In September 1963 the Minister of Justice stated that "NUSAS has become the mouthpiece of leftists and liberalists... it is tainted with communism and has been for many years" (SAIRR Survey, 1964: 296). NUSAS leaders repudiated any connection with the Communist or any other political party (ibid: 296) but in October the NUSAS office in Cape Town was raided by security police. By the end of 1964 it was revealed that certain

people connected either to NUSAS or the Liberal Party had gone beyond the firm adherence to non-violent forms of opposition of both of the latter organisations and had joined one or other of the underground movements engaged in sabotage. Among them were a number who had also been engaged in some of the educational projects just outlined and thus for example, of those initially in 1961 launching the NUSAS sponsored CADET scheme, most of them by 1964, namely Vigne, Duncan, John Lang, Brutus, Leftwich, Terence Beard and Neville Rubin, were all either banned, detained or had escaped the country (SAIRR Survey, 1964 and Letter: 1/9/1964, NUSAS).

The net of suspicion was cast wide and even liberals like Hoffenberg, the Chairman of the NUSAS Advisory Panel and Leo Marquard (the founder of NUSAS) had had their houses searched in 1964 by the Security Police (Letter: 1/9/1964, Osler). In 1965 both these men represented CADET at a meeting in Mafeking to carry forward negotiations about the Bechuanaland project (NUSAS: 1965) but the following year Dr Hoffenberg, (who also chaired the S.A. Defence and Aid Fund), was served a five year banning order (SAIRR Survey, 1967: 40); he then emigrated in 1968. (He had been a guest speaker at a CNENSA AGM in 1961 when he had spoken of a visit to Dr Albert Schweitzer at his mission hospital in Lambarene.)

6.6.3

Liberation Theology and Black Consciousness.

What had been the role of the churches under the ever worsening conditions of political and socio-economic repression of African people in South Africa since 1948? Father Trevor Huddleston, who worked among African people for twelve years in Sophiatown, and who in the fifties chaired both the African Education Movement of the Congress Movement (an alternative to Bantu education), and a Western Areas Protest Committee against forced removals to Meadowlands, (Lodge, 1983: 103 & 128), provides a very pertinent answer to that question in his book "Naught for Your Comfort". Distinguishing between the "Church" in the sense of its hierarchy and the Church as a corporate body of members he roundly condemned the latter for failing to support voices of protest raised by church leaders against inroads upon human rights. He wrote:

"The blunt truth is that the Church, the ordinary Christian man and woman, is not prepared to regard the State as an aggressor in South Africa. The Church is conniving at a policy which openly proclaims itself one of racial domination, of white supremacy, of 'baaskap', because it fears that any effective or determined opposition will lose it the allegiance of its white members...

"In the meanwhile personal liberty has reached vanishing point, and that human dignity which the Church is pledged to protect, can hardly survive.

"'Like a mighty army moves the Church of God,' we sing with gusto and emotion. We do not believe a word of it. And because we do not believe a word of it, African Christians in the next two generations will find it very hard indeed to justify their allegiance."

(Huddleston, 1956: 157-158)

The fact was too of course that most whites by the middle 1950's, whether church members or not, were content to allow the status quo to continue; so despite the individual statements and actions of men like Geoffrey Clayton, Denis Hurley, Ambrose Reeves, Huddleston and DRC members such as Ben Marais, Professors Pistorius and Keet, it was not until after the massacre at Sharpeville that a small but significant white theological admission to corporate church failure began to take shape. I refer to the Cottesloe Consultation of December 1960 that through the initiative initially of Archbishop Joost de Blank, brought together eighty representatives of South African Churches and six members of the World Council of Churches in a multi-racial and ecumenical conference in Johannesburg for eight days (Randall, 1982: 18-19).

Although the Report of the Cottesloe Consultation was "cautious and ambivalent", somewhat paternalistic, still reflected the complacency and insularity of the white-controlled churches, and proved unacceptable to the Afrikaner establishment (Walshe, 1982: 52-54) it nevertheless proved a watershed in church-state relationships. It led to the launch of the controversial ecumenical journal, Pro-Veritate

and the establishment of the inter-racial ecumenical Christian Institute (CI) in 1963 with the Rev Beyers Naude giving up the moderature of the Southern Transvaal Synod of the NGK to become its Director. It also led to the restructuring of the Christian Council which was renamed the South African Council of Churches (SACC). The CI was a member of the SACC and jointly these two bodies set about instigating a more dynamic approach from the churches to the evils rampant in the South African apartheid society (Randall, 1982: 29 & 35).

The fledgling CI, endeavouring to interpret the social implications of the gospel, endured heavy persecution by the state and Afrikaner bodies in particular, but under the leadership of Beyers Naude it held its course and gradually developed new insights among whites. These encouraged black Christians and helped pave the way for the introduction of liberation theology then developing in Latin America and elsewhere. In 1968 the CI jointly with the SACC held a national Conference on Church and Society and flowing from this and a subsequent published "Message to the People of South Africa" a Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society, (Spro-cas) was set up under the direction of Peter Randall between the years 1969 - 1972. (ibid: 35). These studies coincided with the emergence of Black Consciousness among black students in the early nineteen seventies and through increasing involvement with the organisations and chief personalities in that movement, were to help the CI further along the road to a deeper understanding of the implications of its Christian identification with the poor and the oppressed (Walshe, 1982: 59).

While I have taken developments in liberation theology beyond the life-span of the CNENSA they are important as a lead into a new critique which, only a few years after the demise of the Night Schools Association would fundamentally question the liberal approach that had spawned it. And it is this critique, implicit in the black literacy programmes of the Black Consciousness Movement of the early 1970's that I shall draw on in the next chapter for viewing the work of the CNENSA from a more radical perspective.

How then was the way paved in the 1960's for the emergence of new radical black attitudes in the next decade, not only to adult African

education but indeed to all education in South Africa, and how was it connected to Liberation theology and the growth of Black Consciousness?

In 1967, the year the CNENSA came to an end, the University Christian Movement (UCM) was established and attracted large numbers of members on black campuses. Through increasing opportunities for fruitful dialogue and the study of ideas in black theology emanating from the United States, black students began to question whether multi-racial groups were competent to analyse problems in society without bias when consisting of such disparate components, one group being based among privileged whites with stakes in the status quo and the other among oppressed and suffering blacks (Biko, 1978: 10). A feeling of impatience developed over the assumption of white leadership in such groups and over the overriding concerns and values of white liberals. The break with NUSAS in 1969 and the formation of the South African Students Organisation (SASO) was a logical development in the light of this impatience; it led to the rapid growth of the Black Consciousness Movement which was considered by Biko and others as a necessary tactic until such time as blacks had learnt to outgrow feelings of inferiority bred in them by whites and until integration on the grounds of equality and respect could take place. (ibid: 21). As Barney Pitso Rantso explained with regard to white liberals:-
 "They have failed in achieving their objectives and we are now making a start in a new direction. Although we share their ideals, our methods of achieving them differ" (Pitso Rantso, Undated).

Here indeed was Africanism emerging once again but with a new dynamism and creativeness that in the long term were materially to change the face of African resistance in South Africa and contributed to the 1976 and later uprisings of students, and in the short term, after merciless bannings and detentions and the tragic death of Steve Biko, led to the final banning of SASO, related Black Consciousness organisations and the CI in 1977.

Meanwhile in July 1972 the Black People's Convention (BPC) was launched in Pietermaritzburg, the same year that black consciousness and black theologian personalities working co-operatively with the CI, helped to launch under the "Special Programme for Christian

Action in Society" (Spro-cas 2) the "Black Community Programme" (BCP). The latter soon became an independent body with Bennie Khoapa as Director and Steve Biko on its staff (Randall, 1982: 36). Both BPC and BCP in furthering the aims of SASO undertook a wide range of projects designed to restore black confidence and to find the answers for building a better society. The Movement denied that it was communist but believed that a redistribution of wealth was essential (Biko, 1978: 147). In its belief in a form of social democracy it was now supported by the CI which by 1973 in a final Spro-cas Report rejected the established political and economic structures for achieving desired change and had started examining the need to explore "far more vigorously the potential alternatives offered by socialist forms of society" (Walshe, 1982: 61).

Such was the fear and the wrath on the part of the government at these developments that reports on the Black Consciousness developments had to be deleted in the SAIRR 1972 Survey by order of the Minister of Justice and in 1973 a "Commission of Enquiry into Certain Organisations", the Schibusch Commission, investigated the SAIRR, UCM, NUSAS and the CI (Randall, 1982: 36) while during the process key leaders of SASO, NUSAS, BCP and BPC were banned.

Now I come to what will particularly concern a later perspective on the CNENSA. Among the projects embarked on by the Black Consciousness organisations in the 1970's were literacy programmes and these were directly modelled on those set up by the radical Catholic educationist Paulo Freire in Brazil in 1963-1964 (until a military coup put a stop to them there) and subsequently in Chile. These programmes through dialogical, problematising methods were specifically designed to help learners move from a passive acceptance of their oppression to a questioning of the causes of it, followed by positive corrective action. The publishing of Freire's philosophy of education in English in his books "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" and "Cultural Action for Freedom" in 1968 and 1970 respectively, the period he had had in 1969 at Harvard University and his subsequent employment, as a consultant in the Department of Education of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, were all instrumental in giving him an international reputation. Significantly too, his ideas coincided with the emergence of the New Left in Europe and the USA,

and with the development of the Liberation and Black Theologies.

In the opinion of a Nigerian authority on adult education most countries in Africa by the mid 1970's had not appropriated these ideas. She (Bown, 1975: 11) stated: "It is perhaps ironic ... that while the Western world is becoming influenced by the ideas of such thinkers as Illich and Freire, in African countries very great faith is staked on the expansion of the formal school system." However under the South African system of repression the Freirian philosophy reinforced the ethos of the evolving black consciousness movement and was adopted in the literacy programmes of SASO, BCP and BPC in the early 1970's until these groups were also outlawed by the government. I base my conviction of this use of the Freirian model on the evidence given by Biko concerning BPC's literacy programme in the SASO/BPC Trial in May 1976 (Biko, 1978: 112-115). It is also evident in the philosophy contained in an article by the American black theologian, Professor Robert C. Williams in a 1973 SASO publication (Williams, 1973: 12-13).

6.6.4

Further Developments in Trade Unionism.

During these years conditions for African trade unionists referred to in the last chapter steadily deteriorated. In 1959 the Federation of Free African Trade Unions (FOFATUSA), a new umbrella body to rival the ANC-linked SACTU, was brought into being by TUCSA much to the anger of SACTU which saw this as a move to fragment the liberation struggle. FOFATUSA in contrast to SACTU had links with the PAC and with the anti-communist International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) (Ncube 1985: 99). In 1962 however it started losing its affiliates to TUCSA* when this latter body decided to reverse

* TUCSA had a mixed white, coloured and Asian membership and in 1961 comprised 58,6 % of the Coloured and Indian Trade Unionists (SAIRR Survey, 1961: 207). In altering its constitution to admit African Unions it was concerned to appear multi-racial to satisfy the requirements of the International Labour Organisation and also hoped, by achieving a rate for the job, to prevent African labour undercutting the labour of other groups (Ncube, 1985: 98, 107).

its previous rule and to admit properly constituted African Unions even though they were not officially recognised (SAIRR Survey, 1962: 162). By 1965 FOFATUSA had only 12 of its original 20 unions left and in 1966 decided to disband (SAIRR Survey, 1966: 227).

SACTU managed to survive longer than the other members of the Congress movement although it suffered severe restrictions and intimidation. In 1961 it had 64,7% of the African trade unions affiliated to it, and as the only unbanned component of the Congress Alliance played a major role in the organising of strikes and boycotts against the proclamation of the South African Republic in May that year. By 1963 however it was on the point of collapse when 35 of its officials or former officials were held under the 90-day detention clause and it was one of 35 organisations listed under the amended Suppression of Communism Act (SAIRR Survey, 1963: 215 & 39). The following year 50 prominent SACTU members were banned or detained (among them the 1955 former Secretary of the CNENSA, Phyllis Altman) and although the organisation managed to stage a rally in Johannesburg in April (SAIRR Survey, 1964: 265), now with nearly all of its original leaders under banning orders, convicted of political offences or in exile, SACTU could no longer operate effectively.

During this period TUCSA was continuing to develop the concept of parallel trade unions and by 1967 had 13 affiliated African Unions representing 5 500 members (Horrell, 1969: 31). However in December that year, in its fight against the undercutting of wages by African labour, it again changed its tactics, now deciding to confine its affiliates to registered unions and thus to exclude African unions. In a resolution adopted at a special conference it stated: "the Bantu Labour (Settlement of Disputes Act) has failed to stem the tide of Bantu performing semi-skilled and skilled work at greatly reduced rates of pay ... This has greatly reduced the bargaining power of the registered trade unions" and it then proceeded to pursue with the Minister of Labour the necessity for African workers to be permitted to be members of registered unions "on a basis of limited rights" (Ncube, 1985: 105-106).

The intricate manoeuvrings within Trade Unionism at this time and the continuing vacillations of TUCSA after 1967 are outside the scope of

this thesis. However the above thumbnail sketch of certain developments in the period under review, in highlighting the unremitting stranglehold on African labour, serves to reveal additional factors that were destroying legitimate and organised protest by Africans in the sixties and driving many to underground resistance and to violent tactics.

6.6.5

The Radicalising of Liberals and the Emergence of Saboteurs.

When noting the more radical direction taken by a number of the white CNENSA teachers in this last of the three periods of the life span of the Association, either during or after their participation in the night schools, it is essential to get into perspective some of the principal events precipitating this radicalism.

Although black bitterness was seething in the years 1958 to 1960, yet at this stage anti-government forces still remained committed to non-violent forms of opposition. At the end of 1957 when further restrictions had been imposed on contact between whites and blacks a strong impetus was given to many disparate organisations, black and white, to co-operate in finding a non-racial formula to oppose the increasing stranglehold of apartheid on the South African society. This came about through the holding of a very large multi-racial conference in Johannesburg in December 1957 attended by 350 participants and almost as many observers (Karis & Gerhart, 1977: 385). It had stemmed from a call for such a gathering from Luthuli at a similarly important conference in Bloemfontein the previous year under the auspices of the Inter-denominational African Ministers Federation (IDAMF) and attended by 400 African delegates to discuss the Tomlinson Report (ibid: 381).

There had been multi-racial gatherings of one kind or another in previous years but this one in December 1957 was considered "the most diverse national conference in South Africa's history" (ibid: 301) supported as it was by the Congress Movements, Labour and Liberal Parties, the Black Sash, the SAIRR, the Churches, the staff and students from English-speaking universities and to a smaller extent by a few representatives from white trade unions and Chambers of

Commerce and Industry (ibid: 385). Bishop Ambrose Reeves in a concluding speech described the conference as a beginning, the next stage in a process begun by the IDAME at Bloemfontein and felt that it had demonstrated that it was yet possible in South Africa, "for those of various ethnic groups and holding widely divergent views to speak reasonably with one another" (ibid: 387).

In 1959, the year Luthuli and other African leaders were banned and the PAC came into existence those whites with more liberal beliefs had their political base widened through the formation of the Progressive Party; in 1960 this new political group was reinforced by some of the former members of the Liberal Party such as Advocate Donald Molteno, Dr Oscar Wollheim, Gerald Gordon and Walter Stanford when the latter Party adopted the policy of a universal franchise for South Africa, and approved proposals emanating from the All African People's Conference in Accra in 1958 for an economic boycott of South African goods as a means for change.

In the anti-pass campaign of 1960 in which the PAC had pre-empted similar plans made by the ANC, the emphasis on the part of protesters was still essentially non-violent and as has already been seen there was even a willingness on the part of the PAC African leaders in the Western Cape to co-operate with leading members of the Liberal Party. But the events that followed, the slaughter at Sharpeville, police brutality in Langa, the week long cordoning off of the three Cape Town African townships by troops (Ballinger, M. 1969: 432), the four month state of emergency, the Unlawful Organisation Act, the banning of the ANC and the PAC, the silencing of many influential leaders, leading to the eventual collapse of SACTU, the stringent General Law Amendment Act of May 1961 and other steps to abort the staging of a national stay-away at the birth of the South African Republic - all of these oppressive events steadily closed avenues for legitimate protest. These were what finally pushed the main black opposition as well as certain whites into introducing a selected form of limited violence in the struggle against the apartheid regime.

However even while four such conspiratorial groups were secretly developing to give rise to the first acts of sabotage in the latter half of the year, 1961 was still noteworthy for a continuance of

multi-racial meetings and although futile, repeated calls for a National Convention to plan for democratic rule. The three most significant of these meetings which here can only be referred to very briefly but which in their different spheres influenced the non-racial texture of on-going struggle and resistance in South Africa, were the "All-in Conference" of 140 organisations in Pietermaritzburg in March, a Convention of Coloured professionals in Malmesbury in July and a large Conference of the Liberal Party (with the majority of its delegates black [Karis & Gerhart, 1977: 655]) in Durban that same month.

Although the Liberals like the PAC pulled out of the All-in Conference in dislike of alleged manipulation on the part of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), they were identifying more and more with the African majority. This identification was likewise a striking new feature of the Malmesbury Convention (of mainly coloured teachers) for which a "Contact" liberal, Joseph Daniels, was general secretary (ibid: 653). This more conservative Coloured group, in calling for a national convention and a non-racial dispensation, had been finally disillusioned of any prospects of obtaining full citizenship after Vervoerd's intransigence on his colour policy in his "new deal" statements the previous year (Ballinger, 1969: 455-456).

The call for a National Convention by the Pietermaritzburg "All-in" Conference was to be accompanied by a three-day stay-at-home coinciding with the proclamation of the Republic. Lodge (1983: 196-197), while outlining some of the heavy-handed counter-measures by the state to prevent such a disruption taking place, shows nevertheless the considerable support given to the stay-away by SACTU, "the largest surviving legal component of the Congress alliance", and in view of the relative success of trade union responses expresses some surprise at the decision so soon afterwards "to locate the main thrust of Congress activity in the sabotage campaign". However although by June that year, after much careful deliberation and in a plethora of goading circumstances, Mandela and others abandoned the policy of non-violence to form Umkonto we Sizwe, it was not until early in 1963 at a conference in Bechuanaland (and after Mandela's arrest in August 1962) that the ANC publicly

described Umkonto as the military wing of its struggle (Karis & Gerhart, 1977: 650). By this time, 1963, SACTU as already noted had virtually collapsed.

While this crucial change in policy in favour of violent methods was being decided upon in 1961 within the ANC, as a first step if needs be towards ultimate guerrilla warfare, the National Liberation Committee (NLC), later called the African Resistance Movement (ARM), unknown to the main body of the Liberal Party or of NUSAS from which many of its recruits came, was simultaneously preparing too for symbolic acts of sabotage. In October the first of such incidents occurred and the formation of the NLC by South African political exiles in London was announced by the British press.* (ibid: 656).

Meanwhile during 1962 when the NLC had spread from Johannesburg to other centres, particularly among university students, lecturers and young professionals (SAIRR Survey, 1964: 92-95), a smaller group of eleven Coloured Trotskyite intellectuals in Cape Town were studying Chinese revolutionary theories also in preparation for possible guerrilla operations. This group was called the Yu Chi Chan Club and according to Dr Neville Alexander, one of its two co-founders, it had disbanded at the end of 1962 after the National Liberation Front/Committee had been formed (ibid: 26 & 86).

After its 1960 campaign the PAC, its differences with the ANC still unreconciled, also began to pursue in 1961 its own clandestine revolutionary programme. This went under the name of "Poqo" (the meaning "pure" implying Africans only) and was much more fundamental and coercive than Umkonto in its appeal to its mainly migrant followers. It came to include indiscriminate killings and gave an outlet to the inflamed hatreds for whites of many of the heavily abused migrants in the Western Cape, particularly in Langa where Poqo's membership was strongest and in Paarl where there was a record of worker organisation and rioting (Lodge, 1983: 241-249).

* In due course members of the NLC were alleged to include John Lang and Neville Rubin (SAIRR Survey, 1964: 81 & 92) who in 1961, as has already been seen, were busy planning for an adult education college in Bechuanaland with Vigne and Leftwich of NUSAS.

What occurred as a result of these various underground subversive movements has been amply recorded and will only be touched on here by the barest of references to provide the relevant background to the CNENSA movement.

With the growing incidence of acts of violence in 1962 more repression followed and government agents infiltrated organisations; in June another General Laws Amendment Act (the "Sabotage" Act) was passed, in July the names of 102 banned persons who could not be quoted were published, in August Mandela was arrested, in September the COD was banned and in November, after violent riots in Paarl, 350 Poqo members were taken into custody.

After further acts of sabotage and Poqo's Bashee River Bridge killings of five whites in the Transkei in February 1963, the state intensified its already harsh punitive measures and provision was made for ninety day detention without trial in the May 1963 General Laws Amendment Act. Then in July not only were members of the Yu Chi Chan Club arrested in Cape Town but the main ANC underground movement was uncovered when the police raided the headquarters of Umkonto We Sizwe at Rivonia near Johannesburg, arrested 17 conspirators and seized informative documents. It was not until the following year however, after further acts of sabotage and after Mandela, Sisulu, Mbeki and others had been condemned to life imprisonment in June, that members of ARM were arrested in July, the organisation banned in September, and in the subsequent trials in November, that news of ARM'S sabotage activities was made public (SAIRR Surveys, 1963 & 1964).

In the light of these events several questions must now be asked concerning the CNENSA. Were any of its night school participants also members of any of the above-mentioned revolutionary organisations? If so was the classroom ever used as a cover for underground activities? And as asked before, did any of these factors or possibilities directly influence the government in ordering the closures of the schools?

Such questions have no simple direct answers. Certainly Vigne, Chairman of the CNENSA from 1958 to 1960, played a leading role in

ARM soon after its formation about 1962 until his timely escape from the country in 1964. Moreover Alan Brooks and Stephanie Kemp who were found guilty that year of being members of ARM though not guilty of actual sabotage (SAIRR Survey, 1964: 71 & 93) had both been on the SHAWCO Education Management Committee which ran the Windermere School in the early sixties. Brooks taught at the school in 1960 (SHAWCO Annual Report, 1960) prior to the formation of ARM and Kemp was a key Windermere teacher and organiser for three years from 1961 until she qualified as a physiotherapist in 1963; during this period she was also Honorary Secretary for the Education Management Committee in 1962 (SHAWCO Annual Reports, 1960-1963).

There is no evidence however that any of the pupils or teachers conspired together in any of the night schools in plans for subversion. When Windermere received its first instruction to close down in 1963 (subsequently waived for another two years) the reason given was that the "Bantu Community School" in Windermere had been closed (Letter: 3/7/1963, Insp. Bantu Educ.) implying that Africans were disappearing from the area. Furthermore when the school was finally closed at the end of 1965 Inspector Heyns of BED appeared on amicable terms with the SHAWCO students, suggesting in apparent good faith, although very naively in view of implacable government attitudes, that these same students should apply to run senior classes in Langa instead.

It could well have been that just as Vigne believed in preserving as far as possible the neutrality of the CNENSA, as has already been mentioned, in order not to court closure, just as he for instance did not try to involve a prominent liberal like Patrick Duncan in ARM lest this lead to the destruction of the Liberal Party, (Driver, 1980: 196) so people like Miss Kemp, quite apart from being wary of informers, might well have not wanted to compromise the Association by advocating in the classroom any of the ideas she shared with colleagues in ARM. Certainly in my own experience in the Night schools throughout the period 1957-1967 I did not come across any instance of the politicising of pupils. Nevertheless the Government remained very suspicious of those engaged in the work of the Association and in November 1964, the month in which the cases relating to the saboteurs in ARM came up in court, the local

inspector, Mr Heyns (under pressure from his seniors in the Department) complained among other matters that Windermere would not submit the names of its teachers and said that he must be given the names and addresses of all the pupils attending classes (Wilson, 1964b).

I think it would be fair comment to say that just as the Liberal Party and NUSAS were ignorant of the subversive activities of those of their members belonging to the underground movements, so SHAWCO and the CNENSA were similarly placed. Dr T.R.H. Davenport who was Chairman of the Education Management Committee running the Windermere School on which Stephanie Kemp served so steadfastly for three years, had not known of her involvement with ARM (Davenport, 1988). A contemporary indication of this ignorance is conveyed in a letter to the NUSAS Chairman a short while after students and lecturers had been held in the spate of July 1964 detentions when he wrote: "recent developments make me want to wait and see what has been going on among groups hitherto thought to be opposed to violence rather than to try now to talk/write through the clouds" (Letter: 1/9/1964, Davenport).

Richard Turner studying at UCT from 1959 to 1962 who was active in NUSAS and sympathetic towards its adoption of a more radical approach was also a member of the hard-working Windermere Education Management Committee with Kemp (from August 1960 until August 1962 [SHAWCO Annual Reports]). He likewise had no idea at the time of the involvement of Kemp and Brooks in ARM (Morphet, 1980: xiii). Later in 1974, commenting on the ARM episode he felt that the students involved "did great damage to the cause they were fighting for" and this made him "acutely aware of the danger of students turning to violence" (ibid: xiii).

Among the detentions (fortunately short-lived) that had created a furore on campuses two weeks prior to the above-mentioned letter of Davenport's was that of outgoing NUSAS President, Jonty Driver on the fourteenth of August. With the underground activities of certain NUSAS associates having been uncovered, the Government, which for some time had attempted to undermine this outspoken student organisation, was now in full hue and cry against it. But NUSAS

refused to be deterred from its role in defending democratic values and in September under the name of its new President-Elect, Maeder Osler, issued a strongly worded nine-page document to all its affiliates, overseas representatives and International Student Organisations which included a statement from its executive to the Prime Minister and a recent Congress resolution condemning the General Law Amendment Act of 1963. This document showed how despite vilification and smear tactics against it the organisation refused to be silenced. Apart from providing factual diarized versions of the repressive inroads of the 1962 and 1963 General Law Amendment Acts on government opponents, the harm done by solitary confinement, the occurrence of maltreatment and torture among detainees and lists of the May, June, July, August detentions of students and lecturers throughout the country, in its call to the government it made clear its attitude to recent acts of violence and what it saw as the root causes of such violence. Thus while emphasizing unequivocally its abhorrence of sabotage and terrorism it added this rider:

"We recognize that many people in this country have been driven to desperation by the continued failure of peaceful and democratic means of bringing about change in the country; and that the policies of the government, in refusing to allow their opponents the rights which would enable them to bring about change peacefully and democratically, are the main causes of this desperation. It is in terms of this recognition that the Executive calls for a series of meetings or consultations between the leaders of all sections of the community".

(Letter: 1/9/1964, Osler)

Throughout this period, as already mentioned, the NUSAS connection with the CNENSA remained strong. Many of the Windermere teachers were prominent in NUSAS affairs. John Clare for example, the dedicated Principal of Windermere from mid 1960 to mid 1962 and regular attender at the CNENSA co-ordinating meetings was also in 1960 a NUSAS Regional Secretary (NUSAS, 1960).

In its concern for the promotion of African adult education NUSAS gave tangible support to Night School movements particularly after plans by Leftwich and newspaper editor J.G. Sutherland to launch an

ambitious Literacy Campaign could not after all be implemented (Letter: 22/9/1964, Osler). Money that had been collected for that purpose was thus diverted to existing night schools and in 1964 (just five days before Driver was detained) the CNENSA Minutes (9/8/1964) record that "it was decided to accept Mr Jonty Driver's offer of NUSAS aid for finance". Two months prior to this, in his letter (17/6/1964) to me as CNENSA Chairman and referring to the Association's original appeal for financial assistance from the World University Service, Driver had concluded: "May I express my admiration for the work which you are doing? NUSAS is vitally concerned with these tasks itself, though for all the credit it gets, one would think that it did nothing else but try to subvert the government and its policies".

Before leaving this review of political activists among some of the Association's teachers, particularly at Windermere, mention must also be made of three others who later achieved prominence as more radical thinkers. I have already referred to one of them, namely Richard Turner, who served on John Clare's Education Management Committee in both 1961 and 1962 (SHAWCO Annual Reports, 1961, 1962). Turner subsequently achieved wide recognition in academic circles as a philosopher, supporter of NUSAS and the pioneer of a trade union and workers education movement that is considered to be the forerunner of COSATU (Gottschalk, 1988). His book "The Eye of the Needle", first printed as a Spro-cas publication by the Christian Institute in 1972, reveals in Morphet's view, a "growth away from the confusions of the liberal position" (Morphet, 1980: XLX). Tragically Turner was assassinated by unknown assailants in Natal in January 1978.

The other teacher at Windermere meriting special mention as a radical was Martin Legassick who served on the Education Management Committee in 1959 and 1960. He, as Richard Turner was to do later, ran the more informal Friday nights at the Night School and his work in this connection was particularly appreciated by the rest of the committee (SHAWCO Annual Report, 1959). Legassick became the centre of the controversy at a NUSAS seminar at Botha's Hill, Natal, in May 1964 when Jonty Driver quoted him as having stated that NUSAS was too conservative, that it should help unite other forces working towards democracy in South Africa and that in the event of its being banned,

it should have a base outside the country (SAIRR Survey, 1964: 297). Driver while disagreeing with some of these recommendations, believed too that NUSAS should subordinate its concerns for purely student affairs to its efforts for a democratic society but through misrepresentation in the Nationalist Press, Legassick's more radical views were presented as those of the NUSAS President and as the student union's official policy. Subsequently, at a July Conference in Pietermaritzburg, as a result of this wedge driven into student affairs, the more conservative students in Natal censured Driver for the expression of personal views that could thus be equated with those of NUSAS. However when in October SRC elections were held NUSAS people topped the polls in all the English-speaking universities including both sections of Natal University (ibid: 300). But because the Botha's Hill seminar had rejected his views, Legassick resigned from NUSAS (ibid: 297-298).

Lastly, in connection with the appearance of more prominent radicals among CNENSA teachers, it must be mentioned that Dr Neville Alexander whose activities during these years have already been referred to, appeared very briefly as a teacher at the Retreat Night School having been thus introduced by an elderly white woman who was at that time assisting with the primary classes. Shortly after this, in July 1963, he was arrested and later sentenced to ten years on Robben Island for his role in the Yu Chi Chan Club. (SAIRR Survey, 1964: 86). Again there was no evidence of any effort made to exploit the classes for the spread of doctrinaire views but the interest of such an educationalist in the work of the Association from one who was later to become Director of the NUSAS-initiated SACHED in Mowbray is worth recording.

With regard to the emergence of Poqo in the sixties, mainly among the migrants in the over-populated, appalling "bachelor" hostels of Langa (described on Page 19) the question arises as to what extent those who attended night classes were imbued with the Poqo philosophy or subject to its coercive practices? Certainly in the forties and fifties evidence has already been brought forward showing that the majority of those attending the literacy classes of the Association were migrants. Likewise it has been noted that until the emergence of the PAC there was comparatively little interest shown by migrants in

political activities. Then from 1958 to 1960 under the direction of university students such as Nelson (Nana) Mahoma (who was sent overseas by the PAC the day before Sharpeville [Gerhart & Karis, 1977: 66]), Philip Kgosana and the veteran activist Joe Nkatlo, massive migratory support for the PAC in the Western Cape was kindled and as already noted, succeeded in generating the sympathetic co-operation of Randolph Vigne when he was Chairman of the CNENSA, with soon thereafter that of Patrick Duncan and other "Contact" white liberals.

At that stage and before the development of Poqo, it could be assumed that Vigne's contact with Africans through the Night Schools contributed to his stature in the townships. In his efforts in his night school capacity to have the Docks school re-opened, to operate with Nkatlo's help a daily lunch-hour reading-room in Green Street (for which "thousands of notices" were circulated "among African and Coloured workers in central Cape Town" [Vigne, 1958]), in trying to attract more African pupils to St Marks, in his help given to the two township night schools in Langa and Nyanga and in trying to facilitate the opening of a third one in Nyanga West, Vigne was himself receiving a valuable education in learning to communicate with Africans. This must have contributed greatly to his own perceptiveness of problems and helped to inspire the confidence of the labourer leaders, Mlokoti and Matros of the Nyanga PAC Committee who according to Driver (1980: 165) approached him uninvited for help in obtaining white support for the PAC anti-pass campaign.

However given the maintenance of the traditional avoidance of political issues in the night classes and Vigne's own stated adherence to this policy too, there is no indication as to where the political sympathies of the pupils lay or of any specific involvement on their part in those March days of dramatic demonstrations. Sishuba (1988) who was studying at Retreat at the time, recalled that he and many others were insulated from the disturbances by being accommodated in their places of employment during the weeks in which the townships were cordoned off by the police and it is recorded that a good many of the students went "home" during this period (CNENSA Minutes, 19/6/1960).

A very different situation arose in the Western Cape with the strong development of the militant Poqo wing of the banned PAC and the loss through imprisonment or escape from the country of many of the leaders. With this transition within the PAC to the highly organised secret cell system ramifications of Poqo, a break occurred in the cordial relationships with whites such as had been initiated by Mlokoti and Matros when they made contact with the Liberal Party through Vigne in 1959. Gradually in a split in the underground movement, a faction led by Makwetu of Langa and Tshongayi of Crawford with their strong links with grossly dissatisfied migrant hostel dwellers, gained the upper hand (Lodge, 1983: 243). Poqo in contrast to the earlier PAC dispensed with a political theory and a social programme in favour of pithy direct slogans that could appeal to incensed workers; it epitomised a desire to destroy the existing order and through violence replace white power with black power (ibid: 244). Unlike Umkonto or ARM it did not confine its activities to sabotage and in Tom Lodge's view (1983: 241) was probably the "largest clandestine organisation of the 1960's".

It is almost unthinkable that such an underground movement of such significance in the Western Cape could have left untouched the lives of many of the labourers attending the Association's schools. The exact nature of their political awareness is difficult to assess and is beyond the scope of this thesis but a comment from William Beinart arising from his research into worker consciousness in this period is pertinent to the matter under consideration. He observed that:

"in the rapidly changing world of South Africa's industrial revolution where people could find themselves peasant workers, lumpenproletarians and petty entrepreneurs in close succession, and not necessarily in that order, any analysis of the development of political ideas must be able to cater for and capture, the variety of the conditions of oppression. Moreover the prevalence and institutionalisation of migrancy meant that rural social forms, always changing but in some areas deeply embedded in the past, exercised a continuing influence on the perceptions of very many workers."

(Beinart, 1986: 28)

However with reference to the night schools the fact that Poqo caused no visible side effects is in my estimation due to a number of factors. Xonti (1988), a regular pupil at Retreat in 1966 and 1967, was a youngster at Healdtown in 1961 and then lived in Cala, Transkei during the Poqo disturbances. When asked whether he thought the night school pupils would have supported Poqo he confirmed that it was strongly supported by migrants emanating from the Transkei but considered that as "racists" they would not have come to night school to be taught by white and coloured teachers. His feeling was that night school students were largely non-racist, ANC supporters. (He himself, as a member of SAAWU, was by 1988 a strong supporter of COSATU).

Another factor was that there was a noticeable reduction in the number of migrants attending the night schools in the early sixties. This has already been noted in the case of the Docks school where at one stage coloured dockers were brought in to replace African workers; then those African migrants who were employed in the Docks were there for very short periods at a time thus making regular night school studies virtually impossible. In a period of extensive endorsements out of Africans from the Western Cape, restrictions on their mobility and of relocations in terms of the Group Areas Act, it also became noticeable at both Retreat Night School and Windermere how attendances of Africans dropped in the lower classes with a greater concentration of pupils occurring in the senior standards (CNENSA Minutes, 27/3/1960). In fact in 1960, the year of the anti-pass campaign, there was no instruction below the Std. 2 level at all at Windermere, a fact "due less to the obtaining of suitable teachers than to the negligible demand for these classes" (SHAWCO Annual Report, 1960: 23).

Probably however, the biggest factor in making Poqo involvement unlikely among night school students was the all too human characteristic of self-interest emerging in people voluntarily engaged in the hard discipline of self-improvement through classes at night after fatiguing days of work. It can be argued that this process of pupil assimilation into a better educated group and hopefully better forms of employment was fostered by the Association in its concern to overcome racial animosities and foster goodwill and

some critics will see in this a harmful co-option into a society needing to be drastically restructured. That is a matter to be considered in the final chapters but for the moment it can be stated with some assurance that self-betterment embarked on by the pupils in the Association was not at all conducive to the adoption of violent, revolutionary behaviour towards whites such as pursued by Poqo.

At no time did the government directly accuse the Association of spreading subversive ideas although such views were being held by some government officials as will presently be shown, but by 1963 it was clearly in a hurry to have the remaining schools closed. In that year, just after the Poqo riots in Paarl and amidst continuing disparate acts of sabotage in the Western Cape in January, February, September and November (SAIRR Survey, 1963: 12-13) various letters from the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner (7/1/1963; 2/5/1963; 6/9/1963) in Cape Town reiterated the idea that shortly the Association's schools would fall away because they would have no more African pupils. By way of contrast, early the next year, the Cape Argus proclaimed in a banner headline: "Weary City workers for Education: Night Schools are Crowded". It then proceeded to publish in full detail the successful examination results of 22 secondary night school pupils from standards 6 to 10 at both Retreat and St Marks who had collectively passed thirty-three subjects, seventeen being in English on the Higher grade (Cape Argus, 1964a). These two night schools were far from any natural dissolution but after the closure of the Windermere School in 1965, the removal orders in June that year for 1 600 Africans from the old Simonstown location to Langa and Guguletu (SAIRR Survey, 1965: 199) and the implementation of further measures to force Africans out of the Western Cape, their flourishing non-racial character became increasingly anachronistic in terms of government policy.

6.7

THE LAST ROUND IN THE STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL - 1966-1967

In 1966, the year of Dr Vervoerd's assassination and the ascendancy of B.J. Vorster as Premier, District Six was at last proclaimed a white group area and it was estimated that 20 000 to 33 000 people from this area would have to move. In a further crackdown on any form

of inter-racial activity and with a specific aim to prevent the Progressive Party returning four representatives of coloured voters to Parliament in the next election (after its 1965 successes in winning both Coloured seats in the Cape Provincial Council elections) the Prohibition of Improper Interference Bill was introduced. The national committee of the Liberal Party thereupon decided that should this Bill become law it would dissolve itself, as non-racialism was fundamental to the Liberal Party (SAIRR Survey, 1966: 16). It and NUSAS continued to be targets for heavy government attack. By September 1965 some forty Liberal Party members had been immobilised by banning including the fifth consecutive editor of "Contact" (SAIRR Survey, 1965: 7) whilst in May 1966, the President of NUSAS, Ian Robertson, was banned before he could accompany that year's guest of NUSAS, Senator Robert Kennedy, around South Africa.

By 1967 Mr Coetzee's Canute-like imperiousness against the inevitable tide of Africans to urban industrial areas was being relentlessly translated into a series of deliberate stages, including the reduction of African families already resident in white areas and the planned replacement of even the strictly limited "single" African migrants by coloured workers (SAIRR Survey, 1967: 172).

- ✓ With rapidly rising figures of those banned or listed (or both) under the Suppression of Communism Act (SAIRR Survey, 1967: 67), the government with yet another General Law Amendment Act (No. 62 of 1966) widened the powers of officers for arresting persons without a warrant and for the detention of those considered able to supply information about terrorism. Thus with all the strong arm tactics at its command it continued to drive its radical opposition underground or to the growing ANC and PAC movements overseas.

Against this background of heightened polarisation the Association in 1966, while concentrating on its two remaining night schools, took on more overtly than ever the defence, not only of its teaching programme but also of the interracial contact and good-will generated in its tightly knit groups of now veteran teachers and pupils. It was in this shared strength of purpose and commitment and with considerable backing by a significant proportion of the people of Cape Town that in the final bid for the CNENSA's survival, I as

chairman broke with tradition and on occasion openly opposed the policy that was destroying it.

During the final two years of the existence of the CNENSA the long-established links with UCT students were continued despite the loss of Windermere. In view of the changed circumstances the SHAWCO Education Management Committee (EMC), its student-elected members now reduced to five (SHAWCO EMC Minutes, 29/3/1966), continued to meet regularly in 1966, exploring ways in which it could still offer educational services. For want of its own specific outlet it donated the Windermere Night School cupboards and text-books to the Association, held a recruiting drive on campus for teachers (opposed by right-wing students defacing posters and circulars), paid a visit to Retreat (SHAWCO EMC Minutes, 6/5/1966 & 17/5/1966), embarked on needed tuition coaching at the Association's schools and generally kept in regular and helpful touch with me as CNENSA Chairman and with the Co-ordinating Committee. The SHAWCO EMC minutes of both 1966 and 1967 record continuing support for the Association right up to the end and appreciation for this assistance was particularly mentioned in both the Association's 1966 Annual Report and its September 1966 newsletter.

However the frustration of not being able to utilize more fully, in the cause of African and Coloured adult education, the full potential of SHAWCO and the available backing of the University's Faculty of Education, was expressed in the Report for 1966 of the Vice-Chairman of the EMC, Michael Rodd. In this report too he stated^{defensively} that the students' desire "to share their knowledge with those less fortunate" did not "imply, as has been insinuated, a programme of indoctrination by 'Liberal' minded students, but the imparting of factual and, we hope, useful academic knowledge" (Rodd, 1967). The words 'as has been insinuated' appeared in the original report but were omitted in the printed report (SHAWCO 13th Annual Report, 1966: 27).

With now only two left of its volunteer run schools the Association entered 1966 not knowing when next the axe would fall. Inspector Heyns (a man with a humanitarian and missionary school background [Qunta: 1987]) had visited the schools in November 1965 and impressed

by what he had seen, had recommended that they be re-registered but it was suspected very strongly that Pretoria would not share his views (CNENSA Minutes, 5/11/1965). In June the Department of Bantu Education in Pretoria, no doubt again expecting to see a diminution in the numbers of Africans attending the night schools, demanded information concerning how many African and Coloured pupils were attending St Marks and Retreat, where they lived, and details about the environment of the two schools (Letter: 1/6/1966, Sec. for Bantu Educ.). In the reply it was shown that of the total of 148 students at St Marks that year 58 were African whilst Retreat had as many African as Coloured pupils, 66 of each. The students at Retreat were described as mostly living and working on farms in the neighbouring Tokai and Constantia areas or as domestic servants in nearby suburbs; the few who lived in Langa and Nyanga were employed in factories and saw-mills and attended classes before returning to their homes at night. The African students at St Marks included domestic workers, hotel chefs and waiters living where they worked in neighbouring areas (Letter: 20/7/1966, Wilson).

At the beginning of October the Association again applied for reregistration of its schools for the following year but a fortnight later received a letter from the new Cape Town Inspector stating baldly:

"re: St Marks and Retreat Night Schools and Continuation Classes: Closure.

"It has been decided by the Department that the above-mentioned Night Schools and Continuation Classes may continue to function only until 31 December 1966 after which the schools must close finally".

(Letter: 18/10/1966, Insp. of Schools)

How much lay behind the curtness of that instruction? How much does it say about the ideology that could thus summarily dismiss a movement that had celebrated its 21st anniversary in June that year and had helped thousands of adults to become literate or academically better equipped? Before the reaction of the Association itself is examined it is interesting to note that the widely expressed

puzzlement and dismay voiced in the press also found an outlet at a political meeting in Camps Bay when a questioner asked Mr J.A.F. Nel, a former MP (and one of the architects of the Constitution for the Coloured People's Representative Council) why the government was closing down the Cape Town Night Schools. In his answer, not vouchsafed to the Association itself, there is again evidence of deep-rooted government fears of the propagation of ideas adverse to its policy when he stated that "teachers at these night schools, many of whom had been to the University of Cape Town, were sabotaging the minds of the pupils" (Cape Argus, 1966).

This was an accusation that demanded a response and to me as Chairman fell that task. It was given in the form of a letter which the Argus prominently displayed and with the indignation of a typical main-stream liberal of those days it did not scruple to take Mr Nel to task for his allegations concerning two institutions high in the regard of Capetonians, the University of Cape Town and the CNENSA. It rose too to the defence of the small group of university students augmenting the older professionals and others on the teaching staffs of the two schools, maintaining that these students "who make such a superb effort and sacrifice where both youth's quest for pleasure and their studies are more than sufficient to offer counter-attractions, are real sterling people, quiet and unselfish... Does Mr Nel think these are the villains of the piece? - that the minds of those illiterates and semi-literates are sabotaged through their three nights a week plodding patiently away at the three R's?" (Wilson, 1966c).

Through hard work and protest, closure of St Marks had been prevented in 1961, that of Windermere in 1963 and now once again a determined effort was made to prevent the loss of the CNENSA's two remaining and flourishing schools. Once again too, I as Chairman was deeply involved. The first step was a telegram (22/10/1966) to the Minister in Pretoria with an urgent request for an interview concerning the closures and mentioning also that a large African Matriculation class needed another year to finish its course of studies. This, followed up by a telephone call to Mr M.C. Botha's private secretary four days later (Wilson, 1966b) elicited a telegraphic reply from the latter on 28 October which stated:

"In order to enable Bantu Matric class to finish present studies the Honourable the Minister has agreed to postponement closure of Cape Night School for one year i.e. from 24/11/1966 after which date no extension will be considered. In the meantime you should apply for a group areas permit."

What then happened following upon the news of this reprieve involved a long session of misinterpretations, fresh appeals, memoranda and government interviews. For the record concerning these matters I find I cannot do better than to quote my own summary made at the time and presented in the Chairman's 1967 Annual Report. It was as follows:

"It was generally felt by the committee that this reprieve of one year was very worthwhile and some considered it miraculous. Agreement was unanimous though that at the earliest opportunity in 1967, when the Department would be functioning in Cape Town during the Parliamentary session, I should again seek an interview with the Minister, this time to negotiate for permission to continue indefinitely. The opportunity for such an interview arose by the end of January this year as a result of a hold-up due to differing interpretations of the meaning of the Minister's October telegram. Where we had understood him to have given a blanket permission for all the schools to continue in 1967, and had gone far in the process of re-starting all the classes, the Secretary in the Department on the other hand took the concession to refer to the Retreat Senior School only (as this contained the Matric students) and wrote forbidding us to re-open any other night classes.

"Fortunately within a week of this alarming development I was able first to present a written memorandum on the whole situation and on January 31st to obtain a half hour interview with Mr Coetzee, the Deputy Minister appointed to deal with the problem. As is known to you all the outcome was successful as far as 1967 was concerned, and St Marks re-opened that same night whilst the Retreat Junior School lost no more than two weeks through the delayed permission. In addition I was able to report back to my committee that the Minister had promised to consult others in his Department over my specific request that

the Cape Night Schools Association should be allowed to continue at least until such time as the Department of Bantu Administration could organize night classes for African part-time adult students. I followed up this interview with a strong written appeal on February 20th urging the Minister not to forget the Association's request.

"Just over two months later, on April 25th of this year Mr Coetzee instructed his private secretary to reply to the substance of my letter. I regret to have to report here that this reply was not encouraging. It stated that the Department 'cannot take the initiative in the establishment of Night Schools or Continuation Classes for Bantu employees above school-going age, either in European areas or Bantu areas.' It roundly condemned any of the Association's financial maintenance of night schools in the townships as 'contrary to and a breach of the regulations pertaining to night schools and continuation classes in Bantu residential areas'. However on this score it immediately added that such 'financial aid may be granted by the Night Schools Association to the School Boards concerned' provided it was done 'unconditionally and with no strings attached.'

"Lastly the letter stated, (and here was a small ray of hope), the Hon. Minister cannot grant a registration or unlimited registration of a night school 'unless a permit from the Group Areas Board is submitted from year to year.'

"Now the position was that we had Group Area Permits for both Retreat and St Marks Schools. I immediately set about having the validity of these permits established and after a good deal of correspondence a letter finally written on June 5th by Mr Thorpe, the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner in Cape Town confirmed our belief that 'there is no need to obtain fresh Group Area Permits' as the ones in existence already 'remain valid until withdrawn by the Hon. Minister of the Department of Bantu Administration.'

"June 7th therefore occasioned a carefully worded reply from me

to Mr B. Coetsee, enclosing copies of all the Group Area Permits and urgently appealing to him as the only real source of permission, that our schools be permitted to continue in 1968 and that further registration should again be considered in the light of circumstances at the end of 1968."

(Wilson, 1967a)

While waiting for an answer to the applications for re-registration of the schools for 1968 it should be noted that we chose to ignore certain impossible demands made of us in terms of the 1967 Registration Certificates granted for Retreat and St Marks secondary "Continuation Classes"; these stipulated that Afrikaans and English must be used equally as media of instruction and that no Coloured students were to be enrolled (Letters: 8/5/1967 & 23/5/1967, Sec. for Bantu Educ.). We likewise ignored the instruction that the two junior Night Schools (it must be remembered that Retreat and St Marks were seen by the government as four separate schools) were to admit only African pupils (Letter: 7/7/1967, Sec. for Bantu Educ.) No doubt continual disregard for these aspects of Bantu Education had helped to fuel the government's dislike of the Association over the years, but again no reasons were given when after another reminder concerning the CNENSA's request for a 1968 registration a letter to me from the Private Secretary of the Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration and Development brought the final point-blank refusal. This stated:

"I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your letters dated 7 June 1967, 25 August 1967 and 11 September 1967.

"The Deputy Minister regrets that Bantu Night Schools can not be allowed in White (sic) areas after 31 December 1967.

"This decision must be regarded as final."

(Letter: 22/9/1967, Private Sec. Ministry BAD & BE)

Apparently similar letters at this time were sent to other night schools elsewhere in white areas (Bird, 1984: 208), namely those few schools which had also somehow managed to survive the 1957 regulations and the amended regulations of 1962 requiring more

stringent details for group area permits. Thus in addition to the CNENSA schools nine night schools for Africans in Johannesburg were ordered to close at the end of 1967 (SAIRR Survey, 1967: 245). It would appear that these schools, unlike the CNENSA schools, and with the exception of the one run by the University students of the Witwatersrand, were staffed by African teachers (SAIRR Survey, 1966: 244); one of them, the Davies Street Bantu Evening School, started by a Swedish missionary in 1902 for illiterates and semi-literates was receiving subsidies from abroad by 1967 to pay qualified African teachers for its 80 adult pupils (The Star, 1967a). According to the SAIRR Surveys of 1966 and 1967 there were conflicting reports on the numbers of such schools still remaining in this period but the Minister of Bantu Education is quoted as having listed a total of 13 night schools (primary) and 2 continuation classes (secondary) in municipal white areas at the end of 1966 (SAIRR Survey, 1967: 245). Four of these were of course CNENSA schools, namely the two secondary ones mentioned and two of the primary schools.

Thus finally in 1967 the government delivered its death blow to any night classes for adult Africans in so-called white areas. Up to this stage, despite years of harassment, threats and reprieves and the eventual successive closures of Athlone, Docks, Sea Point, Green Street, and Windermere schools, the Association had never allowed government pressure to weaken its sense of purpose or its cohesiveness as a movement of committed volunteers. As its physical scope diminished so its inner strength increased; certainly in this final period it had attracted into its ranks a growing body of men and women from all walks of life but particularly well endowed with skills and qualifications to provide for the academic requirements of those who continued to flock to its remaining schools. But now that all efforts had failed to avoid extinction what was there left to do?

In the first place beyond its implication that schools for Africans were offensive in so-called "white" areas the Government had advanced no clear reasons for the closures. Thus when Die Burger, a mouthpiece for the National Party, but itself puzzled by this action, managed to obtain "reasons" from Mr B. Coetzee (Die Burger, 1967), I as Chairman contested his claims both in letters to Die Burger (Wilson, 1967b) and the Cape Times (Wilson, 1967c) and again, for the

record, in the Chairman's final report at a last general meeting of members in November (Wilson, 1967d). Blaar Coetzee's stated reasons for the closures centred around the fact that it was against government policy to allow Africans to attend schools in "white" areas, that the night schools in such places caused unwanted gatherings of Africans, that there were other night schools in the Langa and Nyanga townships and that if an exception was made in permitting the Cape Town schools to continue "is daar geen rede waarom ons nie ook tientalle ander skole van die aard in blanke gebiede moet toelaat nie" (Die Burger, 1967). One of the ironies of course was that the "other" night schools in Langa and Nyanga (which in any case did not provide secondary classes) had been started by the Association, had been financed by it since 1958 and would have very serious problems in trying to continue once the CNENSA ceased to exist as the government would not subsidize African adult night schools.

After St Marks and Retreat had been told to close, the Press widely backed the Association. It published statements, letters, and a cartoon by David Marais (Cape Times, 1967), wrote supportive editorials and generally helped to high-light the wider significance of the blow not only to already diminished educational facilities for Africans and to cordial race relationships but also to the rights of individuals, teachers and pupils alike, to pursue a common interest together. In its initial public reaction the Association through me as Chairman recorded its strong condemnation of a policy that could "sacrifice the interests of so many students... for the sake of a ruthless ideological idea". It was also pointed out that the Association's plea to be allowed to continue at least until such time as the government could subsidize replacement primary and secondary night schools for Africans had been rejected by the government. After detailing what would be lost through the closures the statement concluded: "It appears that in the eyes of our government, and more important than all the human beings we have dealt with all these years, more important than academic education, more important than even good-will, sympathy and understanding, is the simple ideological idea which says at all costs, separate White from Black" (The Star, 1967b).

The Association at its last general meeting of members on 29 November 1967 sanctioned proposals for the eventual dissolution of the CNENSA and the distribution of its material and financial assets but gave powers of discretion to an on-going committee first to assist financially those of its former students qualifying to attend other institutions or to take correspondence courses.

For some years after the schools had closed I continued to keep a close watch on the situation, hoping for an opportunity for the still existent committee to stage a come-back or possibly through the churches or some other means, to fill the vacuum that now existed in this type of education. That all belongs to another period outside the scope of this thesis but it is of interest to note briefly that in 1968 Blaar Coetzee again entered the limelight in what of course had now become a political issue taken up in particular by Helen Suzman.

✓Asked by Mrs Suzman in Parliament why night schools were closed in Johannesburg and Cape Town Mr Coetzee replied that after allowing repeated extensions of time the Department had eventually had to put its foot down and ensure that classes were provided only in the townships "where the Bantu find themselves in the evening". However, he continued, teachers with whom the school board was satisfied could get permission to go to the townships but certainly not those "who want to go ... and agitate amongst the Bantu". Replying to further questioning he added that even police protection could be given to women teachers approved by the school boards. "And if they are eager, and do not want to acquire everything by way of least resistance, then they will go there. However, I am satisfied that some of these people are not as keen as they pretend to be to educate the Bantu" (Hansard, No. 17, June 1968: 6757-6758).

The above remarks (leaving aside consideration of the insinuations) constituted an extraordinary reversal of the attitude that had refused our request for permission for whites to teach in Langa after Windermere had been closed in 1965; however after they had been brought to my attention and with the backing of our small on-going committee I immediately wrote to the Secretary of the Langa School Board offering it the services of the Association's teachers for

staffing secondary classes in Langa in response to Mr Coetzee's statement (Letter: 2/8/1968, Wilson). The Secretary swiftly replied that the offer had "met with great enthusiasm and (was) accepted immediately" by his Board but that according to "the procedure with matters of this nature", a copy of my letter had "been forwarded to the Circuit Inspector for his necessary approval" (Letter: 13/8/1968, Sec. Langa Bantu School Board). In due course the anticipated reply from the Inspector reached us to the effect that the Department "will not approve of European teachers to give tuition at the school" (Letter: 23/8/1968, Insp. of Schools), but the School Board Secretary in relaying this discouraging news concluded: "If there is any other approach that could be made to the authorities concerned to get their co-operation in the matter, the School Board would encourage the Association to go ahead with them" (Letter: 5/9/1968, Sec. Langa Bantu School Board).

We did not need any further encouragement. I then wrote to the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development and of Bantu Education reminding him of Mr Coetzee's assertions in Parliament and repeating the Association's offer of assistance. The reply (Letter: 17/10/1968, Admin. Control Officer, Ministry BAD & BE) was evasive; it claimed that there were African teachers available and that difficulties "undoubtedly arise when Europeans enter Bantu areas". Again this left a door open in that it could be shown that the Langa School Board had been unable to start up continuation classes, although one had been registered, because of lack of available qualified staff (Letter: 29/11/1968, Wilson).

Thus here was the CNENSA even after the loss of all its schools still refusing to give in. The whole matter was finally brought to an end by the Minister, in repeating his rejection of the Association's offer, resorting to "regulation 7(5) of Government Notice R.26 of the 5 January 1962 where it is clearly laid down that school boards may employ Bantu teachers only for night schools or continuation classes in Bantu areas and Bantu residential areas" (Letter: 3/2/1969, Admin. Control Officer, Ministry BAD & BE). What was far clearer was that the Deputy Minister when he had made such sweeping statements in Parliament the previous year had been ignorant of his own department's regulations.

This now brings to a close the history of the Cape Non-European Night Schools Association over its life-span of twenty-two and a half years and the record of the contemporary events and situations in which it ran its course. In the telling a broad picture of a cross-section of Capetonian life in that period has been presented. There remains the important challenge of evaluating what has been revealed and reaching conclusions. This is what I shall now attempt to do in the next two concluding chapters.

CHAPTER SEVENTHE WORK OF THE CNENSA AS MIGHT BE SEEN FROM A
FREIRIAN PERSPECTIVE

7.1

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE LITERACY AND ADULT EDUCATION PRINCIPLES OF
PAULO FREIRE

As mentioned in the last chapter a new assertiveness on education issues began to emerge from progressive thinkers in oppressed communities in the early 1970's. This was embedded in a long tradition of black suspicion regarding the vested interests of white liberals in the status quo and was reinforced specifically by the spread of the Freirian ideas on adult education that had recently appeared in English publications. The Freirian method offered a means for freeing blacks from their attitudes of adaptation and "domestication" under white domination. Freire belonged to the new school of humanist Christian Marxists (Youngman, 1986: 162) and his radical Christian approach would have served to sharpen interest in socialist goals among black students, particularly those belonging to the new South African Students Organisation (SASO). This socialist trend shared by the liberation theologians, as has already been noted, also found expression in the early seventies in the statements of the Christian Institute, its Spro-cas publications and its offspring, the Black Community Programme, with which Biko was associated.

Before I can proceed to an examination of the CNENSA in the light of the Freirian theories it will be necessary to review them first in broad outline. They are based on the phenomenon of class domination in oppressed societies. In his literacy programme among the illiterate peasants in Brazil in the 1960's Freire had found that traditional forms of education had imposed and perpetuated the dominant culture and that teachers, belonging to the dominant group and using a "banking" method of depositing knowledge, had given rise to passive acceptance among learners and a "culture of silence". (Freire, 1972: 45-47 & Freire, 1985: 50).

Psychologically too, traditional education methods had often led to a learner's internalisation of the forces of domination which not only obstructed self-affirmation but actually helped to inculcate an "active dynamic of negation" in a refusal to accept emancipatory forms of knowledge (Giroux, 1985: xx). All in all the many subtle forms of domination existing in the traditional forms of education (and which were radically analysed in the 1970's by theorists in the new sociology of education), led in Freire's view, to people being dehumanised, either through learning to adapt to oppressive conditions or through being co-opted into the oppressive structures themselves. But, he stressed, what distinguishes people from animals which are by nature adaptive and easily domesticated, is the innate power of the human to reflect upon his world and to change it. Therefore what is needed is the "humanising" or "conscientizing" of man so that he will discover his oppression, examine it critically and transform it. And for this task of arousing awareness and self-affirmation, the pedagogical processes, even at bare literacy level, must become political.

It was in putting his theory into practice in literacy programmes that Freire started to make oppressed people aware of their true human potential for transforming society and for "humanising" not only themselves but the oppressors too. This utopian theory was what SASO students saw as offering new hope for overcoming the sense of defeat prevalent among the black masses at the end of the 1960's in South Africa. Indeed they had started to put the Freirian model into effect in literacy programmes (Biko 1978: 112-115) when the heavy arm of the state again crushed this fresh display of black initiative.

What in broad terms was Freire's theory of adult literacy education and how was it to be put into practice? The method devised for his literacy programmes involved a number of preparatory steps before work could begin. Briefly these could be classified as (1) investigation by the programme co-ordinators to discover or "tune-in" in to the issues or themes of immediate concern in the relevant community and to the main important words in the local vocabulary articulating these; (2) to select about seventeen of these key or "generative" words with special regard to both their syllabic richness and their socio-political and experiential significance and

to make preliminary "codifications" of the chosen words and themes in a variety of visually effective exhibits; (3) to provide guide lines for the programme co-ordinators for replacing traditional 'banking' or 'depositing' methods of transferring knowledge with dialogical, problem-posing methods; to get the co-ordinators to discard completely the conventional teacher role with its imposition of ideas and, through the problematising dialogical method, to prepare to decode jointly with the learners the indigenous codifications as collected and coded in stages (1) and (2); and finally, (4), to produce the educative material of varying kinds such as cards, readers etc based on the prepared codifications and presenting the generative words in syllabic breakdowns leading to a grasp of entire phonemic families.

In the ensuing "cultural circles" the themes thus selected from the context of the learners' environment, through being made problematical and treated dialogically, aroused participation and a new social awareness; concurrently the learners grasped the tools of literacy by learning creatively to compose their own new words out of the syllabic vowel-using variants of the phonemically dissected generative words. The new awareness and discussion of problems led to reflection and action and thus the entire programme embodied Freire's important theory of praxis. The learners were no longer reified as in the old system, were no longer mere objects, but were subjects of their own newly appropriated culture.

7.2

EXAMINING THE CNENSA IN THE LIGHT OF THE FREIRIAN PERSPECTIVE

While there are striking differences between the Freirian adult education theories and those of the CNENSA, the most obvious one being of course the direct political nature of the former, it is nevertheless interesting to note that there are a few similarities between the two systems. Features in the Western Cape's night schools movement that bear some resemblance to those in the Freirian method include Eddie Roux's extended research with colleagues for authentic vocabulary in compiling his "Easy English" for use in Primers, the selection of indigenous themes (though not politically controversial) in the AB Adult Readers, "James Mabeta Goes to Sea" and "The Cattle

of Kumalo", the attempt (though short-lived) to instigate social awareness through the Sixpenny Readers and the Pro and Con pamphlets authored by African writers (e.g. "Should the Natives Representative Council Be Abolished?") and the frequent use of debates and forum discussions. Then too the deliberate creation of home-made flash cards for literacy work in the CNENSA, illustrating indigenous themes and using phonemic families in words designed to build up a speedy phonetic grasp of language was a counterpart in method to the Freirian technique although it lacked the political content.

Although there was a fundamental difference between the rigid non-political stance of the CNENSA and the specific social awareness-arousing intentions of the Freirian method, such disparity in aim does not make it completely inappropriate to measure the one against the other. I have not found any evidence of derogatory criticism against the work of the Association among blacks, yet soon after the CNENSA had been closed the very fact that young intelligent black thinkers seized on the Freirian literacy methods to help awaken the consciousness of blacks to their own innate potential, places a question mark over former adult education systems and invites some critical questioning. The government of course, quick to pounce on any means for awakening a sleeping giant, banned and detained SASO, BCP and BPC leaders and drove many into exile, yet Black Consciousness, aided significantly by the Freirian philosophy and its "conscientizing" techniques, was instrumental in helping to put black resistance once more on course after the setbacks to the ANC and PAC in the 1960's. It also had a direct bearing on the emergence of student power in 1976 and in the ensuing years.

The major stumbling block in the CNENSA on a Freirian analysis apart from its traditional teaching methods, would certainly have been the composition of its volunteer teacher body. Freire is deeply sceptical about the ingrained attitudes and vested interests of those belonging to the dominant class in an oppressive society, a scepticism evident too in the philosophy of Black Consciousness. He believes that those who draw material benefits from the status quo cannot avoid encouraging adaptation and reconciliation to it on the part of those who do not, for fear of having their peaceful existence disturbed. He sees most manifestations of sympathy with the have-nots from such

sources as usually examples of "false generosity" and paternalism that thrive on the continuing existence of poverty. Opposing the roles of such persons in educational programmes for the oppressed, Freire wrote:

"Pedagogy which begins with the egoistic interests of the oppressors (an egoism cloaked in the false generosity of paternalism) and makes of the oppressed the objects of its humanitarianism, itself maintains and embodies oppression. It is an instrument of dehumanization. That is why... the pedagogy of the oppressed cannot be developed or practised by the oppressors. It would be a contradiction in terms if the oppressors not only defended but actually implemented a liberating education."

(Freire, 1972: 30)

He also saw such teachers drawn from the 'dominant' group as inevitably imposing their own view of the world upon the learners, ignoring the latter's own culture and inhibiting their creativity. This phenomenon was described by Freire as "cultural invasion". Concerning it he wrote:

"In the last analysis, invasion is a form of economic and cultural domination..."

"Cultural conquest leads to the cultural inauthenticity of those who are invaded; they begin to respond to the values, the standards, and the goals of the invaders... In cultural invasion it is essential that those who are invaded come to see their reality with the outlook of the invaders rather than their own; for the more they mimic the invaders, the more stable the position of the latter becomes."

(ibid: 122)

Thus despite the general high regard in which the Association was held by the African community and by those opposed to apartheid, did it display any of these characteristics as just described? Was this entire Freirian polemic applicable to the volunteer white teachers in the CNENSA? Could they be ranked with "oppressors" who subtly

thwarted the interests of the people with whom they actually formed such warm ties and strove to serve? How much could the Association be held responsible for fostering compliant adaptive attitudes that negated the will to struggle for freedom from oppression? How much did it co-opt learners themselves into the "oppressive" structures of the status quo? And lastly, to what extent was the Association guilty of what Freire termed "cultural invasion"?

Before any of these questions can be considered individually with regard to the work of the CNENSA the first issue which really underlies most of the others is the question of politics. In Freire's system of adult literacy programmes, dialogical encounters between facilitators and learners questioning the world about them, openly and frankly confront political, economic and social problems and seek ways to master them. This is the very antithesis of the traditional method which eschews all politics and in which a body of knowledge pre-selected from the dominant culture is "deposited" in the passive recipients in what Freire labels the "banking" method of teaching.

The main dialogical principle of the Freirian method was of course not entirely new in South Africa; all the best definitions of education emphasized training people to think for themselves; also as has already been noted (supra: 71), Prof G.H. Durrant, an education officer in Marquard's "Army Education Service" in wanting adults to discuss politics and economics, had spoken out strongly in favour of adult education in the post-war period being concentrated on education for citizenship, "conducted as an exchange of information and of ideas, and not as the enlightenment of the masses by the enlightened" (Durrant, undated: 10). However Durrant, unlike Freire, had not linked this idea to the acute problems of mass illiteracy or semi-literacy nor adopted a positive ideological stance with regard to it.

The CNENSA as has been seen, consciously and deliberately eschewed politics. Such class debates as were held would not have been used to question the existing political situation. But was it not the very avoidance of political bias or controversy that made an Association like the CNENSA possible in the stormy, political and socio-economic context of its period, and that contributed to its growth and

comparative longevity?

Assuming that airing of political views in the Night Schools could have escaped state intervention (which would have been most unlikely), how could a relevant political framework have been achieved among such disparate constituents? Where could a common political factor have been found in an Association that involved white and black participants from such varying levels and stages of political awareness and such different social backgrounds? How divisive would political debate have been and how inhibitive on growth where the Association had to rely on a wide range of volunteers from the white community and on public financial support?

It is true the white members were drawn almost entirely from a comparatively small group of white liberal thinkers but although this group was undergoing major transformations, in the 1950's and 1960's most of its adherents were still removed from the political territory of the Congress Movement and the Freedom Charter, not to mention the militant PAC, NEUM or the strong influence the latter exerted over many Africans in the Cape in those decades.

Where too could the political suspicions of most of the newly arrived migrants concerning both the NEUM and the ANC in the Cape in the fifties have been accommodated by politically naive and uninformed whites if they had strayed from predominantly straight literacy programmes, into attempts to enter the current black political debate where white liberals anyway were themselves regarded with suspicion? Briefly there was a surface fusion of political interests between PAC black supporters and the vanguard of liberal whites in 1960 but with the subsequent banning of the PAC and the ANC, such a political manifestation in the CNENSA, even had it been possible to rally any such common consensus of opinion among participants, would have terminated the Association there and then.

Wolfgang Fricke, an escapee from Nazi Germany in 1935 and a liberal who was prominent on the CNENSA Co-ordinating Committee for many years, testified to the firm conviction among members that political issues should not be allowed to intrude into the Night Schools Agenda. Reflecting back on the late 1950 and early 1960 period and

the harmony among the white and black members of the Committee in their sharing of a common educational objective, he stated (1987): "I remember unease only when Vigne was on the Committee and eventually Chairman. He wanted to make something else out of Night Schools and we were all relieved when he left." (I personally do not recall such a feeling but I was new to the committee in 1958.)

There is no doubt that in view of the different worlds from which participants in the night schools came, and the disparities in life-styles and political awareness, the congeniality that characterised it, the growth of the movement and its educational programme could never have been achieved if a conscious political slant had been adopted or free-for-all political debate permitted. The way it was constituted gave it a needed flexibility. Without undue tension it could accommodate a Segal, a Vigne, a Joe Nkatlo, a Stephanie Kemp, a Kwebulana, a Martin Legassick, a Richard Turner and many other dissidents, alongside more conventional and conservative liberals and even, according to Kwebulana (1987), earn the approval of NEUM's I.B. Tabata as a useful "community service". Probably the factors needed to achieve such a phenomenon were sensed by the compilers of the first constitution of the "African Night Schools Association" when they adopted the following rule (quoted earlier) as a guiding principle:

"that members shall, in order that there should be unity and harmony amongst the various groups and points of view, and in order that the objects and interests of the Association may be most effectively achieved, refrain from political or religious argument, teaching or persuasion, in the course of all duties or activities directly connected with the Association".

(Brodie 1949b: 1 & 2)

Now the other aspects of the Freirian critique must be considered, particularly the polemic against the use of teachers drawn from a privileged group in society for the education of the oppressed. I believe this polemic has to be seen as deeply rooted in the radical ideas which concurrently surfaced in the liberation theology of Latin America, particularly at a conference of Latin American bishops in 1968 at Medellin, and in the book "The Theology of Liberation" by

Gustavo Gutierrez in 1971. The bishops, bringing the full weight of the church to the support of the oppressed, spoke out against structural or "institutionalised violence" as the primary violence in Latin America, and in the interest of justice and peace supported a "dynamic action of awakening and organisation of the popular sectors" for liberating the masses from servitude (Germond, 1987: 224). Gutierrez was more specific; he rejected any concept which would attribute the ugly oppressive and violent situation in Latin America merely to such matters as a low educational standard and a limited economy etc., and in the words of Germond (ibid: 222) expressed the view that:

"the violence in Latin America emerges from the economic base upon which it rests. Liberation theology employs the class analysis of society as the tool with which to understand the social dynamics of society, an analysis which sees conflict between classes as an inherent characteristic of capitalist society."

Freire, an exponent of liberation theology, sees oppression in terms of the same Marxist class analysis and this explains both his deep distrust of the motives of the privileged in educating the oppressed and his belief that they perpetuate the status quo, encourage passivity and promote their own culture at the expense of the authentic culture of the learners.

How fair would this analysis be as applied to the situation in the Cape Night Schools movement? Some of the Freirian criticism of the pedagogic role played by society's more privileged group could be seen to apply to the Association. The night schools no doubt did unwittingly foster "adaptability", and instead of promoting a revolutionary questioning among its pupils of society's fundamental framework, strove instead to educate and to promote inter-racial goodwill in the struggle that was taking place externally for a just society. It can be said also that the Association encouraged personal aspirations within the framework of traditional Western bourgeois values. For those learners who made it to the top it could even be said that the CNENSA with its overall liberal aim of equality of opportunity had helped to transpose people from a lower to a higher

standard of living. But whilst it can be admitted that the volunteer teachers as a group did not embrace a socialist ideology yet they could hardly be termed "oppressors". All of them, in one way or another, outside of their work in the night classes, opposed the juggernaut of apartheid, and many of them sought fundamental reappraisals of the root-causes of South African oppression, poverty and inequality. For the most part, as has been shown, they were liberals at various stages of fluid progressive thinking and were certainly supportive of equal opportunities for all, irrespective of race, creed or class.

While it is true that black consciousness, using the concepts in both liberational theology and in Freirian adult education, had helped significantly to emancipate blacks in South Africa from negative attitudes and from the "culture of silence", yet on the other hand, the night schools could also justifiably claim to have fostered self-respect and human dignity and worth. And in the transaction that took place between teachers and pupils, if instruction in the language, literature and social studies of a western culture constituted a "cultural invasion" it was only in terms of a very definite demand from the learners themselves who chose to follow set syllabi and to work for examination certificates as steps on the path of general advancement in the fait accompli of the existing order.

Earlier I referred to Brodie's description of teachers "growing" and "being educated" as their pupils grew and were educated (supra: 89). This significant experience referred to by many of the volunteer teachers bears some mild comparison to the joint and mutually instructive approach of Freire's "facilitators" and pupils to the learning process and testifies to the pertinence of Gramsci's belief in a necessary "reciprocal relationship" in which "every teacher is always a pupil and every pupil a teacher" (Femia, 1987: 161).

Brodie epitomised the basic attitude that most of the CNENSA teachers continued to have when he described them as hoping that a new society could be forged in South Africa, "in which we would have the courage to break down the barriers of caste and privilege, and where we could give ourselves a course and a direction by simply applying the golden rule of doing unto others as we would be done by" (Brodie,

1968).

As one looks back on the total historical process in the night schools era from the vantage point of the nineteen eighties it is possible to see causes, trends, relationships between phenomena and groups and the nucleus of future developments, which at the time, could not have been easily discerned by the chief actors preoccupied with their tasks in the CNENSA. But there was undoubtedly a "course and direction" implicit in the engagement between whites and blacks in the voluntary adult education movement that was certainly anathema to the authoritarian apartheid regime. It was a course and direction in a shared and warmly human experience that was surely a beginning in what Freire would call "conscientization" and in which the participants were being prepared for the commitments and tasks of the future. I believe that from this point of view in particular, the "diaspora" of the Association's manpower and resources in the relentless 1960's constituted a grievous loss.

✓ The CNENSA era was deliberately brought to an end by the apartheid government. It was the end of an era in more ways than one. The government had driven the ANC and PAC underground, had dealt devastating blows through detentions and bannings to the liberals in NUSAS and the Liberal Party, had caught and sentenced saboteurs and had shackled trade unions. The time was more than ripe for a transition to a new epoch and the emergence of a new force in resistance, namely that of liberation theology. This force, as has already been noted, found its way initially into the ranks of black opposition through the University Christian Movement and the newly established Christian Institute. The formation of SASO two years after the demise of the night schools then signalled far more than a break with NUSAS and its liberal tradition; it signalled the emergence of a radical new Christian commitment to the cause of the oppressed, the impact of the Freirian analysis on the vanguard of Black Consciousness and the beginning of a highly significant new era in South African history.

✓ The life-span of the CNENSA reflected a turbulent, complex historical period in the central struggle between power and privilege on the one hand and the oppressed masses on the other. The work of the night

schools was sandwiched in the midst of this struggle. Speaking of the aspirations, concerns, ways of behaving etc. which constitute the themes of an historical epoch, Freire (1976: 5) discerningly wrote:

"The epochs are fulfilled to the degree that their themes are grasped and their tasks solved; and they are superseded when their themes and tasks no longer correspond to newly emerging concerns."

The force of events and Freire's own Christian, radical views on liberation were to precipitate "new concerns" and to usher in a new era in black resistance in South Africa. These were the ideas that lay behind the Black Consciousness movement that was to turn the tables on the dictates of Bantu Education in 1976. This was the force that despite the casualties along the way, the tragic death of Steve Biko, the increasing number of exiles and the mounting fatalities among black leaders and youths, unleashed powerful new hopes and unstoppable resolution in the struggle for freedom. Indirectly it led to the strong re-emergence of the ANC internationally and to the later emergence locally of the new UDF as strong non-racial organisations once more in the forefront of the struggle.

In view of these new developments what can one select from the past and in particular from the liberal engagement as reflected in the African adult education movement, that could connect the liberals of that era with any kind of a meaningful role in the future with its very different ideological orientation? Steve Biko, while recognising the good intentions of the liberals had realized that they could only make a negative contribution to the process of enhancing black self-esteem and hence his conviction that for a period at least, the black man must stand alone until he had discovered his own human worth and potential. From hindsight now I believe with both Biko and Freire that this was a step that had to be taken. But in the diversified liberal engagement in the Cape Night Schools era, in the heart of the liberal approach, there was still room for growth that could equip its exponents for a fresh and meaningful role in the future. This was not lost and this I would like to touch on in the final chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHTCONCLUSIONS

8.1

THE LIBERAL-RADICAL CONTINUUM

As the centrality of the thesis has been bedded in the movement itself arising from the exigencies of a society of antithetical extremes, the main area of my concluding assessments will centre on the educational undertaking per se. However in the historical background and through inquiry into the nature of the human actors over two decades, both inside and outside the schools, the thesis has dwelt on social history and provided certain insights into early stages in the radicalization of many nurtured in the liberal tradition. With regard to the latter aspect an interesting continuum of liberal-radical thought runs right through the whole span of experience in the night schools and through a succession of related groups and individuals in their varying responses to their times. How far were such persons influenced by involvement in the African adult education movement? It is with regard to this chain of liberal thought (and its mutations) which gave an inner unity and overall character to the twenty-three year existence of the Cape Non-European Night Schools Association, that I will first turn my attention before forming conclusions on the movement itself.

As has been shown the start of night classes in Retreat in 1945 was a liberal response from young whites to the predicament of illiterate and semi-literate black adults as they transferred from pastoral peasant lives to the bleak alternatives in urban townships and squatter camps. But the sudden unaccustomed close contact with Africans led to the discovery of human bonds unsuspected by the casual white liberal. The engendering of these new relationships, quite different from those of the master-servant situation that had previously provided the only common form of white-black contact, were to provide all white participants with a transforming and enriching experience. It was this that was to exert a magnetic pull on those volunteers who remained teaching in the schools year after year. It was the contact, the new awakening to a hitherto unknown but warmly

interesting people, the mutual sharing of new understandings and the unconscious 'humanizing' of whites that provided the inspiration. Kuys began to discover some of this and regretted that excessive organisational work tended to distance him from the direct revelation whilst Brodie (1986b), telling me of the initial impact of his new encounters at Retreat in 1945 encapsulates the new experience in the following anecdote:

"On my first night, I was 'given' a big burly African and told to teach him to write. He clutched a pencil tightly in his fist, tremendously tense, actually shaking with emotion. I had to put my hand on his to steady it. From that moment I was 'hooked'; I realised how much this man needed me. There was an immediate bond between us. I felt a satisfaction and a humility in helping him, which has shaped my life ever since."

He then went on to assert that although he had put "an enormous personal effort into the Night Schools", he had got far more out of it and that this was where his "real education" began. Moreover he did not think that his experience was unique and maintained that "teaching these people who really needed us, filled a deep void in our psyches."

The above subjective revelation which will be construed by some as paternalistic, could be seen to imply that up to his involvement in an African night school situation Brodie's previous life with all that it held in elitist comforts and possessions, of education and race and class exclusiveness, had in fact isolated him not only from discovering the warm humanity of those excluded by all the above factors but also from discovering his own humanity. It taught him "humility" and the realization that this was where "his real education began". This personal record of Brodie's point of departure into a new awareness of himself and others is significant because the evidence supports the commonality of this experience among most of the CENSA's teachers.

This turning point or pivotal new experience was however only the beginning of a humanizing process. The experience in the night schools carried it somewhat further. It wasn't only "need" on the

part of the pupils that nourished it nor the bestowing of a helping hand. It was the feeling of fellowship that comes only when people with a common interest and purpose struggle together in the face of at least some shared difficulties. It was the fact that for those shared evenings, weekly, monthly, yearly, people from such extreme backgrounds could leave their own behind to work together in common territory. It was because the coming together was voluntary, free of monetary rewards, and the commitment to and the absorption in mental activities was quite undeterred by externals, by such things as exposure to the storms of winter, broken window panes, mischievous outside hooligans, crowded noisy rooms and creaking benches, poor lighting, weariness at the end of a working day, or any of the other material or physical discomforts that voluntary night schools in a segregated and oppressive society had to face.

For the majority of the liberal-minded whites in the 1950's and 1960's who continued to be brought thus into contact with African people the achievement of goodwill and fellowship was welcomed as a means for helping to ease racial tensions, and for promoting a climate in which the (diminishing) white opponents of Nationalist Party policies still hoped for Parliamentary reform of an inequitable and entrenched system. This was as far as most of them went. They were liberal in outlook but not sufficiently aroused to translate their liberalism into more radical assessments. However, as has been seen, those who took on positions of leadership in the Association during these two decades were in many cases those who were moving further towards the left. Their lives can support a supposition that the "humanising" experience in the night schools had had a role in shaping far more than a greater empathy towards African people. As the apartheid laws began to bite and the ineffectiveness of normal methods of opposition were thrown into sharp relief especially after Sharpsville, many who had played key roles in the Association either decided to emigrate (e.g. Brodie, Lipshitz, Berman) or in staying, adopted a more critical questioning of the status quo, and more robust and radical forms of opposition.

This latter trend in the 1960's has been seen in the growing solidarity of NUSAS and the Liberal Party with Africans and in the resultant massive subjection of their members to bannings and

detentions. To both of these groups considerable numbers of night school participants belonged. It is also evident in a more radical development in a number of individual cases, such as in Ronald Segal's assistance in the escape of Oliver Tambo and his own subsequent life as a radical writer in exile, in the emergence of the Christian socialist ethics and trade unionist support of the philosopher Richard Turner and in the writings of Martin Legassick after the latter had resigned from NUSAS and rejected the whole premiss of Liberalism. Is the assumption too great that these increasingly radical directions taken in the lives of all of these people were influenced to some extent by the earlier "humanising" contact they had had with Africans in the Cape Night Schools Association?

I am reluctant as the writer to interpose myself personally into the argument but because of my eleven years involvement in the Association and the fact that I have quoted subjective statements from other participants I realize that some of my own testimony is relevant here. For me the night school experience was the beginning of a significant journey. The discussions that arose in the small enthusiastic senior English classes in which I was involved, the extended extra lessons that many of us gave in our homes, the visits to homes and institutions in the townships - all these things afforded the privilege of reaching through to the warmly human people behind the customary masks of exterior politeness. Those years began many friendships some of which for thirty years have developed into close inter-familial relationships in life's inevitable cycle of family events with all their joys, struggles and in a few cases, terrible tragedies. But the influence went beyond the personal friendship level. Even after the close of the CNENSA the journey of enlightenment and understanding continued; an on-going association with black friends continued to deepen a commitment to the forging of a truly non-racial and just society. By 1983 when the United Democratic Front was formed, like many others, I was ready to embark on a new stage in the process towards a democratic South Africa, when the non-racial organisation to which I belonged became an affiliate of the UDF.

It has been noted that only a handful of those who had been involved

with the Association opted later for violent tactics, and that their underground activities were not suspected at the time by their close colleagues in the Association such as Rodney Davenport or Richard Turner. In the case of Vigne and Kemp, who were later members of the African Resistance Movement, their heightened concern over the African dilemma must certainly have been fed by their several years of close contact with Africans during their active night school years. It was no doubt their later close involvement with the PAC and the ANC (certainly for Vigne) and their solidarity of thinking with those Africans in the underground movements who had come to accept some form of armed aggression as the only remaining option, that set this small number of whites in the 1960's on so different a course to those of their liberal peers; however this group does give an additional extension on the liberal-radical continuum seen running through the whole era of the Cape African Night Schools.

In summing up the above contribution made by the adult African education movement in the 'growth of greater "humanity" among whites (which preceded a radical revision of white liberal attitudes for many people in the 1970's and 1980's) it is conceivable that the government's determination to keep the races apart was derived as much from its fear of the spread of such "humanised" feelings with their erosive effects on the structures for racist minority rule, as from tactics designed expressly to keep blacks educationally, politically, socially and economically at a subjugated level.

8.2

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS

I now approach an overall assessment of the Cape Night Schools movement itself. Based on the arguments outlined in Chapter One for an empirical but subjective, humanist approach, the thesis has presented the movement's origin historically in a mixed background of urgent needs and demands, on the one hand from an impoverished, exploited people living in third world conditions and on the other from the voluntary responses of a wide range of educated people mainly from a first world society. This background appraisal has been provided not only for grounding the structure and traditions of the night school movement and the participation of its actors in the

complex reality of its times, but also from the vantage point of some twenty years after the demise of the CNENSA, to provide a surer foundation for assessing the latter's ethos, and its strengths and weaknesses. It has also made it possible, as in the previous chapter, to bring the movement into sharper focus within the periphery of contextual developments and to view it from a later more radical perspective.

Also in keeping with the arguments put forward in Chapter One my own views as an observer (and participant in the final years) have been muted or are implicit rather than explicit in the narrative presentation of the material. Now that the story has been told however, more explicit judgements must be brought forward. In stepping into the educational vacuum to respond to the hunger for literacy and book-learning on the part of migrant or newly urbanised African adults in the period 1945-1967 what was really achieved by the CNENSA volunteers in the Cape Peninsula? In answering this question I will now attempt to assess the extent and validity of the Association's achievements.

Although it was frankly admitted from the start that the whole project was only a stop-gap for what should have been undertaken by the state (Brodie, 1950b: 3) the CNENSA members were determined to put it on as professional and organised a footing as possible. The evidence has cited painstaking efforts on the part of volunteer amateurs to keep abreast of current methods in providing literacy training and to equip themselves with the latest approved skills in teaching adults reading, writing and arithmetic. Where no text-books existed suitable for adult consumption, fore-runners like Roux and various participants (some skilled educationists) such as Lerner, Kuys, Blake, Newbigging and Horwitz stepped in and in the light of widely approved educational methods of the period devised special texts adapted to the age requirements of the adult literacy and semi-literate learners. And undoubtedly over the years thousands of African adults achieved literacy through these efforts.

In the field of secondary education the challenge was more daunting for a volunteer Association drawing its volunteer teachers from many walks in life, but advice was constantly sought from professional

educationalists, special notes in a number of subjects were carefully prepared and distributed and certainly in the 1960's during my chairmanship, only suitably qualified specialists among volunteers were selected for instructing the senior pupils at Retreat and also for the top class (Std 8) at St Marks. All this pedagogically was an effort to measure up to the highest standards possible within the severe limitations of a voluntary organisation that clearly could only be a substitute for properly funded, professionally organised and taught adult classes in adequately equipped classrooms. And the pattern of instruction corresponded to both the orthodox experience of its white (and black) teachers educated in the Western classical tradition and to the expectations of Africans (many from missionary backgrounds) who were strongly desirous of entering that tradition, particularly through the attainment of the all important examination certificate. Thus in the higher classes despite efforts to remedy the matter, the certificate, as it still does in so many institutions to-day, was largely permitted to dictate curricula and methods.

All in all, the CNENSA's educational programme, in its limited number of hours a week, with its limited material resources and objectives and its fluctuating attendances, adhered as best it could, to traditional and then widely acceptable Western liberal educational procedures, and in accordance with the conventional but very decided demands of its pupils.

Within the parameters of this liberal tradition there was undoubtedly the obvious strong current of cherished liberal values, freedom to know, to learn, to think and to criticize. Particularly there was the strong wish on the part of the teachers to open up opportunities for material and mental advancement per se, no doubt in the optimistic but misplaced hope that economic forces would expand the opportunities that were so deplorably lacking in the existing race and class structured society. This attitude was exemplified in the early more ambitious schemes to provide an employment agency and a bursary scheme for advanced pupils, in addition to night classes. It can be seen in the Association's strongly worded support in its Memorandum to the Eiselen Commission for the maintenance of the sciences and Latin in the secondary school curriculum for Africans and in its condemnation of any differentiation in the educational

training and facilities offered to Africans and Europeans (Brodie 1950a: 2-3). It is also revealed in the pride taken and on-going support given in the individual case histories of "success" when through the night schools pupils were launched into medicine, law, teaching, theology or nursing, examples of all of which are provided in the thesis.

The focus, for a variety of stated reasons, was a narrow one, namely on literacy, and on educational advancement along purely academic lines. As has been noted one of the liberal traditions preserved by the Association was the observance of a political (and religious) neutrality in the classroom, regardless of personal affiliations and biases. However in the previous chapter (pp. 288-290) (in countering a critical political pedagogical viewpoint) I have already presented my own arguments at some length on this matter; these saw the Association's approach as unavoidable in the light of the specific and complex circumstances in which the diverse participants in the CNENSA were placed.

Briefly then let me recap, but more specifically, how in the narrow terms of what the Association had set out to do it had honoured its aims. 'Migrants who were illiterate and confused in a new urban worker society among speakers of two foreign languages, far from wives and children, and with their few leisure hours spent in the direst of living quarters, found a warm, responsive and creative home in the night schools. Here they learnt to read and write their own language and write letters home, to speak, read and write the new language used in their daily working lives, to develop greater fluency in language skills and, as they progressed, to learn to comprehend an ever-widening range of written and spoken thought, to read newspapers and to take part more and more coherently in a range of community activities that could also extend to church, trade unions and politics. Sometimes if lucky, through their new learning, they earned slightly better wages and found slightly better jobs.'

Although the provision of all these new accomplishments has been seen from a later radical perspective as adapting workers to the needs of an exploitative society yet this was not the view held in the 1940's by Ray Alexander (1943) of the Food and Canning Workers Union, or by

Miss M.T. Soga (1943) of the National Council of African Women, when they both submitted memoranda in 1943 to the Union Department of Education supporting the promotion of adult night schools.

Prof. Z.K. Matthews, educationist and ANC leader, whom Roux (1948: 299) described as "one of the most sophisticated and westernized of Africans", was a strong supporter too of adult education. He stressed the practical educational needs of migrants in coming to town in the following manner:

"there is a continuous process at work whereby, every year, thousands are being torn from their moorings and are brought into contact with a new environment which puts them in a state of utter confusion. Old customs, sanctions and taboos do not operate under the changed conditions and rarely is there anything to take their place. It is criminal to admit a social and economic policy which inevitably breaks down the old way of life and not assist the people to make the necessary adjustment...

"For them it is an urgent necessity, from their own point of view and the point of view of the weal of the whole country, that they be provided with the means to become 'fits' in the modern world."

(Matthews: 1947)

As far as the more advanced secondary classes were concerned pupils found encouragement and expert help, particularly from a range of experienced professional teachers, which enabled them to enter tertiary training for careers and professions. Furthermore (within the obvious limitations of the project) mental stimulation in the quest for knowledge was expanded extra-murally through pupil debates, documentary films, attendance at plays and especially through encouragement in the use of libraries. These were all tangible educational factors that made the night classes so much sought after and which one might argue, could substantiate a claim that the CNENSA materially benefited thousands of Africans in acquiring the basics of a fundamental school education.

The evidence has dwelt upon literacy, academic attainments, harmony of interest and in particular, inter-racial good-will. And on looking at the background to those twenty-three years of the Association's existence, at the rapid growth of state authoritarianism and repression, the counter developments in black resistance and liberal white attitudes, the banning of black political organisations and the formation of militant underground movements, the fact that the CNENSA, as an independent volunteer organisation could maintain for so long and so productively its virtually neutral territory, an oasis sought with fervour by both whites and blacks from a wide ideological spectrum, was, when measured in the value systems of its time, a highly significant achievement. Even when it is evaluated under later and different systems of value, it will, I believe, still hold an honourable place in the annals of South African history.

8.3

A LINK TO THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

In Chapter One I referred not only to the importance of seeing the past in its relation to the present but also in its connection to the future. As Carr (1964: 123) put it: "The historian of the past can make an approach towards objectivity only as he approaches towards the understanding of the future." And with this in mind, before bringing this study of an educational movement in its historical context to a close, I would like very briefly to reflect upon the continuum in adult education, perceived thus far through liberal and Freirian perspectives, in its appearance in the movement that is now emerging in the present and with its designs for the future.

In the present, the road of repression and exploitation that we have travelled in South Africa has brought us to widespread civil unrest and an ongoing state of emergency. In this tense polarised situation the major forces of opposition on the left are increasingly uniting not only against the racism of apartheid but against the political, socio-economic structures that are seen as the basic determinants of class divisions, elitism, privilege and wide-spread authoritarianism and oppression. In the struggle for a democratic society the centre of gravity moves increasingly towards the left, and whereas in the 1950's the Freedom Charter was banned by the Nationalists and

regarded suspiciously by conservatives and liberals alike, to-day it is accepted widely not only by COSATU, the UDF and other extra-parliamentary organisations, but also by a widening spectrum of moderate progressive-thinking men and women as a foundation document for constituting a just and democratic society.

A similar significant general shift towards the left is manifest in the field of education, and in this process, alongside continuing traditional forms of adult education, more radical programmes are emerging as a powerful means for setting up a counter-hegemony to the opposed hegemony of the dominant culture. In this process the Freirian methods are in turn being viewed from a more radical perspective. I cannot now enter into this particular discourse in any depth; this is a task for future research and evaluations but in an overall synoptic view of the past in its relation to the present and the future I would like to offer the following brief and final comment on the emerging adult education situation.

I must first refer once again to Paulo Freire and specifically to his central belief that transforming the world can never be contained in theory dictating practice or in any static, completed action. He sees it as a continuous cycle, an ongoing process of humans in open dialogue with one another continuously "denouncing the oppressive structure and announcing the humanizing structure". In his view there will always be a need to review and revise and this constitutes his philosophy of hope for mankind, a safe-guard against the danger of authoritarianism and imposition of ideas. Giroux (1985: xxiii), describes Freire's attitude towards theory and practice as follows:

"Theory is informed by an oppositional discourse that preserves its critical distance from the 'facts' and experiences of the given society. The tension, indeed the conflict with practice, belongs to the essence of theory and is grounded in its very structure. Theory does not therefore dictate practice; rather it serves to hold practice at arm's length in order to mediate and critically comprehend the type of praxis needed within a specific setting at a particular time in history. There is no appeal to universal laws or historical necessity here; theory emerges from specific contexts and forms of experience in order

to examine such contexts critically and then to intervene on the basis of an informed praxis."

This transforming process which Freire calls 'conscientization implies utopia. "Only those who are continually denouncing and announcing, committed and engaged in the transformation of the world are utopian and create hope." He believes that if humans are not utopian, constantly questioning culture, culture becomes static in the form of myths.

"If we are not utopian we will easily become bureaucratic and dehumanizing. This is the risk revolutions run when they become static and institutionalized. Revolution must be permanent and it must be Cultural Revolution - a continuous cultural self-criticism of men in society and the world."

(Freire, 1970)

Added to this belief in humans as "makers and remakers of the world" Freire stresses that 'conscientizing education "is not a situation where one knows and others do not" and states:

"Conscientization is not, it cannot be, an imposition, a manipulation. I cannot impose my opinions on others. I can only invite others to share them, discuss them."

(ibid)

I mention this important aspect of Freire's philosophy because it now constitutes one of the areas of dispute in adult education in terms of orthodox Marxists. Freire, rooted in the radical catholicism of the Latin-American founders of liberation theology, imbued with the humanist elements in Gramsci and the early works of Marx and reflecting many of the central beliefs in phenomenology, has been criticised by Youngman, (1986: 153) for providing a theory with which the "liberal ideology of mainstream adult education" can too easily identify. Youngman, while approving of much of the Freirian approach also finds much to condemn in it. Apart from criticising Freire's "strongly Christian overtones" and stating that "a coherent synthesis of Marxism and Christian doctrine at the philosophical level is not possible" (ibid: 182 & 162) he in particular takes issue with Freire's

insistence on avoiding any form of imposition or manipulation on the part of educators in their dialogical engagement with learners in the learning process. Youngman criticizes this as evading the essential role of theory required in a socialist educational programme. In this regard Youngman argues:

"the development of 'critical consciousness' cannot be considered abstractly but only in relation to a theory which is critical of the dominant ideology. An account of education for critical consciousness must therefore accept head-on the superiority in terms of theoretical understanding of the teacher and must also specify the content of this theoretical understanding... My argument is that there is a populist and liberal element in Freire's thinking that pulls him towards an uncritical faith in 'the people' and makes him ambivalent about saying outright that educators can have a theoretical understanding superior to that of the learners and which is, in fact, the indispensable condition of the development of critical consciousness."

(ibid: 178-179)

Youngman's tight adherence to the central tenets of orthodox Marxist political economic theory pushes to the forefront an issue which has been addressed by many neo-Marxists over the last few decades, among them Thompson and Femia, some of whose related ideas have been referred to in Chapter One. The point at issue is this:- in the swing towards the left in the people's movement in this country which of these divergent views in radical thought will gain the ascendancy? My own basically liberal view supports the Freirian utopian process of continually questioning society, of "denouncing and announcing" and of denying a fixed and unbending theory the power that could substitute one form of authoritarianism for another.

In one final reference to the constant movement of events and ideas glimpsed in this study, it is of particular significance in the present to see the expanding role of liberation theology that through SASO's application of Freirian ideas first ushered in a new epoch in adult education in the 1970's. In the general shift towards the left and the search for solutions this continuum from old liberal to new

radical thought has not been broken; in the development of liberation theology it has strengthened. To-day through Beyers Naude, Desmond Tutu, Allan Boesak, Denis Hurley and many others, it carries the ecumenical weight of a powerful church that has come to see its role, in the light of its Christian calling, unequivocally on the side of the oppressed. I believe that in this new blend of opposition forces lies hope for ultimate peace and justice in a non-racial, democratic South Africa.

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- 7/7/1967 Sec. for Bantu Educ. to Regl. Director King William's Town.
- 22/9/1967 Private Secretary, Ministry of Bantu Administration and Development and of Bantu Education, to D.M. Wilson, CNENSA.
- 2/8/1968 D.M. Wilson, Chairman, CNENSA, to the Secretary, Langa School Board.
- 13/8/1968 Sec. Langa Bantu School Board to Chairman, CNENSA.
- 23/8/1968 Inspector of Schools, Bantu Educ. Cape Town to Sec. Langa Bantu School Board.
- 5/9/1968 Sec. Langa Bantu School Board to Chairman, CNENSA.
- 17/10/1968 Administrative Control Officer, Ministry of Bantu Administration and Development and of Bantu Education, to D.M. Wilson, CNENSA.
- 29/11/1968 D.M. Wilson, Chairman, CNENSA, to the Minister of Bantu Education, Pretoria.
- 3/2/1969 Administrative Control Officer, Ministry of Bantu Administration and Development and of Bantu Education to Chairman, CNENSA.

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