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**SPECIAL ISSUE**

**APRIL 2010**

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**REBUTTAL**

**OF CIRAJ RASSOOL'S**

**DENIGRATION OF**

**I.B.TABATA**

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## **CIRAJ RASSOOL'S THESIS CHALLENGED AND REBUTTED**

**A Rebuttal of the Denigration of I.B. Tabata as a leading Revolutionary and the Relegation of Jane Gool's Role in the Liberation Struggle by Denying her Contribution, such Denigration and Relegation to be found in the doctoral thesis of Ciraj Rassool titled, "The Individual, Autobiography and History in South Africa" Submitted to the University of the Western Cape in 2004**

## Introduction

This introduction was published as a Special Issue of Apdusa Views in January 2010 under the heading: “A Vile Deception by Ciraj Rassool on Jane Gool an Aging Revolutionary towards the end of her Life.” For the sake of completeness we have incorporated the Special issue as an introduction to the Rebuttal

About twenty years ago we learnt that a university student proposed writing the biography of leading revolutionary and thinker – I.B.Tabata. This was indeed good news. The country never got to know its leading thinker. The country’s newspapers were full of ersatz leaders – leaders imposed on the population by the very powerful propaganda machinery of imperialism and the liberal bourgeoisie. The vitally important and long overdue piece of writing was to be done by a certain Ciraj Rassool who happened to be a grand-nephew of the well known Gool sisters. Who better than a member of the Gool family, the descendant of the Indian-born wife of the patriarch, Yusuf Gool? Tabata’s own life was closely intertwined with members of the Gool family for over fifty years. It was therefore doubly appropriate that a member of the Gool family should write and record the life of one of the most remarkable men in the struggle for liberation of the oppressed people of this country.

By the mid 1980s our group, Natal Apdusa had become *persona non grata* with the Tabata/ Jane Gool leadership of the Unity Movement of South Africa (UMSA). The principal cause was our group’s involvement and activity in the formation of the New Unity Movement (NUM) which effectively excluded the overseas UMSA leadership from exercising any organisational influence.

During February 1993, we happened to run into Jane Gool in Cape Town. Prior to that I had expressed my fear to Minnie Gool the real possibility of losing forever the history of the Workers Party of South Africa (WPSA) since there were no prospects of that history being written by either RO Dudley or Alie Fataar.<sup>1</sup> Without my knowledge Minnie Gool broached the subject with Jane Gool and told her that I wanted to discuss the preservation of that history with her. When Jane Gool asked me what was it that I wanted to know, I repeated my fears of that history being lost forever. Jane Gool’s response was a curt: “That has been taken care of!” I assumed that Dr Norman Traub had been entrusted with that task.

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<sup>1</sup> I raised the matter of the history of the WPSA with Cde Alie Fataar during the 1990 conference of the New Unity Movement, he being a member of the WPSA. Cde Fataar told me that he had previously raised the matter with Mr. Dudley (also a member) who reminded him that WPSA members were bound by an oath never to reveal the activity of the WPSA. If therefore they considered themselves bound by that oath, there were no prospects of them recording the history of the WPSA.

I now realize that what Jane Gool meant was that the task was entrusted, not to the faithful and loyal Norman Traub but to, in retrospect, a Machiavellian Ciraj Rassool. It is merciful that Jane Gool did not live to see the nightmare of what she believed had been “taken care of”.

Once it was agreed by the UMSA leadership under Jane Gool that the biography of Tabata be written by Ciraj Rassool, no effort was spared to see this objective realized.<sup>2</sup> There were numerous interviews; Ciraj Rassool was plied with all kinds of documents which might have a bearing on the design and creation of the autobiography. Jane Gool submitted herself to no less than eight interviews. There was tremendous enthusiasm and expectation. At long last, the people of South Africa in the main and to a lesser extent the people of Africa would get to read about I.B. Tabata who was described by Professor Linda Chisholm<sup>3</sup> as “arguably one of finest intellectuals South Africa has produced in the 20th century”<sup>4</sup>

It was expected of Rassool that his biography would bring to the fore Tabata the activist revolutionary, the orator without equal and the single-mindedness with which he devoted his entire life for the liberation of his people for no reward other than the satisfaction of doing so.

As it turned out, when Rassool completed the biography, the reader was presented not with “one of the finest intellectuals South Africa has produced...” but a shocking *caricature*.<sup>5</sup> All the worst vices of politicians, especially those from the Third World and most pertinently of the new rulers of this country were visited on Tabata’s head<sup>6</sup>:

- Dishonesty, fraud, petty jealousy and fear of being outshone politically through Neville Alexander
- Intolerance and dictatorship through Livingstone Mqotsi
- Senility, mental degeneration, abandonment of the revolutionary struggle through the insanity-drenched pages of Frank Anthony’s book “The Journey”

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<sup>2</sup> On page (ii) of Rassool’s “Acknowledgements” in his thesis, Rassool states:” Aunty Jane (Jane Gool) and Aunty Minnie (Minnie Gool) were always very supportive of my research, and answered all my questions even when they were complicated ones.”

<sup>3</sup> Who is accepted nationwide as a highly talented intellectual who is with the Human Science Research Council and who is presently seconded to Mrs. Angie Motshega, the incompetent Minister of Basic Education.

<sup>4</sup> “Education, Politics and Organisation. The Educational Traditions of the Non European Unity Movement 1943 -1986 by Linda Chisholm and published in “Transformation” 15 (1991)

<sup>5</sup> The Caricature took the form of a doctoral thesis submitted by Rassool to the University of Western Cape and for which he was awarded a doctorate.

<sup>6</sup> The one vice that Rassool could not place on Tabata’s head was living a life of affluence and luxury.

- Plagiarism or perpetrating a fraud on the public by not acknowledging that his works were written in part by Dora Taylor, through Ciraj Rassool
- Patronage
- “Presidentialism” – betrayal of the principle of collective leadership presumably and developing a craving to be addressed and treated as a President
- Betrayal of the interests of the working class through Baruch Hirson
- Abandonment of Marxism through Baruch Hirson

The unkindest cut of all was Rassool’s act or his active connivance in the act of expelling Jane Gool from the side of Tabata in the display in the District Six Museum and placing a portrait of Dora Taylor in its place.

It is doubly merciful that Jane Gool did not live to see this malice-driven dastardly deed.

Rassool claims that at some stage in his research he chose to abandon the route of a conventional biography of Tabata. He gives no credible reason for this sudden *volte face*. It only reinforces the suspicion that he had all along intended this and made his move at a time when Jane Gool could no longer defend herself or Tabata and when Minnie Gool was reaching out for her century

Let us put it differently. Had Jane Gool and Tabata’s followers like Minnie Gool and Gwen Wilcox known how Tabata’s “biography” was going to turn out, they would *never* have cooperated with Ciraj Rassool. More importantly they would have alerted all Unity Movement - orientated persons about Rassool’s true intentions. In the end Rassool would have been left only with Tabata’s detractors.

Ever since I had sight of Rassool’s thesis, I kept wondering what is it that could make a person engage in such deception. I have made some inquiries about possible motives on Rassool’s part. Various theories were suggested – one enough to make one’s hair stand – but there was no hard evidence.

Ultimately I have been left with a number of strands suggesting possible motives.

1. It is significant that Rassool dedicates his thesis to, amongst others his mother's father, Daniel Michael Crowe, a Stalinist who was a member of the Communist Party and to his mother. Rassool claims that it was the Stalinist Crowe who "stimulated my imagination about the cultural history of radical politics." It strains credulity to understand how the most shameless falsifiers of history could have stimulated any imagination. One has no idea of how much seepage there has been of the poison of Stalinism from grandfather to grandson. It is not accidental that Rassool dedicates his thesis to his grandfather who belonged to a party which considered the Unity Movement personified by people like Tabata as its mortal enemy. The thinking of grandfather and grandson on this score is what lawyers call *ad idem*, of one mind. What can be more fitting than to dedicate a massive character assassination of a leading Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyist to a Stalinist?
  
2. Anybody who knows of or knew the family of Yusuf Gool will concede the rivalry between his two wives and which rivalry was passed on to their descendants. One sees it trickling out from time to time in Joe Rassool's book "*District Six Lest We Forget.*" To what extent did that rivalry affect Ciraj Rassool? Did it have anything to do with the public act of "divorcing" Jane Gool from Tabata's side? We get a glimpse of his own hatred for the Gool family (meaning the family from Hajima, the wife from South Africa) through a cheap jibe at the image projected by the Gool family when he referred to it as the "Gool family gloriana"<sup>7</sup>
  
3. In heaping ignominy on Tabata and relegating stalwart Jane Gool to the sideline, Ciraj Rassool seeks to discredit the Unity Movement as a whole. Ever since its formation, the Unity Movement has been a huge thorn in the flesh of the ANC and the SACP. In all major debates, these two organisations were almost invariably trounced thoroughly by the Unity Movement. It was the Unity Movement which exposed the collaboration of these organisations and their ilk with the ruling class of the day. It was the Unity Movement which condemned the racialism practiced by these organisations. And it was the Unity movement which exposed the various adventuristic stunts parading as the freedom struggle.

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<sup>7</sup> See Footnote 3 on page 439 of Rassool's thesis. What is ironical is that Ciraj Rassool is the grandson of the very same "Gool half sister" he mentions in the footnote.

Nothing would please the new ruling class more than the massive assault on Tabata's political reputation.<sup>8</sup> Nothing would please the new ruling class more than a systematic accusation against the foremost personality of the Unity movement of all the very political vices the Unity Movement had accused the ANC and SACP of.

That massive assault would be considered by the new rulers as precious service rendered. There would be rewards aplenty from the new ruling class for a young ambitious man who can render such valuable service.

Ciraj Rassool is not averse to being heaped with positions and what he considers honours. He is even less averse to inflicting a narration of these honours on the readers of his thesis.<sup>9</sup> There is no better way to garner positions and honours than by singing the praises of the new rulers and slandering and vilifying their most persistent gadfly.

Let us be clear about one thing. It is not our intention to try and psychoanalyse Ciraj Rassool for actual motives in perpetrating the vile deception. When you accuse someone of vile conduct, it is expected from your audience that you furnish some indication of the motive. But the purpose of the rebuttal is not to supplant the work of an alienist but to deal with the more important of the slanders and to show their baselessness.

We intend showing that:

- The level of scholarship displayed by Rassool falls short insofar as factual and objective presentation is concerned
- The standard displayed by Rassool concerning fair and balanced presentation
- In basing his attack on the Unity Movement and Tabata by employing the article by Baruch Hirson Rassool has revealed his own ignorance of the politics of Tabata and the Unity Movement.

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<sup>8</sup> The new ruling class like the Mafia can be extremely cynical. They did everything in their power to destroy one of the most impressive creations of the liberation struggle, which is SACOS. Then they offer the past presidents of SACOS awards for their struggle through SACOS! The ANC and SACP did everything in their power to deny the Unity Movement recognition by the OAU and thereby were responsible for the denial of access to much needed resources. It is now incontrovertible that the Unity Movement mission abroad failed because of the withholding of recognition. Tabata died in exile with his dream and life's work remaining unfulfilled. The ANC government thereafter granted him an award. The Mafia with incomparable cynicism used to bring the largest floral tribute to the funeral of a victim, assassinated by the Mafia in the first place!

<sup>9</sup> See page 502 to 512 of his thesis.

- Rassool scrapes the barrel by relying on “work of fiction” by Frank Anthony when the latter during a period of mental breakdown poured out his hatred against those whom he perceived were his political opponents.
- Without research and investigation he accepted the version presented to him by Neville Alexander concerning his suspension of from the Society of Young Africa and his subsequent relationship with the Unity Movement
- He accepted without testing the validity of the version given by Livingstone Mqotsi and thereby was unable to provide a rational political
- explanation for the behaviour of Mqotsi and failed to reconcile his conduct with his subsequent considerably low key political involvement for the rest of his life
- With deliberate and malicious intention he reduces Jane Gool’s role as that of a mere companion of Tabata with no mention at all of Jane Gool’s considerable political talent, skill and contribution<sup>10</sup>
- Without any factual evidence Rassool makes the absurd claim that Dora Taylor was strongly influential in Tabata’s development as a political thinker and activist
- Without any acceptable factual evidence Rassool makes the claim that Tabata’s works and writings were the outcome of joint effort and contribution by himself and Dora Taylor which Tabata failed to disclose, acknowledge or make public
- Rassool committed the cardinal error of not researching and not studying the most important component of the life of his subject for biography. In Tabata’s case that component was his political outlook which is inextricably bound up with the organisations he worked in and advanced.
- In writing about Tabata and the Unity Movement Rassool showed shocking ignorance so as to render his entire thesis falling short of what is generally considered to be fair objective academic scholarship.

## **THE APPROACH TO THE REBUTTAL OF RASSOOL’S THESIS.**

1. We do not belong to the academia and are thus not trained in the rules governing debate and disputes between academics.
2. We are political activists and have been so for a long time.

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<sup>10</sup> As it happened it was Jane Gool who had recruited Tabata into the WPSA.

3. We intend responding to Rassool's thesis as we would any polemical matter.
4. We debate hard and do not engage in niceties and euphemisms. We say what we have to say bluntly and where anger is justified then anger is expressed.
5. We do not submit the Rebuttal as an academic thesis to be assessed and given a grade. We submit our Rebuttal as both a defence of the honour integrity and reputation of very special individuals which have been sullied and attributed with infamy and also as an attack on the dishonourable motives and questionable techniques employed by Rassool in seeking to smear Tabata's life with infamy, which life by and large was free from most of the vices of human beings.
6. We also seek to repel Rassool's malicious relegation of Jane Gool to the sidelines and thereby deny her her rightful place in the liberation struggle, both as an activist and a theoretician. And knowing both Tabata and Jane Gool for decades, we reject out of hand the assertion by Rassool that she was a mere companion to Tabata because for 60 years she was his partner in life, his comrade, his co-political strategist and his fellow-fighter, always together in the forefront of battle.

CONCLUSION It is our intention to publish our Rebuttal on the Apdusa Views website either as a single piece or in sections, depending on factors of convenience and practicality.

**ABOUT THE PERSON WHO HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED WITH THE TASK OF FORMULATING A REBUTTAL OF CIRAJ RASSOOL'S DOCTORAL THESIS WHICH IN THE MAIN SEEKS TO DENIGRATE AND DEFAME THE POLITICAL REPUTATION OF LEADING REVOLUTIONARY AND INTELLECTUAL, I.B. TABATA.**

APDUSA VIEWS has taken a decision to administer a full rebuttal of the thesis insofar as it seeks to denigrate I.B. Tabata, to marginalize the role of Jane Gool and through these means to undermine and belittle the contribution made by the Unity Movement and Apdusa in the liberation

struggle. Apdusa Views has appointed its editor Kader Hassim to prepare, formulate and publish the rebuttal.

It is our view that Kader Hassim is qualified to execute this task. He has been actively involved in Unity Movement politics, both organizationally and theoretically for the past 59 years. Over these decades Kader Hassim has interacted with the leadership of the Unity Movement at various levels – from the local to the national.

With the passage of time, the number of people who have intimate knowledge about the Unity Movement has drastically diminished either through death or through desertion. There are few left who have a substantial knowledge of important information about the Unity Movement. Kader Hassim is one of them.

Kader Hassim joined the Unity Movement in 1951 as a student. He went on to become an activist in the Anti Segregation Council in Dundee in that same year. He continued his political activities when he was employed in a factory, as a university student, as editor of the journal “The Soyan” in 1959, as Vice president of SOYA<sup>11</sup> in 1961, as an attorney, as prisoner on Robben Island, as one of the leading members of the revived Apdusa in Natal in 1982, as a member of the steering committee of the New Unity Movement and as its Vice president in 1988.

He was appointed as editor of Apdusa Views in 1984 and has remained in this position until the present.

On Robben Island, he was placed in “B” section with people like Pokela and Masemola of the PAC, with Govan Mbeki of the SACP and Nelson Mandela of the ANC and others from 1973 until his departure from Robben Island in February 1980.

Kader Hassim has met and interacted with leading personalities of the Unity Movement over the decades.

In the preparation and formulation of the rebuttal, Kader Hassim has been actively assisted by his wife and comrade, Nina Hassim who herself has been involved in the liberation struggle through the Unity Movement since she was eleven years old, i.e. for over 60 years. She is the niece of Jane Gool and I.B. Tabata and has known them since she was a child.

The Rebuttal is relatively substantial. Work on it commenced during August 2008 when the existence of the thesis on the internet came to our attention.

## **APDUSA VIEWS EDITORIAL COMMITTEE**

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<sup>11</sup> Society of Young Africa

## THE NEED TO INTERVENE

It may be asked what need there is for Apdusa Views or Nina and myself to intervene in a matter concerning the senior leadership of UMSA, in particular I.B. Tabata, Jane Gool and Dora Taylor. It may be said that you are not even members of UMSA. Those asking the question may even go so far as to say that you Kader Hassim, together with Sunny Venkatrathnam and Gabby Pillay, were subjected to a scurrilous attack written by two UMSA members who did not have the courage to identify themselves and sought shelter behind *noms de plume* but who we got to learn were Leonard Nikane and Ronnie Britten. But we also knew that the senior leadership had sight of that document before it was published and had raised no objection.

Our attitude is that the strained relationship between ourselves and the senior leadership of UMSA was no more than just a phase in a relationship which spanned decades. We therefore do not turn our backs on people with whom we have had a long and enriching relationship simply because there have been subsequent differences of a political nature.

An important part of our political training and upbringing is to react always to any act of injustice. Reacting always with righteous indignation at an injustice done has been so ingrained in us by the Unity Movement that it has become second nature to us. When, therefore, a grave and heinous injustice has been inflicted on selfless and committed revolutionaries, who, being dead are no longer in a position to defend their reputation, it becomes the sacred duty of all those who learnt from them and who were, even for a short time, inspired by them, to rise and defend those persons.

On that basis, we consider it to be our duty to be in the forefront to ward off the slanders and to expose the slander to the public.

All three individuals, Tabata, Jane Gool and Dora Taylor have had a great influence on our political upbringing and therefore our thinking, our activity and on our lives. In rising to their defence we do no more than what grateful apprentices or pupils the world over would have done.

From the above it is clear that we require the consent of no person or organisation to launch the rebuttal. Nor is membership of UMSA or its successor a prerequisite to entering the battle in defence of the

reputation and honour of those maligned, insulted or unscrupulously misused as was the case with Dora Taylor.

Thus the need to intervene becomes the right to intervene!

## **THE MANNER OF THE REBUTTAL**

In his zeal to demonise Tabata, Ciraj Rassool was like a rampaging juggernaut. There were no holds barred. He used every piece of dirt he could gather to smear Tabata. No trouble was too much to attain that objective. He got people who bore grudges or hatred against Tabata and lines them up. Then he gave each such person the opportunity to give free rein to ventilate his or her hatred against Tabata. He ensures that Tabata is tied hand and foot with a gag tied tightly round his mouth. By this we mean that he failed to provide what people from time immemorial have done – provided the accused person the right to reply or defend himself.

In our rebuttal we will seek to show that Rassool is no respecter of fact where fact obstructs a smear. We will show that in matters of importance Rassool is abysmally ignorant. We will also show that in not a single instance did Rassool test or take the normal accepted steps and procedures to test and verify the most damaging allegations against a man who is no longer able to defend himself. In the course of this rebuttal we will make the claim that Rassool must take the full responsibility for the shoddy research done by Tabata's accusers like Baruch Hirson or the insane ranting by a mentally unbalanced person like Frank Anthony since Rassool has without qualification or reservation put forward their views to the reader as if it is the truth.

When you deal with such a person as Rassool, there is no place for courtesies or polite language. There is no place for a genteel dispute. There can also be no place for half measures. We do not intend confining our response to an entire section of slander to a single sentence. We shall deal with and debate each such section fully.

Ciraj Rassool is in full pursuit of Tabata after his death. He leaves no stone unturned. Even death does not bring closure for Rassool. He therefore pursues him to his actual grave and mocks at the religious inscription on his tombstone, somehow expecting the reader to blame Tabata for what is inscribed there.

## **THE USE OF JARGON AND BOMBASTIC LANGUAGE**

My limited knowledge of the English language was responsible for my aversion of university theses. The style in which they are written, the use of jargon and the practice whereby every sentence or even half

a sentence is accompanied by a footnote. Each time you take your eyes away from the text and read the footnote, you are interrupted. This makes concentration difficult and adds to an already difficult piece to understand..

The one outstanding exception is Robin Kayser's thesis for his MA degree – "Land and Liberty! The Non European Unity Movement and the Land Question 1933-1976" I found this document to be most readable with little or no burden to understand what the writer was seeking to convey. When the matter of Kayser's thesis being published in book form was raised, Raymond Suttner offered to assist. He advised that the manuscript be rewritten to make it presentable as a book and not as an MA thesis. In my own mind I could not understand the need to rewrite. My amateurish advice was to gather all the footnotes and place them at the end of the document!

The same cannot be said for Rassool's thesis. Without being overdramatic I must confess surrounding myself with a pile of dictionaries plus the electronic ones – Encarta and Britannica. This is because I have not comes across a document like Rassool's thesis with it such a high degree of unintelligibility. The man's propensity for the use of bombastic words like "presidentialsim", "mediation", "paternalism", "patronage" and "biographic site" is limitless.<sup>12</sup>

## **SNEERING AND GLOATING**

In Chapter 5 of his thesis, Rassool claims that there are five sites where Tabata's life was commemorated. Two of these must be contested and challenged.

1. There is the grave of Tabata in what Rassool calls a "Roadside Cemetery". On a tombstone there is an inscription clearly not formulated by the UMSA leadership. The inscription is by Tabata's family members and the community in which he was born and from which he left for the city and for exile many decades ago up to the time of his death. In death he was returned to his family members and the community. They are a simple rural people who have chosen to honour their son in the way they thought was proper. Rassool's arrogance is most offensive when he pours ridicule on the religious tones of the inscription.

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<sup>12</sup> Often he assigns meanings to such words which are not used normally

2. The second site is the APDUSA office in Salt River, Cape Town. No reasonable person can for a moment doubt that the opening of the office was for principal or sole purpose of doing work. It was meant to be an office, nothing more and nothing less. But Rassool chooses to convert an office into a commemorative site. Why? To honour Tabata? Far from it. The opposite has all the hallmarks of being true.

Look at the great details he takes the trouble of going into. He describes a run-down, unimpressive office with its dingy and dubious origin. It is surrounded by hairdressers, shoe shops, fruit and vegetable stores (he leaves the stench of decaying fruit and vegetables to the reader's imagination). He even takes the trouble to describe its location – under a stair way to accentuate the dinginess, sleaziness and poverty of the area in which the supposed commemorative site is located. All he needed to complete his picture was a shebeen and a brothel!

He is in effect saying: “Look! This is where the so-called great revolutionary ends up!”

It reminds me of a description in one of Isaac Deutscher's biographical volumes on Trotsky. When Stalin expelled Trotsky from the Soviet Union to Turkey and on to the Isle of Prinkipo. Churchill who hated Trotsky with all his aristocratic being exclaimed there *he “sits disconsolate, a bundle of rags.”*

I have in my possession a number of Tabata's works in my study and until a few weeks ago I had a photocopy of his photograph enlarged and pasted on the wall of my study. Does that become a commemorative site? How many photographs are required to be displayed before the place becomes a commemorative site?

Rassool's purpose in converting an Apdusa office into a commemorative site of Tabata was simply to sneer and gloat!

## **EXAMPLES OF SHODDY SCHOLARSHIP AND MISREPRESENTATION.**

Rassool's thesis is written in a way that exudes erudition and confidence that the writer is very knowledgeable and that it was thoroughly researched and is therefore beyond criticism. It is also geared to intimidate any prospective opponent into silence.

When it comes to the first part of his thesis (up to page 290) which deals with the theoretical aspects of the writing of biographies, I offer

no comment or opposition because my knowledge in that field is virtually nil. But when it comes to the second part of the thesis (from page 291) I know as much as most people do. I am in familiar territory and can take firm positions on most matters concerning the Unity Movement.

It is my intimate knowledge of the Unity Movement which made me remark to a correspondent that Rassool's work was shoddy. That person's response was almost a reprimand; "I don't think it is an example of shoddy scholarship" and later: "on the basis of careful research Rassool has come to certain conclusions about Tabata." "Careful research"? My own reading of Rassool's thesis is that it is riddled with factual errors, distortions of facts and ignorance on matters of great importance. Why they were not spotted by my correspondent who made the judgment of "careful research"? The relevance of this incident is that it opens the door to the question as to why were they not spotted by those who took the decision to award him a doctorate for his thesis? I believe that they were most probably swept off their feet by the show of knowledge and erudition in the thesis and their own lack of sufficient knowledge of the Unity Movement and its history.

A. In footnote no.122, Rassool makes the allegation that Kader Hassim, JB Vusani, Kwezi Tshangana, Bobby Wilcox, Frank Anthony and Sonny Venkatrathnam tried to leave the country for military training and were arrested. He advises the reader to: "see State vs Kader Hassim and thirteen others.

It would have been better if Rassool had taken his own advice and he himself at least *saw* the charge sheet. Had he done so he would have learnt that the abovenamed had *not been charged* for wanting to leave the country for military training. This means that Rassool did not even read the charge sheet let alone the court record of the trial which ran into 6000 pages.

B. The case against *The Guardian* newspaper.

In dealing with the action launched by Tabata against *The Guardian*, it will be shown how Rassool deals with the facts selectively so as to conceal the truth of what really happened.

1. In 1975 *The Guardian* published an article which was highly defamatory of Tabata.
2. Amongst other things it stated that:

- a) Tabata had been suspended from office in the Unity Movement
- b) The reason for suspension was suspected maladministration of Unity Movement funds

3. Tabata sued *The Guardian* for defamation.

4. *The Guardian* was led to believe that there would literally be an army of Unity Movement members who would come forward and give evidence in support of the allegations made by it against Tabata.

5. *The Guardian* had based its article on allegations made by a certain Scrape Ntshona who had been expelled from the Unity Movement for security reasons.<sup>13</sup>

6, According to Rassool, in 1985 *The Guardian*, after defending the case initially offered an apology to Tabata.

7. Although the situation cried out for it, Rassool offered no explanation for the *volte face* on the part of *The Guardian*. I do not have the least doubt that Rassool would have asked for the reason for the apology. Equally I have no doubt that he would have got it.

8. He would have been told that the reason *The Guardian* tendered the apology to Tabata was because it could not muster witnesses to furnish credible evidence against him! In other words *The Guardian* had no defence against the action instituted by Tabata!

9. The all-important question is: Why did Rassool not take his reader into his confidence? Why did Rassool not tell his reader that *The Guardian* could not get any one to support the very serious allegations made against Tabata by Ntshona and published by *The Guardian*? The concealment of vital information, which seriously distorts the actual truth, is a blow to Rassool's professional integrity.

10. To have done that would have taken the sting out of the slur of dishonesty cast on Tabata. It would have been a question of an innocent person's good name being dragged through the mud. More importantly it would have undermined the credibility of one of Rassool's star accusers against Tabata, namely Livingstone Mqotsi. The question asked would have been: Why did Mqotsi in a strong letter to *The Guardian* spurn its effort to get him to give evidence?

11. *The Guardian* published its apology, stating inter alia that Tabata was:

- The president of the Unity Movement since 1964
- A major and respected figure in the resistance movement
- Accepted as a person who devoted a lifetime to freeing South Africans from white domination and exploitation.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> In 1971 Scrape Ntshona and his wife Constance Ntshona had used the telephone between Johannesburg and London to discuss the presence of the Apdusans from Zambia who had allegedly come into the country to recruit persons for military training. Constance Ntshona was one of over 100 witnesses used by the State in the abovementioned trial against Apdusa members.

<sup>14</sup> From Rassool's thesis page 480

12. We also know that *The Guardian* had to pay damages to Tabata for the defamation.

13. Rassool was unable to hide his disappointment at the outcome of the case against *The Guardian*. He was churlish towards Tabata describing his victory in these words:

“once again it was the narrative of Tabata’s political biography that was the main issue in dispute”<sup>15</sup>

Put in that way it seems to imply that it was Tabata’s fault that the dispute took place. Rassool seems to have forgotten that the dispute was not of Tabata’s making. He had become a victim of slander. He did no more than what every human being is entitled to, namely, a defence of his or her dignity. To have remained silent in the face of a defamatory statement which severely damages the integrity of a person would simply be construed as admission of the allegations.

14. Not being satisfied with his churlish stance, Rassool exacerbates the situation by stating that the “dwindling resources” of the Unity Movement were used by Tabata in defence of his integrity This a wildly irresponsible statement to make on Rassool’s part.

a) What is Rassool’s basis for making the statement about dwindling resources?

b) Did he have access to the financial statements of the Unity Movement to be able to see a dwindling?

c) Does Rassool have information about the amount of Tabata’s legal costs?

d) Does Rassool have information about the amount of costs to be paid to Tabata by *The Guardian*?

e) What was the amount of damages received by Tabata from *The Guardian*?

f) What reason was advanced as to why Tabata had to use the “dwindling resources” of the organisation when not only would he have been awarded costs against *The Guardian*, he would also have received a cash payment as damages?

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<sup>15</sup> Paragraph 2, page 480 of Rassool’s thesis.

It will thus be seen that Rassool did no serious investigation into the disputed matters he raised regarding *The Guardian* case. That bit about “dwindling resources” was no more than childish petulance.

C. The claim that Leo Sihlali was one of those who initiated the NUM.

1. This is totally untrue. Rassool will not be able to furnish any evidence to support this claim.

2. To put it bluntly, Sihlali at best was ambivalent towards the New Unity Movement.

3. Sihlali attended no meeting of the NUM, not even a single session of its conferences.

4. What is Rassool’s evidence to support this claim?

5. What Sihlali did do was to hold discussions in 1982 about the revival of the Unity Movement. At that time there were several attempts to get discussions going about the revival of the Unity Movement from various quarters.

6. The first step towards the formation of NUM was the meeting in Kuils River, Cape Town during the first half of 1983 (subject to correction) where a preliminary statement was agreed upon. There were then a series of meetings of the Steering Committee culminating in a conference during December 1983 in Isipingo, Natal.

7. Sihlali did not attend a single one of those meetings during 1983 nor at any subsequent time. While he himself did not participate in any way in the formation of NUM he did not obstruct or discourage any one from joining. Being an organisation claiming to be the revived Unity Movement, he understandably followed its progress keenly.

8. All that is quite different from saying that he was one of those who initiated the formation of NUM.

9. There is no truth at all in the claim that Sihlali turned his back on Tabata and therefore the UMSA leadership in exile. This claim is useful to Rassool for it reinforces the allegation that Sihlali was supplanted as president of the Unity Movement. To the best of my knowledge Sihlali and Tabata retained their comradeship and friendship until the very end. This is confirmed by my own observation when I visited Sihlali in Durban very shortly before his death. We spent an afternoon discussing a wide variety of subjects. Not a single word of recrimination was directed against Tabata, nor against Dr Jordan for that matter.

10. Sihlali would never have competed with Tabata for a position. Those who knew Sihlali would know that he would never compete with Tabata for a position in an organisation. Tabata was his

mentor and comrade for many decades. It is vile and malicious to hint that a noble person like Sihlali would have taken a position against Tabata because the latter was vested with the title of President of the Unity Movement.

The reader of his thesis gets information fourth hand. It goes like this: Tabata to Honono; Honono to Deirdre Levinson; and Deirdre Levinson to Rassool. Finally Rassool to his reader! Serious scholars will only touch information peddled in this manner with a fourteen foot-barge pole!

#### D.. The alleged Gandhism of Sonny Venkatrathnam..

Again this is information which does a runaround before it gets to the reader of Rassool's thesis.

1. It strains credulity that Sonny would have said anything which would justify calling him a proponent of Gandhism. Sonny is not a Gandhist. Why would anybody call him a Gandhist? Sonny, if not subjected to tremendous pressure, would never reject revolutionary armed uprising.

2. Nor will Sonny disavow violence unless compelled to do so, like during his trial when it is permissible to do so. As before, Rassool relies on gossip or third-hand information and seeks to pass it off as fact.

E. Rassool claims that in 1985 "Hassim and other senior members" of Apdusa (Natal) went to Harare to try secure support of Tabata and Jane Gool for the NUM,

1. The fact is that only Nina and I went to Zimbabwe on a tour of liberated Zimbabwe and not a delegation of "senior members"

2. We went as visitors of Tabata and Jane Gool. Their home was our base while we visited the important sites of Kariba, Hwange Reserve and the Victoria Falls.

3. Our purpose in visiting them was to end a two decade absence of physical meeting. It was to give them a report of what we had been doing and to explain our involvement in the NUM. But it was also a time for some straight and hard talking about aspects of their activity of which we were strongly critical. It centred round the manner in which the 1970 expedition of the four Apdusans from Zambia was handled and the reckless conduct of the four which exposed us in the country to the Security Police.

4. Our suggestion to Tabata and Jane Gool was to concentrate on the theoretical and propaganda aspect of the struggle and to leave the organisational aspect to the people in South Africa.

5. In our face-to-face meetings, there was no suggestion that we had sought to exclude them from the organisation nor that we had smeared their name so as to prevent them from defending themselves from attacks. In any case, how does smearing people prevent them from defending themselves?

6. We parted on friendly terms. They took us to the airport for our return flight to South Africa. Prior to that they gave us a striking photograph of Dora Taylor to be inserted in the reprint of her *Role of the Missionaries* . They also gave us photographs of themselves.

7. Lastly, if the purpose of our trip was to persuade them to support the idea of the New Unity Movement, that trip would have been made *before* the formation of NUM and not *after*.



7. Kader Hassim with Jane Gool and Tabata in Zimbabwe in 1985.



Nina Hassim with Jane Gool and Tabata in Zimbabwe in 1985.

F. Was my joining NUM more galling because I was married to Jane Gool's niece?

1. I cannot imagine anything more ridiculous than Jane Gool saying, directly or in effect: "Look at Kader Hassim! He gets my niece in marriage and yet he forms a rival organisation!" But this is the kind of garbage that Rassool collects and seriously presents it as part of recent history.
2. I can understand Jane Gool trying to explain our strong criticism as "bitter rejection" but the marriage and ingratitude explanation is much too much.
3. It may be that Rassool's own upbringing has trained him to judge the political positions of people through the prism of family relations. But he should not project his own approach on others who have spent a life time analyzing politics scientifically and through dialectical materialism.

G. The groundbreaking thesis of ROBIN KAYSER

- 1) In 2002, Robin Kayser was awarded an MA degree for his thesis: "Land and Liberty!: The Non European Unity Movement and the Land Question 1933-1976"
- 2) According to Rassool, the methodological basis of this work was "archival and documentary." Both adjectives refer to documents which form the basis of record keeping.
- 3) I was involved to a limited extent in Robin Kayser's research. My overwhelming impression was that most of his time was spent travelling from one end of the country to the other interviewing

members of the Unity Movement. In other words it was back-breaking field work, not just sitting in a library.

4) The important document is his thesis, not so much the essay in the SADET publication.

His thesis was groundbreaking because it blew to smithereens the lies and false propaganda about the Unity Movement such as that:

- a) it was Western Cape-based
- b) it was teacher-based
- c) it was middle class-based
- d) it consisted of armchair politicians, and
- e) it had no mass base.

5. Robin Kayser's research, both theoretical and practical, established the correctness of the strategy of organising around the demands of political liberty and a new division of the land.

6. His research also vindicated the work of Tabata which was concentrated amongst the peasantry.

7. Robin Kayser's research contradicted Rassool's own assessment of the Unity Movement and the role of Tabata. So how does Rassool deal with this dilemma?

8. He chooses a short cut. He dismisses Robin Kayser's prodigious effort by describing Kayser as an "Apdusa member" and his research as "partisan"

9. To guileless and trusting readers branding somebody "partisan" and a member of the organisation researched is enough to make them suspicious of what has been written.

10. As it turned out, Robin Kayser has not ever been a member of Apdusa, something I established during the first of many meetings we have had.

11. Robin Kayser was born and brought up in Cape Town. He lives in Cape Town. Why did not Rassool make contact with him especially since both were vitally interested in the same subject: Tabata and the Unity Movement?

12. Rassool has the time and effort to travel many thousands of kilometers from home to learn about the Unity Movement from people like Baruch Hirson, Deirdre Levinson, Professor Karis, Professor Carter and others. Yet he has no time to meet and discuss with Robin Kayser in Cape Town? I do not believe it. I suspect that Rassool would have discovered early enough that Robin Kayser did not belong to any political organisation. But to tarnish its groundbreaking findings, he "made" Robin Kayser a member of Apdusa.

13. As for dismissing Robin Kayser's work as partisan, let me record that two very experienced historians in local politics, Allison Drew and Professor Tom Lodge awarded Robin Kayser a distinction for his thesis. Professor Lodge goes so far as to report:

**“This is a superb thesis, the kind one encounters very rarely indeed. It is outstandingly well researched, meticulously presented, extremely elegantly written and of compelling interest to any student of South African politics. I have no hesitation in according it a distinction and urging that it should find a publisher as soon as possible.” (Our emphasis)**

14. Rassool's treatment of the work of Robin Kayser shows shoddy research on his part or what he considers a clever ruse to avoid dealing with Kayser's work which undermines his prejudices.

## **CONCLUSION**

I believe that sufficient has been presented to establish that Rassool has been shoddy in his research and has not been transparent when it was incumbent on him to be so. What I have done is to establish that the damning accusation of shoddy research etc has not been made frivolously. During the course of the rebuttal there will be other instances to show ulterior motive, unfair presentation and shoddy research.

## **WHERE THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF FACTS, USE FICTION!**

It is common sense that a biography has to be based on facts – on real events and on deeds and words. Where a biographer presents viewpoints of persons who are critical or hostile to the subject matter of the biography, care must be taken to verify claims which present the subject of the biography in a poor or bad light. Far greater care must be taken where the subject matter of the biography is deceased and therefore unable to challenge or rebut allegations made against him or her.

The subject matter of Rassool's biographic material is IB Tabata, a most remarkable man by any standards, who in the course of long decades of struggles had fallouts and disagreements with a number of people. It is easy to hurl dung at a person who is no longer able to defend himself. It is the duty of the biographer to provide that defence, either through the testimony of persons holding a different viewpoint or through vigorous testing or verification.

In the course of his writing about Tabata, Rassool has chosen two “novels” or “fictionalized accounts” to make damning and highly critical attacks on Tabata and others.

The question is whether the biographer is entitled to use works of fiction to attack a person. There is nothing wrong if the attack is on a work of fiction written by that person since all literature must go through a gauntlet.

But it is always possible for a scoundrel to call an autobiographical piece a work of fiction so as to get the licence to exaggerate, to fabricate or invent or to simply hide behind the claim of “fiction” when confronted about some aspect or another.

### **THE JOURNEY by Frank Anthony**

The first book is called *The Journey* written by Frank Anthony and described as a “novel” or by Rassool as a “fictionalized journey.”

Anybody who cares to read the book will be struck by:

- the complete absence by the writer of any semblance of modesty by Anthony who strikes one as a supreme egotist;
- the author’s depiction of himself as the perfect and most complete revolutionary;
- a limitless capacity to hate and to spew malice;
- the most sickening sycophancy of Tabata. The latter is almost elevated to a deity without a blemish until he pricks Anthony’s ego. Then all hell breaks loose; and
- the fact that nobody is spared :- Tabata, Jane Gool ( sarcastically referred to as the Grand Dame), Kader Hassim, Comrade R (Robert Wilcox) Document Man (Iyavar Chetty), The only one spared is Anthony’s girlfriend, Comrade Z.

The book was clearly written at a time when the writer was mentally deranged and full of hurt and hatred. It is vengeful and designed to hurt those targeted as much as possible.

I once described the book as a pouring out of all the nauseating contents of a gigantic carbuncle, smearing all the characters of the book except Comrade Z, Frank’s girl for whom he left wife, children and South Africa.

In one of the interviews Rassool had with Jane Gool, the latter made the point that the book was a product of a sick mind. She would have also given him all the facts behind the actual journey. He, Rassool, deliberately chose to suppress these facts.

Any person reading the book, even a simpleton, would know that either the writer is deeply mentally disturbed or is describing a deeply mentally disturbed person. Rassool, whatever else one may say about him, is not a simpleton.

Yet Rassool went ahead and presented a section of the book where Anthony is most vicious and malicious towards Tabata, Jane Gool, Kader Hassim and Iyavar Chetty. There was a duty on Rassool to have contacted Robert Wilcox, or myself or Iyavar Chetty and asked them for comments. But as the saying goes: Why allow facts to spoil a good smear? Somebody clearly identified the various characters in his book. That person would have told him that the “Document Man” was Iyavar Chetty and where to contact him.

Equally important is the legitimacy of the use of a “fictionalized novel” as a source of facts for a biography. It would be in order to use such a novel if the biography was about the writer of the work of fiction.

## **WHAT WERE THE FACTS?**

- 1 Anthony was appointed as vice president of UMSA.
2. Iyavar Chetty, who was very close to Karrim Essack and Ibbo Mandaza, had settled in Harare where he was high-up in the civil service.
3. Iyavar Chetty made it his duty to visit Tabata and Jane Gool on a daily basis and to assist them in whatever way they needed to be assisted. He became advisor to Tabata and Jane Gool and carried out their errands and requests.
4. Frank Anthony chose at that time to desert his wife (and two daughters) and to set up “home” with a certain Ms Velma described as Comrade Z who was in Harare.
5. Through her, Anthony sent word that he intended coming to Harare to meet Tabata and Jane Gool.
6. The latter knew of no reason for Anthony’s intended journey and told Cde Z to convey that to him.
7. But there was no stopping Anthony. Cde Z then informed Tabata that Anthony was expected to arrive in Botswana on a certain day.
8. Apart from the fact that Tabata’s illness was getting the better of him and that he would be unable to get to Botswana to see Anthony, in his (Tabata’s mind) there was still no valid reason for the meeting. Apparently, a well-established method of communication had been set up and Anthony had chosen to ignore that route.
9. Iyavar Chetty then flew down to Botswana only to find that Anthony had not arrived. He returned to Harare.
10. The people in Harare then got the message that Frank had been arrested by the Botswana police.

11. According to Iyavar Chetty, Anthony walked into the police in broad daylight, thereby making it obligatory for him to apply for refugee status. That in turn meant that he could not return to South Africa. That, according to Iyavar, was exactly what Anthony wanted. He wanted to live permanently in Harare where Cde Z was.

12. When Anthony arrived in Harare, it transpired that there was nothing of any importance to be talked about. He regaled them with such things as details of his journey, his arrest.

13. Contact was then made with the Cape Town Apdusa people who informed them that they knew nothing of Anthony's trip; that it was not discussed in Cape Town, nor had Cape Town Apdusa agree to it.

14. Anthony was then given his marching orders. Both he and Cde Z went off to Botswana,

15. In the meantime, the Executive of UMSA met and discussed Anthony's escapade and decided to strip him of his position of vice presidency and recommended that his re-entry depended on his receiving psychiatric treatment.<sup>16</sup>

16. Reading the book will show how sycophantic Anthony was towards Tabata. It is unbelievable that such a person can claim to be part of the Unity Movement where from the first day we were taught to place principles before personalities and always to combat the cult of the individual.

17. A direct result of the rebuff and rejection would have sent Anthony whirling into the pit of insanity. Hence the book *The Journey*. Anthony was an intellectual with a very powerful command of the written language but showed the direct opposite when it came to verbal expression. He could really fumble with the spoken word; except when performing in drama.

18. One can safely assume that Rassool would have asked about Anthony's fate in the Unity Movement.

19. He would have been told that Anthony was readmitted into the Apdusa group but was stripped of the title of vice president. His readmission would have entailed appropriate apologies to Tabata and Jane Gool and the Unity Movement. *That in turn would have meant a retraction and withdrawal of the contents of his book.* The question that arises is why did Rassool not mention this important information? More importantly: Why use a book contents of which have been retracted by the author?

If he had revealed that information, then that would have negated the all those pages of denigration of his thesis which summarized Frank Anthony's attack.

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<sup>16</sup> On page 5 of a detailed report dated the 15<sup>th</sup> May 1991 sent to us by Iyavar Chetty after the publication of "The Journey"

When Tabata died in October 1990, it was Leonard Nikane who spoke as Vice President at his funeral.

19. To the best of my knowledge, Anthony died before Jane Gool.

20. It was a great blessing that by the time the book was printed, Tabata was dead. He did not have to say once more: "*Et Tu!*"

The big question is that if Rassool wished to interview those individuals mentioned in the book, why did he not go to Ms. Velma (Cde Z) and ask her for the details? She would have told him. He then would have had to do the correct thing any writer worth the name would do –namely, to get a response from the affected people. The concept *audi alteram partem*, ("Hear the other side!"), long considered just and civilised conduct, had no place in his thinking.

### **ABOUT FRANK ANTHONY**

This is really an afterthought. Our generation will in due course pass on and there will be nobody left who would have known Frank Anthony as a person. It is still essential to try and explain the personality who could have turned with such viciousness against a person he hero-worshipped in a most sycophantic manner.

A few more facts may help to understand the character of the man.

1. Anthony was a great individualist. He sought first place in everything he did.

2. He was also a supreme egotist.

2. I got to know him during our incarceration in 1971. There was a whiff of the informer in him when we got to first know that he was a detainee like we were.

4. That impression, quite wrongly, arose because of the circumstances of his arrest and that of the young people he was in contact with.

5. When Jama (one of the four Apdusans from Zambia) got to Cape Town 1970 to recruit persons to leave for training overseas, the group in Cape Town declined his offer, except for Anthony who undertook to recruit a band of young people with whom he would leave the country.

6. As it turned out, that did not materialize. Jama left Cape Town. The police began arresting people. One of them was Anthony. From him the police were able to obtain the names of those young potential recruits. They hitherto were unknown both to the police and the rest of the group. Anthony was thus accused of having revealed their identities.

7. During the awaiting-trial period, Frank revealed certain peculiar behaviour:

- a) He would regale one of the co-accused with his exploits which cannot be repeated in polite

company. Since we were all kept in six cells, three on each side of a single passage, with a portion of the front of each cell being a metal mesh, one could hear whatever was said in the other cells.

This was the previous Death Row leading to the gallows.

b).Anthony confessed that the Security Police almost drove him insane with the strong suggestion that while he was serving his prison term, his wife would be in an intimate relationship with a certain X. It appeared that Anthony's wife had been X's girl friend before he (X) was imprisoned in 1964. While X was in prison Anthony married her. The security police made him believe that X would take revenge while Anthony was in prison. According to Frank he believed them.

c). Anthony assaulted one of his co-accused in the latter's cell over a trivial matter.. Force had to used to subdue Anthony.

d). During the trial, lasting nine months, the wife of one of local benefactors of the APDUSA accused, used to visit Frank during visiting hours, twice a week, bringing him washed and ironed clothes, food and reading material. Frank began to flirt with the wife openly and in the presence of the warders, the co-accused and their visitors.

e). Through the wife of the benefactor Anthony sought to smuggle liquor and was caught out by the warder, much to the shame and embarrassment of the remaining accused.

f). After our conviction and while we were at Leeukop Prison, Frank chose to quarrel with one the prison gangsters who had been planted in our cell. When Frank was challenged to a fight, he ducked the challenge. But thereafter he did not try picking a fight with the gangster.

h) When we landed on Robben Island, Frank created a fair degree of disaffection ( I have forgotten the details). The Apdusa group on Robben Island by a majority vote took a decision to suspend him. The consequences of that suspension became a nullity because of subsequent events which led to five of us, including Anthony, being transferred to the single cells or "B" section.

Already, one sees in Anthony an unstable personality with strong antisocial traits and antisocial personality.

Anthony's leaving his wife and children for a young woman when he was in his forties reinforces the belief of an unstable personality.

It was such a person who wrote *The Journey* which Rassool swallowed hook, line and sinker!

Here is Rassool gloating with special relish:

“However, Anthony's biographic rejection of Tabata represented the most intense dismissal of the encrusted legend of a leader, a painful realisation of the extent of mythology's hollowness and delusion, and of the fact that the emperor indeed had no clothes.”

1. Because Rassool got carried away with Anthony's eloquence in his hatred of Tabata, he needs to be reminded that he is describing a mentally sick person in the throes of spewing his insanity.

2. All over the world and in every tribunal or quasi tribunal, (the reading public is a quasi tribunal) the evidence of a mentally sick person is not accepted as credible evidence. Why does Rassool ignore the good sense and wisdom shown by the international community towards evidence given by mentally unstable persons?

It can only be because his own hatred for Tabata dovetails with that of an insane person.

3. Throughout their years of old age and seniority, Tabata and Jane Gool remained highly respected people in the world of freedom fighters. Rassool himself admits this.

Page 481, line 6 onwards of his thesis:

“Harare was where the ageing Tabata and Jane Gool had moved...where they were accorded a place of honour as esteemed veterans of the anti-apartheid struggle...”

In footnote 126 on page 481 Rassool goes on to say: “as veterans and ‘comrades’ their opinions were regularly sought in Zimbabwean political forums... and they were sought out by international figures such as PLO ambassador Ali Halimeh.”

Rassool takes a shot in the dark when he tries to link the relationship between Tabata and Jane Gool with cabinet ministers Amina Hughes and Mrs Victoria Chitepo through ZANU PF 's pro PAC stance. Rassool obviously has no clue of the other dimension – the exposure of Unity Movement ideas to intellectuals from Zimbabwe; from those intellectuals like the Culverwell brothers from Zimbabwe who had studied at the University of Cape Town and had been attracted to the Unity Movement ideas. In fact a New Era Fellowship was established in then Salisbury and

Alie Fataar, executive member of the Non European Unity Movement, was invited in July 1947 to address this body on the ideology of the Non European Unity Movement.<sup>17</sup>

People who had been severely criticised by Tabata and Jane Gool for joining the New Unity Movement like the Natal Apdusa Group, paid glowing and unqualified tribute to Tabata after his death. Alie Fataar and Ursula Fataar, both of whom had joined the New Unity Movement, were at Jane Gool's side to do their duty when Tabata died. There were many other people, including luminaries from Zimbabwe, who assembled to pay tribute to the deceased revolutionary.

Were they all blinded by some force that they failed to see "an emperor without clothes" but saw only a great revolutionary brought down by illness?

4. Or was Frank Anthony alone in caricaturing an ageing and ailing Tabata? How is that Rassool alone of so many people sees Tabata as an emperor without clothes? What does Rassool have in common with a mentally sick Frank Anthony?

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## **ANOTHER WORK OF FICTION, A NOVEL, USED BY RASSOOL TO PROVIDE "FACTS"**

### **DEIRDRE LEVINSON**

#### **NOTE TO THE READER:**

We learn of the interaction between Ciraj Rassool and Deirdre Levinson when Rassool enjoyed the hospitality of Deirdre Levinson and her husband Allen Bergson in New York.

The nature of the interaction can be testified to only by Rassool and Levinson since there was no other person present.

Rassool has given an account of what occurred between him and Levinson and this is published in his thesis, the subject matter of this rebuttal. The only other account of what took place is that of Levinson. For reasons best known to her, Levinson does not want her version to be published in this rebuttal.

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<sup>17</sup> Dr James Muzondidya's recent book *Walking a Tightrop* (published by Africa World Press New Jersey) deals with this phenomenon.

This leaves us in a position of having to contend with only one version by a participant. We test that version from the outside, as it were, and how we see the matter.

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Ciraj Rassool repeats his approach of using a work of fiction as fact when he presents a summary of certain aspects of a novel *Five Years* written by Deidre Levinson.

1. Deirdre Levinson came to Cape Town from the UK to lecture in English in the mid or late 1950's. She was advised to make contact with the Unity Movement people on the campus of the University of Cape Town. There she met Dr AC Jordan and other members of the Unity Movement.
2. She was drawn into the circle of young Unity Movement intellectuals. 8 Milan Street, the residence of Tabata and Jane Gool was opened to her as was access to Mrs Dora Taylor. She was thus allowed access to the so-called inner core of the Tabata wing of the Unity Movement.
3. Ms Levinson in the meantime had commenced a clandestine love affair with Dr Jordan. She relishes a description of that affair in her "novel". Also clandestine was her making notes of the goings on around her with the object of using the material for a book/novel.
4. Deirdre was treated by the group as one of them. Little did any one know that she was observing them and recording events. They trusted her and were open and transparent about details of what was going on. *By failing to declare her interest in Dr Jordan and the fact that she was making notes of the people she was interacting with, Deirdre engaged in calculated deception of the people who trusted her.*
5. What is particularly reprehensible is the detailed information which she would have picked up from the group and which she would have passed on to Dr Jordan concerning the political infighting over Dr Jordan's association with the liberals, amongst other things. The senior members of the group of young intellectuals would have picked up information about the trouble and would have discussed it among themselves in the presence of Deirdre. It goes against the very grain of probability to believe that Deirdre would not have passed on that information to Dr Jordan.
6. Now Rassool had the opportunity of interviewing her. Instead of seeking directly from her what he wanted to know he relied on her book which he describes as "a novel"! How does a serious writer or scholar rely on a work of fiction or a novel as the basis of factual historical truth? What adds to the strangeness of his conduct is that he met Levinson and got to know her. With the present state of information technology, it would have been quite easy for him to have conducted a full interview across the oceans. Yet he chooses to rely on a book of fiction.

7. The root of the problem with Dr Jordan lay in the tug of war which took place between the liberals on the one hand and the Unity Movement left as represented by Tabata and Jane Gool on the other hand, for the soul of Dr Jordan. In other words, his political loyalties. Over the years Jordan would have cultivated a relationship with the leading liberal intellectuals, firstly on a professional basis, then on a political/academic basis. It requires a will of iron to be able to judge the political role of a person objectively, i.e. to be able to separate the personal from the political. It is not easy to accept that a close associate who invites you home for supper on a regular basis and whose wife and children treat you with warmth and friendship is the ENEMY, the agent of bellicose and heartless imperialism. The greater the affinity you develop with the liberals on a personal basis the more the class consciousness dims and the more difficult it becomes to accept the Unity Movement's assessment of the role of liberals and liberalism.

8. Unlike what Rassool/Levinson contend, the issue was not about the fight for academic freedom. The banner of the liberals was "ACADEMIC NON SEGREGATION!" As against that slogan the Unity Movement countered with the demand for a DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY! The former position was the maintenance of the *status quo* with changes limited to abolition of segregation in respect of education offered at the so-called open universities. This still permitted apartheid in student residences facilities like the swimming pools and other sporting activity and the degradation of pre-university education.

9. Rassool should have asked Dr Alexander about the march of the academics. He would have told him how he physically tried, in vain, to wrench Dr Jordan away from the march.

10. Giving evidence before the Commission of Inquiry was again part of the liberal reaction to the shootings and assaults on the citizenry by the fascist state. By giving evidence before it, Jordan lent credibility to the farce of deliberate shootings of unarmed civilians and then holding a commission of inquiry to give the impression of justice.

11. Jordan had outlived his stay in a revolutionary and principled organisation. It was time for him to move on.

12. Deirdre is, however, wrong to claim that Jordan was suspended from the Unity Movement and that his suspension was announced at the Ninth Unity Conference by Leo Sihlali. It is totally inconceivable that Sihlali who enjoyed a close and comradely relationship with Dr Jordan over decades would in public describe him as "dangerous to the Movement" The writer was present at the conference. He does not recall seeing Deirdre there. But if she was there those "Notes" describe something which did not take place. This is confirmed by the discussion I had with Mr Sihlali shortly prior to his death when he was convalescing at the home of Gabby and Navi Pillay in Durban. Our discussion covered a wide number of subjects including Tabata and Dr Jordan. There was no

hint of hostility or unfriendliness on his part towards Dr Jordan. So the claim that he would have described Dr Jordan as “dangerous to the Movement” strains all credulity.

Dr Jordan was a prominent member of the Unity Movement. The announcement of his suspension would have been like a loud thunderclap- something not liable to be forgotten.

13. The Jordan family had taken the decision to leave South Africa and the struggle for liberation. Phyllis Jordan, born Tantala, has written a book titled “Life’s Mosaic”. In this book, Mrs Jordan lays bare the circumstances which made the Jordan family emigrate:

- The Group Areas Act would have driven them out from their comfortable home in so-called coloured middle class Athlone into one of the African townships – Nyanga or Gugulethu.
- Three of her children, including Pallo, would have to study at the ethnic university set aside for Xhosa-speaking Africans.
- By not studying at the University of Cape Town, the children would have forfeited the 80% reduction in fees in view of the fact that their father was employed at UCT.
- Dr Jordan was being wooed by imperialism by being offered a Carnegie Travel Grant to visit universities and colleges and then a one year’s position as visiting professor.<sup>18</sup>

14. When Deirdre describes herself to Rassool as a fellow traveller in the Unity Movement, she is being untruthful. She may not have signed membership form. But strict observance of formality in the Unity Movement was never enforced. The fact of the matter is that Deirdre had worked her way right into the heart of the young leadership of the age group represented by people like Archie Mafeje, Neville Alexander and Nina Hassim. Furthermore the homes of Minnie Gool, of the Taylors and of the Tabatas were open to her. She probably describes herself as a fellow traveller to justify her desertion from the South African struggle when the Jordans took the decision to emigrate to the US.

15. South Africa was a profitable adventure. She was the recipient of the most advanced ideas in the country. She mingled with the brightest and most committed young people. She had a clandestine love-affair with a married man. She secretively collected material for a book which was published. This was her version of gracious thanks to people who mistook a total stranger with a hidden agenda for a comrade.

## **CIRAJ RASSOOL AND DEIRDRE LEVINSON BERGSON**

### Introduction

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<sup>18</sup> Life’s Mosaic by Phyllis Jordan, pages 185 seq

It puzzles me as to how Ciraj Rassool came to enjoy Deirdre Levinson's hospitality. He did not know her, nor she him. So how did they meet? I suspect that Rassool was directed by some person to those persons known to have an animus against the Tabata/Jane Gool leadership. That person must have been part of the Unity Movement who had contact with the upper or middle echelon of the Unity Movement leadership and who had knowledge of the various factional fights which took place in the Unity Movement. That person is clearly no longer a member of the Unity Movement, having deserted it for greener pastures or through plain cowardice.

Why else would Ciraj Rassool want to meet Deirdre Levinson who by no stretch of the imaginations can be considered an expert on the Unity Movement. Ciraj Rassool was directed to Deirdre Levinson because it must have been known to that person that Deirdre Levinson harboured strong ambivalence towards the exiled leadership.

If we are to believe Ciraj Rassool, he and Deirdre Levinson got on famously from the word go! According to Rassool, Deirdre Levinson:

- a) gave him hospitality
- b) taught him much about the Unity Movement and its activists

Rassool does not spell out what she taught him about the Unity Movement. Nor does he name the activists or what he learnt about them..

The impression one gets on reading his thesis is that the atmosphere under which the discussions took place was congenial. It appears that Deirdre Levinson generously made available to Rassool not only what is described as "Personal Notes" on the proceedings of the 9<sup>th</sup> Unity Movement Conference held in January 1962, and her "Short Notes" on the proceedings of the SOYA Conference which was held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1962 but also a letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> June 1986 from Honono to Deirdre Levinson and a Circular Letter dated 9<sup>th</sup> February 1971 from W.M. Tsotsi.<sup>19</sup> She apparently gave him a copy of what is described as "Deirdre Levinson Bergson Papers"<sup>20</sup>

I do not know whether Deirdre Levinson gave Rassool other documents which he did not use for his thesis. Nor do I know what other information she furnished Rassool with. Honono's letter has all the hallmarks of loose talk or gossip while Tsotsi's Circular Letter is used to mock at the use of the form of address "Our President" (referring to Tabata) and Tabata's ideas of grandeur in expecting to collect "millions of dollars" in the US.

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<sup>19</sup> See Footnote 77 on page 463; footnote on page 464; footnote 88 on page 467; footnotes 92-94 on page 468; footnote 123 of on page 479 and 28 of 482

<sup>20</sup> See last line of page 515 of Rassool's thesis where he states that he has the "Papers" in his personal possession

## **DR NEVILLE ALEXANDER**

1. The circumstances which led to the departure of Dr Alexander and members of the Unity Movement he was able to win over to his cause were subject to intense controversy.
2. There was therefore an obligation on Rassool to verify claims made. Where there was an opposing viewpoint, that viewpoint had to be mentioned.
3. Rassool failed to do anything close to his obligation.

It is therefore essential that an account, different from the one given by Dr Alexander or claimed by Rassool to emanate from Dr Alexander, be given,

1. Neville Alexander was the brightest and most promising recruit to the Unity Movement in the 1950s.
2. Apart from being strongly passionate about everything he did, he was extremely articulate and exuded charisma.
3. At that stage, the Tabata group felt the need to form a student organisation which would provide a home for politically conscious students who were not mature (politically) enough to join The Society of Young Africa (SOYA). Apart from providing a home for activity, it would also be training ground for potential recruits to SOYA
4. It is true that while Neville Alexander was a draw card, there were other forceful and dynamic young people who helped form the body named the Cape Peninsula Students Union (CPSU). There was Kenneth Abrahams, Carl Brecker, Nina Hassim Pat Naidoo, Frankie v.d Horst, Peter Meyer, Fats Fataar and Abe Fataar. The CPSU was not the private preserve of Dr Alexander. Nor did the latter ever claim it to be so.
5. The Jaffe clique came out against the formation of the CPSU. As was the habit of this charlatan, there had to be “genuine Marxist” reasons for the opposition. The one cooked up for this occasion was that student organisations were potentially fascist!
6. With the CPSU well on its way, Dr Alexander completed his Masters degree and was awarded a prestigious scholarship to do his doctorate in West Germany.
7. The occasion of his success was celebrated at 8 Milan Street – the Tabata/Jane Gool home. Also celebrated that evening was the success of AK Tom, who had completed his BA degree. What was outstanding about AK Tom was the fact that he had come to Cape Town as a migrant worker. On one occasion he heard Tabata speak at a public meeting. So impressed was he that he vowed to educate himself to be able to speak like Tabata. That was the source of his inspiration. He studied after work and with the help of Dora Taylor he was able to complete his degree.
8. Neville Alexander was absent from South Africa until 1961. Soon after his return, political turmoil erupted.

9. It became known that Neville Alexander had been in touch with a certain Michel Pablo or Raptis of the Fourth International. It also became known that Pablo had deeply impressed Dr Alexander about the need for guerrilla warfare in South Africa. I believe that Dr Alexander had given Pablo certain undertakings about organising support for a guerrilla war. However there was nothing new in Pablo's assertion that the centre of gravity of the world revolution had shifted to the colonies. Anybody reading *Time* magazine would have picked that up as being the position being broadcast all over the world by Mao Zedong!

10. It is one thing for Dr Alexander to claim telling that he conveyed to Rassool that he told Tabata that guerrilla war was "a long term strategy". But that is not how Dr Alexander's young followers understood it. Nor did his and his group's subsequent actions substantiate that claim. I recall the childish but dangerous formulation; "If Castro could do it with 12 men why can't we?" There was all the sense of urgency. Within 3 months of the suspension, the long term strategy had become *short termed*. This was when the National Liberation Front was formed. This body was going to embark on the armed struggle.

11. The night before the SOYA Conference in 1961, Dr Alexander spent a number of hours with me. We had a one roomed flat, so we had to have our discussion in the passage.

12. Then and now, I accept unreservedly that the action initiated by Tabata and Jane Gool against Dr Alexander and Kenny Abrahams was fair and reasonable as behoves a responsible leadership.

13. Dr Alexander, without the green light from the senior leadership, had engaged in serious discussions about an armed struggle with a person who for all practical purposes was a stranger to him. Pablo could well have been an *agent provocateur*.

As it turned out, Pablo came to a disreputable end. He was also an adventurer. Many years later, while on Robben Island, Dr Alexander related Pablo's plan to bring the Belgium economy to its knees by engaging in counterfeiting on such a massive scale so as to reduce that country's currency (the franc?) to nothing.

14. The Tabata leadership owed it to the organisation and to its young members not to allow foreign infiltration through Dr Alexander or anybody else to influence thinking. There was a duty to protect the organisation, especially its young and impressionable members. Those were extremely dangerous times we were living in. General Kevy of the Security Police had returned from a trip to Algeria where he was taught the murderous art of torture of political prisoners.

15 When Dr Alexander was told: "You know where to come to if you want to discuss the matter.", he was being told in effect: You have always had an open invitation to come to 8 Milan Street. That is where you raise the matter of the armed struggle. Talk of the armed struggle, not in the strategic and long term sense but as a current matter at a meeting, no matter how private or how restricted the attendance was courting disaster.

16. In my view the stern response from Jane Gool was justified. The young revolutionary who had returned from fame and adoration could not take the harshness of the criticism.

17. The real issues for which Dr Alexander was suspended were never raised in public. That too was a result of a sense of responsibility on the part of the senior leadership. Can you imagine young Soyans hurling arguments against “If Castro could do it with 12 men....” in public and semi-public debates? Those times were swarming with police informers. We spotted at least two in Natal Apdusa. Dr Alexander’s YCC had at least one – the one who got them all arrested. There could have been mass arrests. And then trials. And then imprisonment for those found guilty and those who refused to give evidence. And then lifelong shame for those who could not face imprisonment and did give evidence.

18. So the direct arguments were carefully avoided. Indirect arguments were developed like accusing the leadership of bureaucracy, causing disaffection in the ranks etc.

That old leadership really wins admiration for their foresightedness.

When Tabata and Jane Gool briefed the Natal SOYA group before the conference, they did not utter a single word about the liaison between Dr Alexander and Pablo. They said nothing about his proposal to commence guerrilla war. They skirted the real issue because they did not want to endanger Dr Alexander and his group as well as members of SOYA with such potent and explosive knowledge. Has Dr Alexander given thought to that possibility given the passage of some 45 years? I have and it makes a lot of sense to me.

19. When Dr Alexander and his comrades were arrested, there wasn’t a tittle of evidence used against them from the debates and arguments they had with us. It was all *their* doing and saying!

20. As it happened, most, if not all (leaving aside the recruited police spy) of Dr Alexander’s recruits came from Apdusa, Soya (?) and the CPSU.

The question is: Is a leadership not entitled to take all necessary action to prevent its members from being enticed, lured and taken away by elements considered dangerous and irresponsible? Rassool attributes to Dr Alexander the claim that Tabata adopted an attitude of open hostility towards him because Tabata feared that people would credit Dr Alexander with having first raised the matter of the armed struggle (and not him Tabata) and that that perception would bring him power! It is difficult to believe that Dr Alexander would articulate such a view. But even if he did, surely the consideration of the grave danger that that kind of talk and thinking posed to all those the participants would be the more cogent and probable reason for the relentless attacks on Dr Alexander.

But then accepting a more cogent version would simply get in the way of a good smear!

## WAS DR. ALEXANDER SUSPENDED OR EXPELLED?

1. Dr Alexander was suspended from SOYA. The suspension was reported to the Non European Unity Movement and hence Leo Sihlali's remarks on the difference between suspension and expulsion.<sup>21</sup>

2. On Robben Island during one of our meetings with Dr Alexander and Fikile Bam, the matter of Dr Alexander applying for membership to Apdusa cropped up. Because of Apdusa's high profile case, Dr Alexander assumed that there was a functioning organisation which he could join upon his release from prison. We cleared up the position to him by explaining how the state had smashed the hard core of active members and that there was no organisation to go back to.

The point being made is that if Dr Alexander had considered himself expelled from the Unity Movement or its organisations why did he entertain hopes of joining Apdusa upon release from prison?

At the end of 1962, we attended a fund raising party in Cape Town. It was a Unity Movement event. The people in charge of the event appeared to be Dr Alexander and his sister. There was Kenny Jordan present as were the Wilcox brothers – Jimmy, Alfie and Bobby. I recall Alfie who was on the executive of Apdusa announced that since the function was a Unity Movement function, he, on behalf of the Unity Movement, was taking control of the event. This he did by taking charge of the entrance.

3. The importance of whether he was suspended or expelled comes up in connection with the Alexander Defence Committee (ADC). The Unity Movement leadership in exile linked up with the ADC by having a tour under that name and by raising funds under that name and using it for the Unity Movement.

4. When we heard about this in South Africa, we from Natal felt acutely embarrassed. We believed that it was opportunistic for the leadership in exile to use the ADC for its benefit. At that time, we knew nothing about Franz Lee who was a recruit of Dr Alexander and who was offered a scholarship at the University of Tubingen. It was Franz Lee who described himself as the European representative of Apdusa who invited Tabata on a speaking tour of the USA on behalf of the ADC. No mention is made of Lee either by Dr Alexander or Rassool.

5. When we met with Dr Alexander on Robben Island, we reported to him about the leadership in exile using the ADC for its own ends. And we expressed our embarrassment. Dr Alexander informed us that he knew about that but felt that he had no objections to them using his name for their own benefit. We thought it very generous of him and we let that matter rest.

6. After 20 years, Dr Alexander, according to Rassool, adopts a different position in interviews with him. He describes his departure from the

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<sup>21</sup> See page 468 paragraph 2

Unity Movement as an expulsion. At no stage does he say that the Unity Movement *expelled* him. Rassool, however, says it for him:

“The outcome of this process, however, was that *in practice*, Neville and his supporters were expelled from APDUSA and other affiliates of the Unity Movement.” (Our italics)<sup>22</sup>

Rassool does not explain how you expel people *in practice* without due process or precisely how Dr Alexander and his supporters were in practice expelled. Were they prevented from attending meetings of the Unity Movements or its affiliates? Were they stopped from distributing Unity movement literature or calling themselves Unity Movement?

Isn't the simple truth that having exhausted the process of enticement and recruitment, Dr Alexander and his group simply departed from the Unity Movement? There was nothing to detain them further. But you always score points of sympathy if you can claim that you were expelled.<sup>23</sup>

If Dr Alexander felt strongly about Tabata and the exiled leadership using the ADC, he had 26 years to raise it with Tabata. Neville was released in 1964 and had 32 years to raise the issue with Jane Gool. Why did he not do so? Did he really have to wait for Tabata to die and for Jane Gool to be dying to raise the matter in such a controversial manner?

The writer and Nina Hassim had serious problems with the old revolutionaries. They made it a point to confront them while they were still alive and mentally focused. It ended there.

One wondered why it was necessary for the issues of suspension and expulsion to assume such importance. Why did Rassool keep reverting to it?<sup>24</sup>

Not only does he keep reverting to it, he makes a categorical statement:

“...the rupture between Tabata and Alexander was downplayed and almost opportunistically, Alexander's expulsion from APDUSA and the Unity Movement was swept under the carpet.”

There is an obligation on Rassool to ascertain the following:

- i) Was there indeed an expulsion?

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<sup>22</sup> Page 469 of Rassool's thesis

<sup>23</sup> There is Note No 14 to Document No.79 in “SA's Radical Traditions” Volume two which states that Drs Alexander and Abrahams were suspended.

<sup>24</sup> See line 1 of page 470 of Rassool's thesis

- ii) In other words was there a meeting called to deal with a motion to expel?
- iii) If there was such a meeting, where was it held? The date of the meeting? Was Neville Alexander invited to the meeting and did he attend?  
if so, when and where was the meeting called and who called the meeting
- iv) What was the date of the expulsion?  
If the expulsion was in writing a copy of that expulsion has to be produced. Has it been produced?
- v) Who delivered the written expulsion?
- vi) Who accepted delivery?

It becomes clear that it was necessary for Rassool to insist on “expulsion” and not “suspension” for two reasons:

1. If Indeed the Unity Movement had expelled Neville and his group, then the exiled leadership had no right, moral or other wise, to use the ADC in any way for its advantage.
2. Again, if indeed Neville and his group had been expelled then Tabata deliberately withheld this vital information when he, Tabata, met Pablo in Algeria.

Concerning 1 above, the ADC apparently had no objections to the funds of the ADC being used by “the organisers and others in the Unity Movement.”<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, the ADC developed with the passage of time so that its principal purpose was not confined to the defence of Neville and his comrades. For example the New Canadian ADC *widened* its aim

“ not only to collect funds to aid political prisoners and their dependents but also through such cases of victimisation to focus public opinion on the inhuman Apartheid policies of South Africa and on the destruction of civil and political liberties.”<sup>26</sup>

The idea then is to wage an attack on the moral integrity of the exiled leadership. They were a bunch of fraudsters who expel a person and then claim him as one of their own so that they can get publicity, paid trips and funds through the ADC.

On page 470 of his thesis, one can literally hear Rassool smirking when he quotes Dora Taylor as saying: “Neville was always our son.” And goes on to state sarcastically that Dora Taylor placed herself alongside Tabata

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<sup>25</sup> See footnote 99 on pages 470 and 471 of Rassool’s thesis.

<sup>26</sup> Persecution Under Apartheid Laws In South Africa.” Published by the new Canadian Alexander Defence Committee. The document was obtained from the Internet. There are no further details.

as the co-parent. Rassool may have intended a deeper innuendo. But let him wallow in that.

What Rassool is announcing as *his* conclusion is that first they expel him. Then when advantage can be squeezed from his name, “He was always our son!”

But concern for Dr Alexander did not arise only after the birth of the ADC. Let Rassool look at his own thesis. On page 468 Rassool writes:

“Referring to Alexander directly Tabata (at the 9<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Unity Movement 1962) emphasized that the liberatory movement had great hopes for the youth and we have had and *still have* great hopes for him. (Our italics) This was a test for him ...to put the organisation before himself. This will be proved by his willingness to subject himself to the discipline of the organisation.”

Placing this statement against “He was always our son” reveals a consistency of feeling. The only irony is to be found in Rassool’s mind!

Likewise as fraudsters they conceal the alleged expulsion of Neville from Pablo so that they can get him to give them assistance from the Algerians. Yet one can be certain that Neville would have alerted Pablo to the latest development and thereby exposed any attempted deceit on Tabata’s part.

Placing the Unity Movement directly against Dr Alexander’s group, Rassool claims that the president of the Unity Movement, Leo Sihlali “came out strongly against guerilla warfare.”<sup>27</sup>

*Now nowhere in his presidential address at the Ninth Conference or in the Conference minutes will you find a criticism of guerilla warfare. Likewise not a single Unity Movement member will be found criticising guerilla warfare!*

Consistent with the Marxist-Leninist position, the Unity Movement had harsh criticism for “terrorism” as a method of struggle – the idea that a select or chosen few will rid society of oppression by placing bombs in various places, including under the car of, say, the Minister of Police or President of the oppressive country.

The leadership of the Unity Movement was very clear about the differences between acts of terrorism as a form of struggle and guerilla

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<sup>27</sup> See line 1 of page 468 of Rassool’s thesis

warfare which must involve the mobilisation and politicisation of the masses.

It is Rassool who is not clear!

### **ONE FINAL MATTER CONCERNING DR ALEXANDER**

1. Dr Alexander has made the allegation that when he raised the matter of guerilla warfare on his return from Germany in 1961, his suggestion was rejected and that he got expelled (sic!) for it. But when Tabata returned from his trip he put across the *same proposition*. This time it was unanimously accepted.

2. When a person is introduced to the Unity Movement, within a very short time that person learns that:

- a) It is not possible to change the heart of a ruling class from an oppressive and exploitative government to a caring and benevolent government.
- b) An oppressive government can only be overthrown through the power and might of an organised oppressed and exploited population.
- c) Appealing to the heart of the oppressors like Gandhi advocated was tantamount to perpetrating fraud on the population and in fact disarming them.
- d) For this reason petitions and deputations as forms of struggles were condemned out of hand.
- e) As an essential part of their training Unity Movement initiates were taught about the Russian and the Chinese Revolutions.

In short, without any time wasted, there was no doubt left in the mind of new member that only by an armed struggle was it possible to achieve radical and qualitative change in the country.

So when Dr Alexander returned and spoke about the armed struggle, he said nothing that we did not know. It was not an original idea. The armed struggle was always at the back of our minds. The crucial point was the *timing and the design*.

3. Rassool attributes to Dr Alexander the explanation that Tabata was hostile to him because Tabata feared that he Alexander, would steal his thunder by advocating a switch to the armed struggle and that in turn would bring him power. As far as we were concerned, Tabata's only concern was the matter of security being breached with loose talk of the armed struggle and that without the foundation being laid; such talk was

premature, dangerous and would play right into the hands of the Security Police.

4. Of these two approaches on what basis does Rassool choose the one indicative of pettiness and personal glory on Tabata's part? In truth there was no personal glory. It was the case of being placed right in front to face the security police.

But this approach on Rassool's part is generally consistent with his intention to demonise and belittle Tabata.

## **THE UNITY MOVEMENT'S APPROACH TO THE ARMED STRUGGLE.**

1. The Unity Movement viewed the armed struggle, after Clausewitz, as the political struggle fought by other means.

2. Primacy had at all times to be given to the political struggle

3. The armed struggle presupposed substantial political and organisational work when mobilizing the population.

4. I recall Tabata emphasizing that the military aspect had to be subordinated to the political structures of the organisation.

5. Those that carried the guns must be subject to the discipline and instructions of the appropriate political structure.

6. If those wielding the gun were not controlled, that would lead to the formation of gangs and thence to gangsterism!

7. For the armed struggle to be effective, a sizeable section of the population had to be politicised and organised and placed under the central authority of the revolutionary organisation.

8. This was the message from the Head Unity Committee. A version of the message will be found in a 1963 document: "What is Apdusa?"<sup>28</sup>

9. In his public speeches Tabata, and later others kept emphasizing the organisational aspect. "If you want guns you can get them provided you are properly organised. To prevent the tanks and saracens from travelling from one place to another, it is organisation which will ensure that the saracens and tanks do not get petrol.

10. To show the seriousness of the political aspect, there was the instance of three young professionals who offered to go abroad for military training. Their offer was turned down on the grounds that their political expertise and energy was needed in the country.

11. The decision to embark on the armed struggle was taken only after Tabata returned from his secret overseas trip during which he met various officials of states who promised assistance to implement the armed struggle. He had accomplished what he regarded as the crucial preliminary and indispensable preparatory work.

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<sup>28</sup> The copy I have in my possession was reprinted in 1983 with an update.

It will thus be seen that the conception of the armed struggle as espoused by the Pabloite Fourth International and that of the Head Unity committee of the Unity Movement was quite different.

It is my view that had Dr Alexander and his group shown patience and waited for Tabata's return, history might have taken a different turn in the country!

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## **In Defence of Comrade Jane Gool!**

### **Against Her Denigrator!**



Introduction:

South Africa is notorious for its dearth of intellectuals who are activists, leaders of organisations and thinkers and theoreticians. Look around in journals and books and see how many have been creative and productive intellectually. You will find very few.

The largest organisation of the oppressed people, the African National Congress, on which piggybacked the Communist Party has nothing really to show. There is a book or two by Govan Mbeki about the peasantry. But that is in form of journalistic reporting. Their “great” leaders like Moses Kotane, Dr AB Xuma, Chief Luthuli and Nelson Mandela have produced nothing. Instead they have had others write about them. They could not even write about themselves! Thabo Mbeki, apart from a few flowery speeches, has written nothing. Instead he has had three, not one, biographies of himself written, including the one by that weird Trinidadian, the “unlikable Mr Roberts.”

When it comes to women, the position is immeasurably worse. Where are the women leaders and thinkers? When I speak of leaders and thinkers, I most certainly do not have in mind the likes of driver’s licence fraudster, Ms Baleka Mbete. I refer to committed freedom fighters like Mrs Lilian Ngoyi, Mrs Albertina Sisulu, Ms Ray Alexander, Ma- Mbeki. They have left no legacy of any intellectual endeavour. Ray Alexander, the fiery organiser for the Communist Party, was reduced to snivelling denial of all knowledge of the terrible repression suffered by the people of the so-called Socialist Bloc. Throughout those decades of dragging the good name of socialism in an ocean of innocent blood, there wasn’t a murmur of protest. She was the case of the monkey who saw and heard no evil in the paradise created by Stalin and his henchmen, The one person who did write, partly because of her profession, is Professor Meer. However, there is nothing original in her writings; she joined the band of the Mandela (including Mrs Winnie Mandela) praise singers; she deliberately concealed the reactionary and racist position of Gandhi in South African politics.

There is Cissy Gool who retained her married surname though not the man who gave her the name. The Gool name had value. Mrs Gool was strikingly attractive. That, coupled with her demagoguery, made her a popular and charismatic figure. As for being the local “Joan of Arc”, let us say we beg to differ. Joan of Arc did not fight the English for acclaim and praise. When we say she “fought” we do not mean in a figurative sense. She participated in the battle with sword in hand. She was prepared to die for her cause. And so she did – a very painful and excruciating death by being burnt alive!

Mrs Gool was par excellence an opportunist and joined Stalinism – first the Stalinist Sam Khan and then the Stalinist Communist Party. There is nothing productive coming from Stalinism. Hence Mrs Gool’s political sterility. From “Joan of Arc” to the South African nation, she lowered her sights and settled to be a ward councillor in the racist Cape Town City Council for the rest of her life.

Ruth First was different. She was an intellectual in her own right and refused to toe the Party Line slavishly. According to her husband, Joe

Slovo, she was “fiercely independent but was sidelined by the movement...At that stage independence was just not tolerated. It was part of the sickness...”<sup>29</sup>

### **JANE GOOL – A CLASS OF HER OWN.**



Jane Gool addressing a mass meeting or conference in the early 1950s

Cde Jane Gool was one of the daughters of a well- off Indian businessman, Yusuf Gool, and the descendant of a Malay slave, Hajima! The latter was a powerful and dominant woman who had her face turned towards the modern world.

It was at her insistence that both Jane Gool and her sister Zubeda were allowed to enrol at the University of Fort Hare, a university peopled predominantly by African students from all over the country and Africa.

This was the sisters’ first contact with members of the African population on the basis of equality and non-racialism. It was something totally unheard of in the Indian/Malay community and must have been a hot topic for gossip and discussion.

Taking into account the times of those days, the very act of enrolling at Fort Hare University was a revolutionary one.

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<sup>29</sup> Barbara Harlow: AFTER LIVES Legacies of revolutionary writings,1996, Verso London page 144

Upon completing their studies, the sisters took up teaching posts, again something unheard of in the Indian /Malay community. Again something revolutionary.

Jane Gool taught at the Muir Road school in District Six throughout her professional life. *Thus she served the community of District Six as a teacher of its children until her retirement which was just before her flight into exile in 1963, i.e. her entire professional life!*

In the 1930s Cde Jane Gool joined the Lenin Club in which ed the leading intellectuals of Cape Town participated Cde Jane Gool learnt from the best. When the Lenin Club split on ideological grounds, Cde Jane Gool joined the Workers Party of South Africa and the Spartacus Club under the leadership of Yudel Berlack and Claire Goodlatte. It was in these organisations that Cde Jane Gool received an intensive training in all aspects of political knowledge of Marxist Socialism. She emerged as a fully fledged socialist revolutionary, both articulate and activist.

That, too, was a revolutionary event.

It needs to be recorded that of the public leadership which formed the Non European Unity Movement, Jane Gool was the first to have joined the WPSA and was its most senior representative. It was she who recruited Tabata into the WPSA. I have no doubt that it was she who would have persuaded the vacillating Goolam Gool to throw in his lot with the WPSA and not with the so-called Trotskyist faction led by Avebach or the National Liberation League.

In an interview conducted by Lyov Hassim on the 21<sup>st</sup> November 1990, Jane Gool gives a cameo picture of Clare Goodlatte. She describes an occasion when Clare Goodlatte declared to Tabata and Jane Gool: “You are leaders!” Jane Gool stated that they protested: “What are you saying, Comrade Goodlatte?”

The quality of Jane Gool as a leader was spotted in the very early years. This is not an exaggeration because “Isaac Tabata and Jaineb Gool” were appointed as representatives of the WPSA to the conference of the All African Convention on May 18th 1936!<sup>30</sup>

It was during this period (the mid 1930s) that she met IB Tabata and persuaded him to join the WPSA. They became attracted to each other and forged a permanent relationship which lasted 55 years.

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<sup>30</sup> See footnote 4 of page 397 of Rassool’s thesis.

## **A CROSS-COLOUR RELATIONSHIP**

Falling in love with a person outside the racial or religious fold from which one comes takes a tremendous amount of courage. It is worse if you establish a liaison with a member of a group considered inferior.

Being a woman of immense courage, Cde Jane Gool went public with her relationship with IB Tabata, much to the shock and horror of the conservative Indian/Malay community.

## **COMRADES IN THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE.**

When Cde Jane Gool embarked on the road of political struggle, there was no turning back. There was no relenting. She was actively involved in the struggle until the day she died – covering a period of *over 60 years!* It was a life of successes and of failures. It was to be the fate of Jane Gool and IB Tabata to go from a position of being greatly respected for their knowledge, intellect and wisdom and working with a large array of talented and dedicated people constituting the much envied leadership of the Unity Movement at their side in the early years to a much reduced motley crowd of under-trained and ill-equipped supporters.!

Ciraj Rassool who appears to have a hidden agenda for annulling the relationship between Tabata and Cde Jane Gool and replacing it with the relationship between Tabata and Mrs. Dora Taylor, refers to Jane Gool dismissively as a partner, at best a colourless description of a relationship.

There was much more than a mere partnership between Jane Gool and Tabata

- She worked all her life. Both Tabata and Jane Gool lived off those earnings. Tabata was a full-time revolutionary. His only contribution to the joint household was during the time when he hawked socks in Langa and from the modest stipend he received from the WPSA.
- They would debate and hammer out ideological positions on all matters of importance like the national situation, the international situation, the land question, the workers and trade unions and the educational setup.
- They would plan for and attend all the conferences of the Non European Unity Movement, the National Anti-Cad.; the All African Convention. Tabata was in the habit of saying: “Conferences do not run by themselves. They have to be directed, otherwise there would be chaos!”
- They attended the very numerous committee meetings of the various organisations for which they would have planned and prepared.

- They would do the research necessary for establishing a full understanding and for the subsequent presentation.

## **THE EXPERT ON THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION**

While it was Tabata's prerogative to present the analysis of national situation it was Cde Jane Gool's to present the analysis of the International Situation. The latter preceded the "national situation" so as to place the position of South Africa in the context of geopolitics. It was the context in the international arena which made it possible to understand what was happening in South Africa. An understanding of what has happening in South Africa armed us to do our work. When we went into the field we all became miniature Jane Gools and IB Tabatas. How great it felt to pass on to people carefully prepared and simplified intelligible analyses of what appeared to be complex phenomena.

In 1953, Cde Jane Gool delivered her paper on the International Situation at the conference of the All African Convention. It was my first attendance of a conference of a Unity Movement organisation. It was also the first time I listened to an exposition of the International Situation. I still clearly remember the theme – the phenomenon of neo-colonialism without that phrase being used. The Conference was presented the two roads of the anti-colonial liberation movements – the road taken by China and the one taken by India. There was a comparison of the programmes of these two trends with Conference being left in no doubt that the road to be chosen by the Unity Movement was the road of China. Equally Conference was left in no doubt that the road chosen by the leaders of the Indian National Congress was the road of betrayal – later called neo-colonialism.

The exposition was brilliant; she was an effective speaker who kept her audience with her all the way. She did not hesitate to give a public figurative sharp jab if she saw attention flagging on anybody's part.

For me, the International Situation became a highlight whenever Cde Jane Gool presented it.

We learnt with amazement about the importance and significance of Guinea's "NO" to the French invitation to join the French Union. We also learnt of the vicious retaliation by the French when they removed as much as they could, even telephones and toilet seats on their way out of Guinea. To us, Guinea's NO was equivalent to the immortal NO by Antigone, the central character of Sophocles' play by that name. Like Antigone, Guinea also had to pay a heavy price for a principled stand.

We learnt for the first time about the Chinese Communes in another paper by Cde Jane Gool on the International Situation. "Commune" was transformed from a vaguely understood unit of social organisation in

China's great experiment into a living organism. Cde Jane Gool had done her research with the usual thoroughness and gave us lengthy quotations from a writer, Felix Greene, who had written a book called *The Wall has Two Sides*. These quotations described in detail what a commune was and what took place in a commune. We were able to link the nature and happenings in a commune with the theme of Kropotkin's classic, *Mutual Aid*- survival of the fittest meant *not survival of the physically strongest* but of those species which could best work and live together!

## **CDE JANE GOOL, A POWERFUL AND FEAR-INSPIRING LEADER**

Those who knew her also knew that she did not easily tolerate fools. Being in the top leadership position meant, inter alia, performing unpleasant asks like delivering rebukes and verbal chastisements when called upon to do so. Tabata's personality did not equip him to deal with those situations. Yet the unpleasant task had to be performed. It thus fell on Cde Jane Gool to perform that task. In prison those who administered the flesh-tearing lashes were remembered and cursed for their brutality but not the officer or court who sentenced him to lashes.

One got a glimpse of this when traitor and police informer, Davidson Ngqeleni, a participant of the so-called Apdusa Conspiracy in Zambia in 1970 to organise and recruit for military training, who fled Zambia by arrangement with the Security Police and gave evidence against the 14 Apdusan trialists (13 +1). While giving evidence, he expressed great fear about Cde Jane Gool. He said that if Jane Gool gave you that look, "you were a dead man."<sup>31</sup>

I recall very clearly how in 1957, B.M. Kies attempted to win me over to his and Jaffe's faction. We sat in his car in Lorne Street, Durban, discussing the politics of the Unity Movement. One of the things that struck me was his attempt to separate Tabata from Jane Gool. He said that he had no difficulty in discussing matters with Tabata, but it was Jane Gool who was so unreasonable.

In 1962, I recall Neville Alexander making a similar comparison.

On both those occasions I did not accept the validity of the comparison. Those two hardened revolutionaries (Tabata and Jane Gool) *were usually of one mind* when dealing with anything of importance. I was old enough to know that the comparison was untrue. I also came to believe that when Cde Jane Gool administered a tongue-lashing, it was not the contents of

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<sup>31</sup> Or words to that effect.

what she said that offended these people but the manner in which she said it – harsh and searing.

**A VERY DEEP AND PERMANENT BOND UNTIL THE VERY END.**

Cde Jane Gool devoted her entire life to the cause of liberation and to Tabata as her man and comrade. She saw to his everyday needs – his food, the cleaning and ironing of his clothes, the darning of his socks, nursing him in times of illness; she shared with him the vicissitudes of their political fortunes, fighting his ideological and polemical fights when he could no longer do so because of his banning orders; she filled the breach in their defences when their comrade Dr Goolam Gool was wounded and literally destroyed in the polemic against Jaffeism.

Cde Jane Gool fought like the great female warriors described so graphically in legends and in the histories.

When the polemic reached its climax at the 1958 Edendale Conference, it was Cde Jane Gool who led the charge. Hosea Jaffe, the leading antagonist, the coward that he always has been, was nowhere to be found. By the time the charge had had its ripple effect, the Unity Movement was in two pieces. This was a painful but necessary separation. From that time onwards, little or no time was spent in the time-consuming, morale-destroying and destructive polemic. Each faction had to pick up the pieces and continue with the struggle against oppression and exploitation.

It was Cde Jane Gool who performed that operation. There was no time left for sentimentality; there was no place for the squeamish. What had to be done was done.

She performed what Tabata could not because of his banning orders. When her comrade and co-fighter had become disabled, instead of bemoaning her fate, his and that of the Movement, she got down to the task and completed it.

How pleased Tabata must have been to get a detailed blow-by-blow account. Sadly, there is no record of that in the form of a letter or memo.

Rassool has taken great delight in quoting letters from Mrs Taylor to Tabata and from him to her. He calls her, *inter alia*, his confidante. There is no correspondence, so to speak, between Tabata and Cde Jane Gool. Why should there be? They lived together and spent most of the time together. They did not feel the need to communicate through letters or record their feelings in a diary.

Look at their activity over the decades and draw the logical conclusion of joint planning and formulating of positions and exchanges of confidences.

## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TABATA AND MRS DORA TAYLOR**

From the very earliest days, we came to believe that there was a special relationship between Mrs Taylor and Tabata which went beyond close comradeship. But that aspect of their relationship was never flaunted in public. Nor was there any occasion when special affection between them was displayed or demonstrated in our presence. They were highly disciplined people who could keep their feelings and emotions under strict control. We therefore, at no stage felt uncomfortable when they were together, nor a feeling of guilt of disloyalty towards Jane Gool, whom we all greatly admired, respected and feared.

## **A MATURE AND CIVILISED RELATIONSHIP**

In retrospect, my view is that the quadrangular relationship involving Jane Gool, Tabata, Mrs Taylor and Mr Taylor was strictly a matter between them. These four people took a decision somewhere along the line to let things be, provided there were no adverse consequences. A comrade wrote the other day, upon learning of the strong relationship between Mrs Taylor and Tabata, that she felt very sorry for what Jane Gool had to endure.

My response to that is that Jane Gool had the option to disengage from that quadrangle. A similar option was available to the other members. But they chose not to disengage because they believed far more important things bound them together.

*It was their decision and theirs alone.* We need to respect that. We can also marvel that that relationship did not only not destroy the unity of that group of WPSA members, but that they were able to be so productive, so active and so full of influence. On top of all that, Mr and Mrs Taylor were able to raise a family of three girls.

*Here is an example of mature and civilised conduct and behaviour involving four adults in a situation which is notorious for inviting the use of the gun, poison or metal poker to resolve. This is not to say that there were no tensions or no pain. Not even relationships planned in heaven are free from expression of strong human feelings.*

But all four chose to remain discreet about that relationship and succeeded until gossip-mongers seized the opportunity to publish that relationship with glee. It was a paparazzo, using a personal computer instead of a camera, who feasted on the revelations.

## **FOR THE BETTER OR FOR THE WORSE**

In the thirties and forties, the members of the WPSA made a tremendous impact in the political arena. Here were intellectuals who could speak knowledgeably and without notes on virtually any subject. Apart from the contents of their speeches, the presentation was highly impressive. They were orators. In the case of Dr GH Gool, there was also great charisma. Tabata was considered as a rising star who deeply impressed people with the depth of his knowledge, his powers of persuasion, his seriousness and his demeanour. To be in his company was considered to be special honour. It was Jane Gool who was always at his side. The three musketeers – Tabata, Jane Gool and Dr Gool were known far and wide. In those days just being with Tabata was a special experience and Jane Gool must have savoured every minute.

But that was not always the case. The leadership of the WPSA split and Tabata and Jane Gool and the Taylors found themselves to be a minority with their backs against the wall. This was a time of tremendous resolve and courage. Polemics are not a sedate affair with debates being conducted according to accepted rules of propriety. They can be quite dirty. Ultra-sensitive people rather run than be caught up in a dirty fight. The burden, the heaviest part of the burden, fell on Tabata and Jane Gool to arm their young followers ideologically and morale-wise to enter the polemic. They were like generals who viewed the carnage of their supporters with a sinking heart but who would not give the signal for surrender.

At the end of it all, the organisation was split from top to bottom. Tabata and Jane Gool had to pick up the pieces and exhort their supporters to move forward. Somebody once claimed that an organisation becomes stronger after a purge. Well, that did not apply to the Unity Movement nor to the Soviet Union when that purge became a river of blood.

There was hope and expectation when the mass peasant organisations like the Makhulspan made contact with Apdusa and indicated their willingness to work with Apdusa. This led to the flight of Tabata, Jane Gool and Honono from South Africa to Africa in the high expectation of fulfillment of the promises of assistance to launch an armed struggle. And in that mood of high expectation they prepared the Memorandum to the Liberation Committee. It was an excellent document with crystal clear analysis. But these freedom fighters with high ideals had not reckoned with the limitless capacity of the new elite of Africa to engage in deception and treachery.

We have previously reported how Ja Ja Wachuku, that obnoxious Nigerian who was chairman of the Liberation Committee, kept

interrupting Tabata in his presentation to unsettle him and to distract from the potency of the analysis. We related how Jane Gool, fearless and in fury, attacked Wachuku for his disruptive behaviour.

Do we know of many women, or men for that matter, who would get up in that august body to defend her comrade's right to free speech?

For the next three decades, it was a frustrating and soul-destroying existence to try and get recognition so as to be able to conduct an armed struggle. It was the matter of one door after another slamming in their faces.

In this period the frustration and failure to get recognition seriously affected the other members of the leadership. Differences arose like a crop of boils. There were ugly fights; there were expulsions and there were departures.

Towards the end of his life, Tabata, though widely respected, was treated like an aging lion.

It was the period of defeat and humiliation. Jane Gool was at his side every minute of the day and she defended him like a tigress would her cubs. His illness was already manifesting itself in 1985. Yet she encouraged him to drive his motor car for the sake of his dignity. But it was she who would be directing him all the through the journey by pointing with her finger.

These were the worst days of Tabata's life and that is when he needed support most. Jane Gool was at his side, never deserting him or leaving him to the vicissitudes of fate, and seeing to all his needs necessary for existence and survival.

The real journey together, from the mid-1930's until Tabata's death was an unusually long journey covering a whole 55 years of her adult life.

It is such a person whom the paparazzo has removed in a public demonstration of expulsion from the side of Tabata.

According to Daria Surve (born Friedrichs), a niece of Jane Gool, a visit to the District Six Museum showed a portrait of Tabata placed next to a portrait of Dora Taylor. Underneath Tabata's portrait are certain descriptive notes. The following constitutes a summary of notes by Daria Friedrichs:

“Photo Ann Fisher

Workers Party in Cape Town – debates- Spartacus Club, NEF – Meetings in District 6 – formed WP comm. of AAC in 1941, active in African Voters Assoc, H/Q AAC- Stakesby L Hostel where IB resided during the 40's. Activist and theoretician- NEUM, - prominent figure, prolific author – Soc and pol debates – eg Rehab

Scheme, development of black political movements, boycott, character of Bantu Education. Trips to the Transkei reg. Up to 40's and early 50's to mobilize and politicise rural poor –peasantry. Much of his life assisted by comrade, confidante Dora Taylor. Banned- '56. In 1961 pres of APDUSA unitary org of peasants and workers – left (SA) '63lived in several southern African countries drumming in support 4 liberation struggle.

Jane – separate - arms length away

Matric Trafalgar – 2<sup>nd</sup> group of matrices- Fort Hare-1931 teacher on return

Workers Party – 1930's – events and discussion NEF Founding mem Anticad- activist – AAC – NEUM conferences She addressed on Int(ernational) events”.

The suppression of facts and figures on the relationship between Tabata and Jane Gool is without doubt deliberate and malicious

Can one imagine anything more despicable?

Can one imagine any person more contemptible than the person who seeks to perpetrate this?



## HOW LONG?

*“Concerning the blows that have fallen to our lot, I reminded Natasha the other day of the life of the archpriest Avvakum. They were stumbling on together in Siberia, the rebellious priest and his faithful wife. Their feet sank into the snow, and the poor*

*exhausted woman kept falling into the snowdrifts. Avvakum relates:*

*“And I came up, and she, the poor soul, began to reproach me, saying: ‘How long, archpriest is this suffering to be?’ And I said, ‘Markovna, unto our very death.’ And she, with a sigh answered: ‘So be it, Petrovich, let us be getting on our way.’ ”*  
*(From Trotsky’s “Diary in Exile” page 121)*

## RASSOOL CHALLENGED

Rassool’s contemptible act of expelling Jane Gool from the side of Tabata in the District Six Museum and placing Dora Taylor’s portrait next to Tabata’s amounts to a public announcement that Tabata’s true partner, lover and comrade was Dora Taylor and not Jane Gool.

He used his influence and position in the District Six Museum to give effect to the expulsion. Notwithstanding his seemingly invincible position in the museum, his vile deed did not go unchallenged. Those members of the Unity Movement who knew Tabata, Jane Gool, Dora Taylor and JG Taylor well and knew the relationship among them, challenged Rassool. But Rassool has dismissed their objections because he knows that if push came to shove, he would use his “influence” with the powers that be to get his way.

According to Rassool, Dora Taylor’s portrait was placed next to a photograph of Tabata *“as a means of indicating a biographic relationship”*<sup>32</sup> (Our italics and emphasis). What does Rassool mean by “a biographic relationship”. He does not explain. The dictionaries in my possession are of no help. Does he mean the two had a personal relationship? In what manner was that relationship deeper and more meaningful than the relationship Tabata had with Jane Gool? Again this is a case of Rassool obfuscating an issue by using language in a manner not understood.

Then Rassool seeks to poke fun at people’s opposition which claimed that the positioning of the photographs implied that Dora Taylor was Tabata’s girl friend. Since when does the placing of one photograph next to another invariably implies a romantic relationship? Rassool attributes this to narrow minded and spinsterish view of two photographs placed side by side. This is again Rassool’s fabrication.

Feigning impartiality Rassool concedes “that Tabata and Jane Gool had a long term relationship even if it was not monogamous”. Giving it its

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<sup>32</sup> Page 510 paragraph 2 of Rassool’s thesis.

normal meaning and not a Humpty Dumpty one, a monogamous relationship means where a person is married to only one person at a time. Does Rassool have any evidence that either Jane Gool or Tabata was married, at any given time, to more than one person? Does falling in love with another person during a stable relationship make that a polygamous relationship?

When referring to the “long-term relationship”, honesty required spelling out *how long*? The very close relationship between Tabata and Jane Gool involving a relationship between man and woman, between fellow members of the WPSA, between comrades who actively fought side by side in the political struggle, spanned *fifty-five years* - from the time when Tabata was first recruited into the Lenin Club in the mid 1930s until the day he died in October 1990. They lived together as man and wife under one roof from the mid 1950s until October 1990.

As against that, the personal relationship between Tabata and Dora Taylor was of a much shorter duration and came to an end when the parties left South Africa in the early 1960s.

In view of the above, especially the description of the working together of Tabata and Jane Gool, why has Rassool not attributed a “biographic relationship to Tabata and Jane Gool?

It is the view of the writer that Rassool has an ulterior motive.

Concerning the non-mention of Jane Gool in the biographic sketches drawn by Dora of Tabata, Rassool suggests that Dora Taylor may have deliberately occluded Jane Gool’s involvement with Tabata or their joint political activity.<sup>33</sup>

That statement is made as a result of the failure on Rassool’s part to realise that the purpose was to present an impressive image of the president of the Unity Movement to those individuals and institutions who could advance the cause of the Unity Movement. There was no decision taken to promote the image of Jane Gool or any other member of the Unity Movement leadership.

If there is merit in the suggestion that Dora Taylor deliberately kept Jane Gool in the background, what then can be said of the fact that Dora Taylor’s own contribution and activity was also subject to “occlusion”. What conclusion is sought to be drawn?

“...it seemed incontrovertible that it was Tabata’s relationship with Taylor *that was the most formative in his development.*”<sup>34</sup>

In plain language Rassool makes the absolutely preposterous claim that Dora Taylor was most influential or decisive in the development of Tabata. There is not even an iota of evidence to support that conclusion.

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<sup>33</sup> Page 511 of Rassool’s thesis paragraph one..

<sup>34</sup> Ibid page 511 paragraph one

Doing the secretarial work for Tabata; assisting him to improve greatly his command of the English language and reformulating passages or even sections of what Tabata had written does not qualify Mrs Taylor's relationship with him as "*the most formative in his development.*" Tabata's work in the political struggle including his theoretical input was not limited to the of use of elegant English or the ability to quote Shakespeare in writings and speeches.

All those who know of the young Tabata will know that he was trained and tutored by Clare Goodlatte, one of the leading intellectuals of the WPSA. They will also know that already in the 1930s Tabata had matured sufficiently to be appointed one of the delegates to the All African Convention. His co-delegates were Jane Gool or Dr G.H. Gool. By the time Tabata was appointed as full-time organizer for the WPSA and was assigned Dora Taylor to do his secretarial work and to develop his proficiency in English, Tabata was already a seasoned revolutionary. What was still required to be developed in him that Mrs Taylor finalised?

## **BARUCH HIRSON**

### **THE PERSON**

1. As a person claiming to be a committed revolutionary socialist, Hirson failed abysmally to attract and win over people to his organisation or its programme.

2. He belonged to that faction of the Lenin Club led by Averbach which had broken with the Workers Party of South Africa. Yet he chose to join the Unity Movement whose left leadership belonged to the Workers' Party of South Africa. What was his motive in doing so? Compared with the Fourth International led by Averbach, the Unity Movement had a massive membership. Hirson joined the Unity Movement in the hope of poaching members. That practice has been given the fancy name of "entryism."

3. He claimed to belong to an organisation called the Workers' International League (WIL). This group was affiliated to the Unity Movement for a single year. To the best of my knowledge, the WIL was neither a workers' body, nor was it international nor a league. It was an attempt by one of the Trotskyist factions in South Africa to form trade unions. It has been described as "ephemeral" and vanished from the scene after two years.

a) He did not succeed in poaching members and therefore in all probability the affiliation was not repeated at the subsequent conferences. He then joined the Progressive Forum, an affiliate of the Unity Movement in 1950 and remained in it until 1957.

b) It would have done his morale little good to see the rate of recruitment of young intellectuals to the Unity Movement in contrast to his failure to do so.

c) His frustration was matched by a great anger fuelled by his failure to convince people of the correctness of his ideas and/or his failure to impress people with the mountain of statistics he would hurl at them.

6. The writer met him at the University of Natal in 1956 when he (the writer) was a second year student. He had attended a conference organised by the SRC. The theme of conference was a “common society”

i) The conference turned out to be a contest between the Unity Movement and the liberals. Baruch Hirson joined in the debate.

ii) He met the writer during the conference. Hirson sought to recruit the writer to his point of view which was strongly critical of the basic positions of the Unity Movement. He came across very strongly, literally demanding sympathy and support at the rough treatment he had received at the hands of the ultra-left section of the Society of Young Africa. One recoiled at the strong outburst of emotion coming from a stranger.

iii) In retrospect, the writer believes, rightly or wrongly, that Hirson had a personality which repelled people rather than drew them to him and his viewpoint. That may explain the reason for his failure to recruit people to his cause in any significant number.

7. According to Hirson himself, he decided to part ways with the Unity Movement in 1957. One of the first things he did was to write and publish a critique of Tabata’s “Awakening of a People” The question is why wait for seven years<sup>35</sup> before publishing a critique? He waited until he left the Unity Movement and therefore did not have to answer to anyone about his critique. I do not know the extent of the circulation of his critique. It could not have been very wide because we in Natal did not have access to a copy.

8. In a matter of two years, Baruch Hirson and Mtutuzeli Mphele<sup>36</sup>, were knocking at the door of the ANC for admission as members. One does not know what Hirson’s motives were since the ANC at that time, and for a long time thereafter, admitted only Africans in the narrow sense of the word as members. He was directed to join the Congress of Democrats which was a “whites-only” body, a partner of the ANC.

9. The next one heard of Baruch Hirson was when he was charged together with a group of young white liberals for sabotage. Hirson, the avowed Marxist, had decided to indulge in a bout of terrorism. This

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<sup>35</sup> The Awakening..” was published in 1950.

<sup>36</sup> He was removed as Chairman of SOYA at the 1958 conference due to his ultra left politics. He resurfaces as trouble in the Mqotsi episode. He ended up joining the ANC in exile.

position went against the most basic of Marxist teachings about methods of struggle. Let us be clear on this. *The criticism does not reflect on the courage, fearlessness and commitment of the persons involved.* It is a criticism of the method of struggle which was long debated and settled among Marxists. Hirson was sentenced to nine years' imprisonment of which he served every single day.<sup>37</sup> John Harris, one of the country's bright stars, was judicially murdered! Was it worth it – John Harris' life against the satisfaction of having shown the ruling class defiance?

10. At some stage, whether in detention or in prison, Hirson decided that he had had enough of the political struggle. The aims and objectives of the socialist struggle no longer had meaning for him for him. The struggle for a socialist revolution was not for him. In plain terms, he decided to desert the struggle.

11. On release from prison, Hirson literally took the first available plane out of the country to a place where he was safe from the South African Security Police. He decided to switch careers. He chose to become a historian instead of a revolutionary.

12. He has been highly rated as a historian by people including Professor Tom Lodge of Wits University.

13. During 2003, Hirson decided to write "A Short History of the Non European Unity Movement – An Insider's View"<sup>38</sup>. By that time, most of his contemporaries in the Unity Movement had either died or, a small minority, like him, had deserted the struggle. He waited for 30 years after his release from prison to write a twenty two and one half page history of the Unity Movement. Why did he wait for people like Tabata, Jane Gool, Enver Hassim, Karrim Essack, Zulei Christopher, LL Sihlali to die before he made his major assault?

14. I have found this document to be one of the most disgraceful pieces of writing. Hirson has correctly condemned the falsification of history by the Stalinists and his attitude was: "Its time to set the record straight." But in writing his History of the NEUM Hirson has even surpassed the Moscow falsifiers. It would take more than a 100 pages of rebuttal since errors, inaccuracies and falsifications are so numerous. I will give a few examples to illustrate my point.

15. It is this kind of history that Rassool chose to use as authority to judge Tabata and the Unity Movement.

16. Let us examine the "History":

Introductory Remarks: One is immediately struck by:

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<sup>37</sup> Political prisoners received no remission or parole in respect of their sentences.

<sup>38</sup> Our copy of this document runs into 27 pages. It is available on the internet to the reader. Should there be a problem in tracking the section referred to in this critique because of numbering of pages, we are quite willing to provide a copy of the document in our possession from which the page references were made – Editorial Committee.

- a) The total absence of footnotes for the numerous attacks made on the Unity Movement.
- b) All we are given is a list of references at the end of the article.
- c) When one looks at the references submitted, one finds many valuable documents missing.
- d) The most important set of documents omitted are the *minutes of the conferences* of the NEUM, the National Anti-Cad and the All African Convention. In other words, Hirson prepared his “History” without studying or referring to the minutes!
  
- e) There is no reference to the Unity Movement classics like the “Building and Basis of Unity,” “The Background to Segregation”, “The Boycott as a Method of Struggle,” Van Schoor’s “The Origin and Development of Segregation”, “The Ten Point Programme” by Dr GH Gool, the two papers by Dr Gool on the Trade Unions and the Liberatory Movement, or his “Land and National Oppression”, “ A Declaration to the People of South Africa”, “Race Riots and the Nation”, BM Kies’s “Contribution of the Non European Peoples to World Civilisation .” Edgar Maurice’s invaluable piece on the origins of the theories of racial inequality.

#### ABOUT THE MINUTES:

These documents are unique since no other organisation in the liberatory movement has such detailed minutes.

The minutes record, inter alia:

1. The names and number of organisations represented at that conference.
2. What was discussed and who said what.
3. Substantial summaries of the various papers delivered and the contributions of various individuals, including the opposing views.
4. Resolutions in full together with the names of the movers and seconders of the resolutions
5. A detailed Secretarial Report setting out the work done and the problems encountered and the comments and contributions from the delegates.

A large portion of Hirson’s ill-considered attack on the Unity Movement flows from his failure to read and study the minutes.

Where in the world do you find a historian writing about an organisation without reference to published Minutes?

According to Rassool, Hirson has stated:

“The reading of documents is not proof against false conclusions – but the historian must at least have these available before a coherent account can be written.”<sup>39</sup>

Hirson did not follow his own advice. Yet Rassool describes him as “the most indefatigable documenter”<sup>40</sup> when it came to the history of Trotskyism in South Africa.

Truly, Hirson was *sui generis*.

- a) Page 1 line 1-2 – The split took place in 1958 and not in 1957.
- b) Page 1 line 2 - “ went into terminal decline. Inactive if not dead in South Africa during the 1960s” – Robin Kayser’s thesis “Land and Liberty” conclusively rebuts that fallacious conclusion. Add to that the fact that the Kies/Jaffe faction continued being active in the Teachers’ League of South Africa, in the newly created civic movement, eagerly imitated by the pre UDF-ers movement and in the unique and creative formation of SACOS which performed the function of a liberatory organisation, taking full advantage of a relative immunity granted to a national sporting body by the oppressors in order to get consent to participate in international sport, especially rugby and cricket.
- c) Page 1 para 2 line 8 “...became nationalist leaders.”  
The leadership under Tabata and Jane Gool at no stage abandoned their internationalist position. One has merely to read the minutes of the conferences of the Non European Unity Movement, the Anti-Cad and the All African Convention to confirm the pride of place given to the paper on the International Situation, the internationalist position adopted and the resolutions passed to be able to dismiss as absolute rubbish the attack made by Hirson.
- d) Page 2 para 2: “Ultimately, it was said that white groups could join.”  
There is no evidence of any sort to suggest that there was debate or argument about whether whites could join. The leadership of the Unity Movement was committed to non racialism from the very outset.
- e) Page 2 para 6: “.. gave little attention to the black workers, viewing them mainly as peasants...”-

- i) The Role of Trade Unions was given special attention in both the 1945 and 1951 Conferences of the Non European Unity

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<sup>39</sup> Rassool’s thesis page 307-308

<sup>40</sup> Line 1 page 307 of Rassool’s thesis.

ii) Movement. No less a person than the Vice President, Dr GH Gool delivered the papers.

ii) The role of the workers was also given special attention in the 1962 Presidential Address of APDUSA. Amongst other things, its president, Tabata, stated:

“Our belief is that those who create must decide what is to be done with what they have created. The producers of wealth in a society must be in the government of the country.”<sup>41</sup>

f) Clause © of Apdusa’s Constitution under programme and policy states:

“The democratic demands and aspirations of the oppressed workers and peasants shall be paramount in the orientation of Apdusa in both its long term and short term objectives.”

Page 8 para 3: “if it had not been for Kies, it is conceivable that nothing would have been done to resist ..” the CAD .”

This is an absurd statement to make. There was a vibrant intellectual leadership poised to make the greatest impact on the Coloured people in their history. Why on earth would have they missed the formation of the Coloured Advisory Council? Apart from the broad militant leadership there was the New Era Fellowship which attracted the cream of the Coloured intelligentsia. Above them all was the underground WPSA. The formation of the Anti Cad was not a chance affair.

g) Page 8 para5: Hirson seeks to belittle the first Anti-Cad conference by giving the impression that it was a sort of haphazard affair. Had he taken the trouble to read the Minutes of the First Anti-Cad Conference he would have learnt that :

i) There were 70 organisations represented at the Conference.

ii) Of these 70, 15 were trade unions,

iii) The importance of the Conference is evidenced, inter alia, by the fact that the Communist Party Central Committee saw it fit to send its leader Moses Kotane as a delegate.

iv) That prior to the conference, meetings were held in 30 areas in the Western Cape and in East London and Port Elizabeth.

v) Prior to the Conference some 160 organisations had publicly come out against the CAC.

h) Page 10 para 5 – “...no public statements from the NEUM on war in Europe or Asia. The one time militant stance of the WPSA on the war was swept under the carpet and a discrete if

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<sup>41</sup> APDUSA Presidential Address April 1962 page 16.

dishonest silence was maintained.” One is struck dumb by the brazen lie. The minutes of the various conferences *give lie to this claim*. Specifically the reader is referred to the Minutes of the Sixth Conference of the NEUM held in 1948, pages 18 to 22.

i) *page 23 para31*: “...led to the mobilization of some young cadres as a sabotage group...poorly organised...the group was arrested...several sentenced to imprisonment to Robben Island.”

i) The function of a historian is, amongst others, to report and record accurately.

ii) It was not just young cadres who were mobilised. The centres throughout the country were mobilised.

Hence when the state struck, some 200 members were arrested from various parts of the country.

iii) The charge was not sabotage but, inter alia, participation in a conspiracy to recruit people for military training to overthrow the State, attending and participating in meetings where recruitment was discussed; and advising those from Zambia that their presence had become known to the police and that they had to flee the country.

iv) The campaign was *not* poorly organised. At least two of the persons sent from Zambia were in the country for *six months* before their presence became known to the police. They moved from one end of the country to the other without detection, being given protection and succour by the local membership throughout their stay. It took a traitor from Zambia, Davidson Ngqeleni, to expose the presence of the four Apdusans from Zambia who came to do the actual recruiting.

v) The people involved were not just young people. Most of them were adults.

vi) Of those charged, the youngest was 30 years old and the oldest 65 years.

vii) Thirteen were convicted and sent to Robben Island.

viii) All the above information came out during the trial and was given extensive publicity in the print media.

One can go on and on, and as stated above, 100 pages can be easily covered in uncovering and exposing Hirson’s lies.

Let us conclude with one final example:

On Page 19 para 3, Hirson claims that Tsotsi, President of the AAC:

*“deplored the failure (by Marxists) to recognise that emergent African nationalism was a progressive*

*political force, was genuinely anti-imperialist and anti colonialist". (Our italics)<sup>42</sup>*

What the president of the AAC *actually said* was:

“We have to recognise that *insofar as it is genuinely anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism*, African nationalism is a progressive political force. It is only when African nationalism degenerates into racialism i.e. it is anti white, anti coloured, anti Indian, and when it is tied to the apron strings of imperialism and is the latter’s agent for the economic exploitation of the colonial peoples, that it has to be condemned and fought.” (Our italics)<sup>43</sup>

We ask the reader to compare what Hirson attributes to the president of the All African Convention and what exactly the president had stated.

The *deliberate distortion* is clear!

## **RASSOOL’S SLAVISH AND UNQUESTIONING RELIANCE ON BARUCH HIRSON’S OPINION OF THE UNITY MOVEMENT AND I.B. TABATA.**

Introduction: It appears that Rassool has at no stage and paused and asked himself what is so special about Hirson’s opinion of Tabata and the Unity Movement that makes it unnecessary for him to investigate and test the man’s opinion? It appears as if Rassool was so overwhelmed by Hirson’s hatred for the Unity Movement and Tabata since it in all probability coincided with his own feelings and views that he felt no need to question and test allegations. It appears as if Hirson was a “historian” after his heart.

We have shown Hirson’s “History of the NEUM” to be a shockingly disgraceful piece of writing which has no regard for fact or truth. This is the “history” which Rassool describes as a product of Hirson “reflected much more purposefully on the history of the Unity Movement.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Where does Hirson get that quotation? It is nowhere in Tsotsi’s Presidential Address

<sup>43</sup> Presidential Address delivered by WM Tsotsi at the 1958 Conference of the All African Convention held at Edendale Pietermaritzburg.

<sup>44</sup> Page 310 para 2 of Rassool’s thesis

All that Hirson's "History" is bent on is to denigrate the Unity Movement and Tabata. Even from a cursory reading of his "History", certain questions must rise to any person claiming to be an intellectual:

1. If it is correct that as Hirson contends it to be, viz., "the propagation of democratic demands tied them into a nationalist framework from which they could not break",<sup>45</sup> why then did Hirson affiliate his WIL to the Unity Movement in 1945?
2. Further, why did Hirson join the Progressive Forum (affiliated to the Unity Movement) in 1950 and remain in it for a whole seven years?
3. Why did Hirson wait for seven years before he criticised Tabata's "Awakening...?"
4. Why did Hirson wait until 1957 before he made a class analysis of the African population?
5. Insofar as the numerous faults and complaints Hirson has about the Unity Movement, the question is what stopped him from doing the very things he accuses the Unity Movement of failing to do?

Rassool's failure to ask these and other pertinent questions reveals the man's own ignorance of the politics of the Unity Movement and Tabata's which is an integral part of it.

Let us take the allegation that Tabata relegated the workers to second class status.

1. Two major papers on there trade union question were delivered by Dr GH Gool at the 1945 and 1951 Unity Movement conferences.
2. Almost without fail there would be a paper on workers and the trade unions at all the conferences of the NEUM, Anti-Cad, and the AAC.
3. I repeat reference to section © of the Constitution of APDUSA (1961):  
"The democratic demands and aspirations of the oppressed workers and peasants *shall be paramount* in the orientation of APDUSA in both its short term and long term objectives."  
(Our italics)

Rassool has not read the constitution of one of the most potent organisations in the Unity Movement. Neither has he read Tabata's presidential address to the founding Apdusa Conference in April 1962. Otherwise he would not have dared to make the derogatory allegation that the workers had "second class status."

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<sup>45</sup> Page 312, para 3 of Rassool's thesis

And how does one dare write about a man without reading one of his most powerful political pieces?

*And since when does the struggle for a democratic society lead to the abandonment of the struggle for socialism?*

1. The programme of demands or the vision of a changed social system is determined by both the objective and subjective conditions prevailing in society.
2. The prerequisite is an analysis of society which reveals the bundle of contradictions which exist.
3. It is the art and skill of leadership to be able to determine which is the dominant contradiction in society.
4. It was the conclusion of the WPSA that colour oppression and land hunger were the dominant contradictions around which it was possible to rally and move the largest number of people to bring about social change.
5. It was from this analysis that the Unity Movement considered national oppression and land hunger to be the rallying points. Hence "Land and Liberty".
6. The programme for the resolution of these contradictions was formulated as the Ten Point programme.
7. The WPSA considered the struggle as a permanent phenomenon. It is for this reason that the Ten Point Programme was described as a minimum programme.
8. Depending on the alignment or balance of forces at the appropriate time, the objectives could be upgraded to socialist goals.
9. Only a fool or ignoramus would sniff or sneer at what is called a bourgeois democratic programme.
10. Lenin believed:

"The bourgeois revolution is precisely an upheaval that most resolutely sweeps away survivals of the past, survivals of the serf-owning system and most fully guarantees the broadest, freest and most rapid development of capitalism.

That is why a *bourgeois* revolution is in *the highest degree advantageous to the proletariat.*"<sup>46</sup>

The WPSA followed the Marxist Leninist approach in planning its long term strategy. The successful Chinese Revolution also had a minimum programme. Because it was actively involved in an

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<sup>46</sup> Lenin: *Selected Works: Two Tactics of Social Democracy*, page 452, Progress Publishers Moscow, 1977

armed struggle for most of its pre-liberation existence, it could afford to announce publicly its maximum programme of socialism.

According to Rassool, relying on Hirson, Tabata is alleged to have described emergent “African nationalism as “genuinely anti-imperialist and anti colonialism.”<sup>47</sup>

The fact of the matter is that Tabata *made no such claim*.

We showed above Hirson’s shameless distortion of Tsotsi’s statement on African Nationalism.

Not being satisfied with that distortion Hirson decided to drag Tabata as well into that fabrication. As with the smear on Tsotsi, no evidence or proof is submitted that Tabata had indeed made that statement.

When you decide to subject truth and authentic research to slavish repetition, this is the disgraceful consequence!

On page 313, line 1 of Rassool’s thesis there is the allegation that in contrast to a previously held position that land was to be held collectively, Tabata announced that “redivided land to be held collectively after liberation” could be sold as private property.

No reference of any kind is given about holding land collectively. That is so because there is *no such reference*. It is an invention! It is yet another fabrication by Hirson. And yet another slavish adoption of the fabrication by Rassool. Rassool or any other interested person can search the literature of the Unity Movement but they will find no reference to “collective” holding of land! The ultra-left interpretation of point 7 of the Ten Point Programme only surfaced in the mid 1950s.

This is not the time and place to deal with the polemic the Unity Movement engaged in over the land question in the 1950s. It will require a detailed paper.

Hirson makes the charge that the leadership of the Unity Movement “tried to conceal their Marxist background” and “used nationalist rhetoric and misled countless men and women who believed that they were working for socialist ends.”<sup>48</sup>

It is true that the leadership of the WPSA took a decision to go underground in 1939 because there were real prospects of fascism

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<sup>47</sup> Page 312 para 3 of Rassool’s thesis

<sup>48</sup> Rassool’s thesis page 313 para 1

taking over the country. This meant the propagation of ideas in a manner which was least likely to open them to fascistic reprisals. This precaution was fully justified in view of fascism's merciless reaction to revolutionary socialism.

It is also true that there was a toning down in the use of Marxist terminology. That was common sense. There is no point in going underground and then persisting in socialist rhetoric.

The real question is *whether* in going underground, the *WPSA abandoned Marxism* as a method of analysis and whether the essence of what socialism is was ever abandoned by the leadership of the Unity Movement.

Hirson does not pose the real question.

Important documents like "Boycott as a Weapon of Struggle", "The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest", "The PAC Venture in Retrospect", the Apdusa "Presidential Address" (1962), "The Problems of Africa"<sup>49</sup> have all used the Marxist analysis and historical materialism in the interpretation of events. There is Dr G.H. Gool's "Land and National Oppression" where on the very first page the evolution of society is described through Marxist analysis.

Why has Hirson not referred to them?

How were people misled? There was only one programme of demands advocated, viz., the Ten Point Programme. On this score please read the Minutes of the 6<sup>th</sup> Conference of the NEUM. (1948). Dr GH Gool, who led the discussion on "The Coming War and the Non Europeans" states on page 21, Para (b):

"The Movement of National liberation is based on the ten point programme. Our objective is full citizenship in this country. The Communist Party has for its objectives socialism. There must be no mixing of the two banners."

At no stage has the Unity Movement mixed banners. It is Hirson's fabrication and Rassool's slavish acceptance of that fabrication that claims that "countless men and women" were misled.

After wallowing in an orgy of misrepresentation, distortion and blatant falsehoods, Hirson, in what must have seemed to him to be an outburst of

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<sup>49</sup> First appeared in Apdusa: Vol 2 No 12, Jun-September 1967 and later reproduced in "Imperialist Conspiracy in Africa" by IB Tabata, published by Prometheus Publishing Company 1974, page 54

generosity, seeks to compliment Tabata.<sup>50</sup> It is a cheap and crude attempt at fairness and balance.

Any attempt to explain Tabata's work and life in terms of Hirson's alleged research must be rejected out of hand. That research is fatally flawed for the reasons set out above.

According to Rassool, Tabata's "dualist" trajectory was explained by the self-subordination by the underground WPSA to bourgeois politics and nationalist demands.

The ideas of "dualist" path and "bourgeois" are Hirson's. In adopting them, Rassool has exposed his ignorance of Marxist-Leninist politics which is cogently argued in Lenin's "Two Tactics of Social Democracy".

Allison Drew's criticism that Tabata had failed to understand rural conditions cannot be taken seriously. Who better than a committed revolutionary who was born and brought up in the rural areas and who functioned as a full time organiser to understand rural conditions and the extent of proletarianisation?

Hirson trots out the moth-eaten argument of the Unity Movement being armchair politicians. Nowhere does he spell out the kind of activity it ought to have engaged in. Nowhere does Hirson himself show *by example* the kind of activity the Unity Movement should have engaged in.

People who have the power to make other people engage in action have great responsibility not to abuse that power. Ordinary people are moved to action for a variety of reasons. Sometimes, it is through a clear understanding of issues and the course of action to be followed. Rational thinking governs action. On other occasions it is blind emotion which moves people to commit the most horrendous deeds. A good example is a lynch mob in action. Closer to home there is the ugly bloody stain of xenophobic violence and murder. Politically we have seen the use of mob psychology to send people to their deaths. Let us recall the anti-pass campaign where the PAC leaders promised people that all they had to do was to hand over their passes at a police station and lo! The passes would be a thing of the past! 15000 people assembled at Sharpeville to hand over their passes. All they got was bullets – a massacre! Here was a clear case of the abuse of the trust that the people placed in a political organisation.

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<sup>50</sup> Rassool's thesis page 313 para 1.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps the first communist theoretician, Wilhelm Weitling, had engaged in agitational activity, including taking part in an insurrection organised by Blanqui.

Weitling met Marx and Engels in March 1846 with the object of formulating some “common doctrine which would serve as a banner to rally around.

Marx posed to Weitling the following question:

“...you who have made so much stir in Germany with your communist propaganda and have won over so many workers so that they have thereby lost their work and their bread, with what arguments do you defend your social revolutionary activity and on what basis do you propose to ground them..? “

Weitling apparently waffled and could not give a clear answer. Marx turned on him:

“... it was simple fraud to arouse the people without any sound and considered basis for their activity. The awakening of fantastic hopes ... would never lead to the salvation of those who suffered, but on the contrary to their undoing...”<sup>51</sup>

When Hirson criticises the Unity Movement for not engaging in action, he does not spell out what sort of action he had in mind. At the same time, he should also assert and substantiate that he did engage in those activities. It is of little use to criticise an organisation for not engaging in a certain kind of action if he himself had not done so.

Let us be blunt here. Nothing less than a blood bath initiated by the action of the Unity Movement would have satisfied Hirson. He, no doubt, would have had no objection if the Unity Movement incited a meeting of unarmed people to attack a contingent of the army or police force armed to the teeth and which retaliated with a massacre. It would have pleased him if the Unity Movement engaged in a sabotage campaign which landed scores, if not hundreds, of its supporters in police hands and in the prison.

Hirson would not have been an easy person to please. His pleasure would have exacted a heavy price from the oppressed.

And for these reasons, no political leadership worth its salt would take seriously a word of what he says.

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<sup>51</sup> Edmund Wilson, *To the Finland Station* First published in Fontana, 196,0 page 169.

## **HIRSON'S CLAIM OF QUALIFICATION TO WRITE THE NEUM HISTORY**

1. According to Rassool, Hirson was careful to spell out his relationship with Tabata.

*What relationship?* Hirson exaggerates! He lived and worked in Johannesburg while Tabata lived in Cape Town. Where did they meet to establish a relationship? Hirson came to Cape Town on the odd occasion and would ask to meet Tabata. Was there a correspondence between the two men in which matters of importance were discussed in detail? If so, let them be produced. Then Hirson and WIL disappear from the Unity Movement - Hirson for five years and WIL forever. (No explanation is tendered for the disappearances.) He resurfaces in the Unity Movement in 1950. He stays in the Progressive Forum for seven years and again leaves. Did he establish a relationship with Tabata during the seven years? He only refers to the one discussion he had had with Tabata and that was about Hungary! At that time the whole world was talking about Hungary!

Hirson claims that he worked in the NEUM. What work apart from getting "The Awakening" printed? It is true that the first print of the "Awakening" is not particularly impressive. But that was never an issue. It is Hirson and Rassool who have made it into an issue.<sup>52</sup> Apdusa (Natal) have printed numerous Unity Movement publications including "Three Hundred Years" and "Role of the Missionaries". That was considered Movement work and duty. It was never trumpeted!

## **RASSOOL'S LACK OF PROFESSIONALISM**

Rassool must take full responsibility for Hirson's so-called "History of the NEUM." He puts it forward without qualification. He does not question the validity of the very severe attack on the Unity Movement and on Tabata. He has not sought to verify the damning criticism of the Unity Movement. By his actions and his failure to test and verify the allegations he has identified fully with the "History". Therefore whatever ignominy is visited on the head of Hirson must also be visited on Rassool. And why magnify the importance of the printing?

If one were to read the Minutes of the All African Convention Conference, (1948 or 1949), it will be seen that the main purpose of "The Awakening" was not to provide an analysis of South African society<sup>53</sup>, or an economic analysis, but to explain to the reading /intellectual section of

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<sup>52</sup> Footnote 47 of Rassool's thesis page 311.

<sup>53</sup> The analysis was already done by the WPSA

the oppressed population *why the differences between the All African Convention and the African National Congress!*

Hence detailed references to minutes of conferences and meetings of these two bodies.

Rasool goes on to say that Hirson “has also criticised the principle of non-collaboration.”<sup>54</sup>

The Unity Movement has been careful to distinguish between “principle”, “policy” and “tactic”. Non-Collaboration has always been described as a “policy” by the Unity Movement, never as a principle!

Let us take one last attack on Tabata and the Unity Movement by Hirson:

“Tabata and the leadership of the NEUM created a hallmark out of never entering a political struggle, except verbally” They “spoke, condemned, insulted and threatened, but did not engage in political action, neither in the rural areas nor in the towns.” (Page 314, paragraph 2 of Rassool’s thesis)

#### COMMENTS:

1. Hirson does not understand the first thing about a political struggle.
2. A political struggle is a highly complex and multifaceted process.
3. No organised political struggle starts off with fireworks – the discharge of firearms, the setting off of bombs and explosives and the like.
4. For the most part a successful struggle involves a long period of gestation during which the WORD, spoken and then written is the most potent ammunition.
5. Very frequently, the first word is NO! NO to oppression; NO to repression; NO to exploitation!
6. It should be plain to Hirson that the WORD can only be expressed effectively through the spoken or written word since human beings have not developed mental telepathic communication.<sup>55</sup>
7. In deriding the verbal political struggle, Hirson derides all the struggles.
8. Karl Marx used only the WORD to set the world aflame with the hope of a communist revolution.<sup>56</sup>
9. Dr G.H. Gool, in his “Land and National Oppression” gives us the situation which needs to be attended to:

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<sup>54</sup> Rassool’s thesis page 311

<sup>55</sup> Nor do human beings find it convenient to use sign language when verbalizing is possible.

<sup>56</sup> Marx is reported to have brandished a firearm only once and that was to chase off a bailiff who came to attach his goods for non payment of rent!

*“It is a known fact that the ideas prevailing in any given society are the ideas of the dominant group. The control by this group of all channels for the dissemination of their ideas, is a necessary and indispensable prerequisite for their very existence. The particular ideas that must flow through the social system must be of such a nature that their impact on the minds of the members of society must produce results that will ensure the position of the dominant group and its continued rule.”<sup>57</sup>*

10. Thus the first step is the battle of the minds and souls of the oppressed and exploited population.

11. It is through discussion and exchange of ideas that this battle is fought. It is for this reason that the verbal battle so belittled by Hirson is the *sine qua non* of a successful political struggle.

12. In launching the battle of ideas, the Unity Movement revolutionized the political face of this country.

13. The ideological revolution meant, inter alia:

- The concept of equality and the rejection of the idea of inferior or “Child Race” and institutions befitting “child races”.
- The unity of all the oppressed people.
- That unity be on a principled basis, with no one section using the other.
- The rejection of the “lesser evil” of the oppressors.
- The rejection of the belief that it was possible to change the heart of the oppressor and exploiter.
- The exposure of the futility and worthlessness of “petition politics”.
- Non-collaboration with the oppressor and exploiter.
- Principles to govern the lives of people at all times.
- The striving of the creation of a single nation and to counter and fight racialism, tribalism and other divisive outlooks.
- The striving for the brotherhood and sisterhood of all freedom-loving people in the world – an authentic internationalism based on egalitarianism.
- The arduous task of rewriting the history of this country and its people so as to present the truth which depicts its oppressed people as a once proud and independent people who had engaged in a glorious struggle to defend the people and the country from the invaders.

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<sup>57</sup> Dr G.H. Gool: “Land and National Oppression”

14. It was through the use of the WORD, both spoken and written, that the Unity Movement became the political *pace setter* for the rest of the liberation movement. It was the Unity Movement which *first*:

- a) Advocated an organisation uniting all the oppressed.
- b) Advocated a programme of minimum demands which were to be considered non-negotiable
- c) Advocated a boycott of all institutions designed for an inferior people.
- d) Advocated the policy of non collaboration with the oppressors.

15. These revolutionary concepts caused major ripples which over the decades were adopted in one form or another by the other segments of the liberatory movement. Hence the ANCYL adopted the policy of non-collaboration; the various Congresses adopted their programme of minimum demands in the Freedom Charter; the various Congresses formed the Congress Alliance in place of a unity movement. The boycott as a political weapon became popular and resulted in the boycott of the advisory boards, the Bhunga, the so-called Indian and Coloured Local Councils, the Bantu Councils and finally the total rejection of the Tricameral Parliament.

16. By this time a tidal wave of opposition was developing and the ruling class realised that the *battle of the minds and souls of the oppressed people was lost forever*.

It all began with what Hirson contemptuously referred to as the “verbal struggle”.

## CONCLUSION

1. One is struck very forcefully by the show of hatred by Hirson for the Unity Movement. One wonders why? After all there was no compulsion concerning his involvement with the Unity Movement. It was purely voluntary.

2. If his intention was to poach members from the Unity Movement, he was not very successful. Mpehle was not a great catch.

3. If he hoped to influence the politics in the Unity Movement, there is nothing to show for it—no written thesis or document by him on any of the important matters.

4. All in all he spent eight years in the Unity Movement. What did he get out of it? Nothing worth mentioning. It could be the “wasted” years that make him turn on the Unity Movement with such viciousness.

5. I.B.Tabata was, without question, South Africa’s leading Marxist political thinker. He wrote in a powerful style and was an orator without peer in the liberatory movement. He was a revolutionary to the marrow and devoted his entire life to the cause of liberation. In doing so he

sacrificed a distinguished career in any of the professions open to him where because of his talents he would have excelled and covered himself with honour and glory. He eschewed that path and chose the road of a full-time revolutionary. On this road, he and his comrade/partner and wife, Jane Gool, had to endure a Spartan lifestyle in view of scarce resources. He was hugely respected and admired. People from all parts of the country came to Cape Town to learn at his feet. He produced some of the finest political writing in the country. One has merely to look at what the other so-called leaders produced to be convinced of his absolute superiority in the ideological field. Tabata was prepared to go the very “end of earth” to achieve the South African revolution. It took the combined effort of backward Africa in collusion with the African National Congress and the Stalinists to deny Tabata what was rightfully due to the Unity Movement and thereby subvert the South African revolution.

6. It is the revolutionary integrity of a person like Tabata that Hirson seeks to sully with his cheap lies and distortions. What could be his motive? Who would believe him except persons whose beings were also full of hatred for all the things that Tabata and his comrades stood for in life?

7. I have little doubt that it was an all consuming hatred fuelled by overwhelming envy that made Hirson do what he did.

8. After all, Hirson could never have been any of the things that made Tabata what he was.

## **RASSOOL’S CULPABILITY**

1. All those who knew Tabata over the long decades knew him to be a “Unity Movement” person. There was no aspect of his grown life that could be separated from the Unity Movement.

2. Any person seeking to write biographically about Tabata had to be much more than just casually acquainted with the Unity Movement. The historian or biographer has to know the Unity Movement *inside out* – its origins, its pronouncements, its writings, its positions on all matters of political importance, its resolutions, its activities, its achievements and its failures.

3. By his blind acceptance of all the drivel dished out by Hirson as a history of the Non European Unity Movement, Rassool showed either his own culpable ignorance or a deliberate concealment of what the true position was.

4. Where Rassool is presented with a history of the Unity Movement<sup>58</sup> which earned the highest accolade from Professor Tom Lodge, he pushes it out of the way with an apparent justifiable reason. He dismisses Robin Kayser's research and Masters thesis on the Non European Unity Movement as *partisan* as it was falsely claimed by him to have been written by a member of Apdusa.<sup>59</sup>

5. Rassool was born and brought up in Cape Town. The Western Cape was saturated with Unity Movement ideas. He, himself would have been exposed to Unity Movement ideas and its history. So when he comes across a political tract which describes the Unity Movement in the most disparaging terms, there ought to have been alarm signals that all is not right.

6. It was open to Rassool to have tested the validity of Hirson's attack by approaching a phalanx of senior Unity movement members and asking for their responses. There was WM Tsotsi, Alie Fataar, Richard Dudley, Dawood Parker, Jane Gool, Mrs Helen Kies, Ernie Steenveld and others. But he did not. The question is why?

7. As stated earlier, Hirson was a "historian" after Rassool's heart. Hirson expressed what Rassool felt deep inside him.

In writing about Tabata *without making a full study of the Unity Movement*, Rassool disqualified himself, at the *very outset*, as a writer of the biographical aspects of Tabata's life.

## MAKING WORDS WORK OEVERTIME

### Introduction

1. The objectivity of a historian is, inter alia, judged by the choice of terminology. The repeated use of terminology denoting unsavoury or undemocratic practices is an indication of bias or dislike.

2. From the very outset, we see Rassool using terminology which is derogatory and unacceptable.

3. Here are some of the examples: presidentialism, paternalism, patronage. It is interesting that not one of these terms has been defined or explained and how they are linked to Tabata. They are collected as fresh dung and hurled at a man no longer able to ward off the missiles nor

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<sup>58</sup> Master's Thesis by Robin Kayser: 'LAND AND LIBERTY! THE NON EUROPEAN UNUNITY MOVEMENT AND THE LAND QUESTION.

<sup>59</sup> The false claim was made by Ciraj Rassool. See page 314 of Rassool's thesis line 10 of the second paragraph. Kayser was never a member of Apdusa.

do his epigones display the strong moral compunction to rise to his defence.

4. As with other words, Rassool takes liberties in explaining what he means by “biography”. If one understands Rassool (and that is no easy task) a statement like “Born 1<sup>st</sup> January 1909, Died 31<sup>st</sup> December 1999” is a biography. In other words, anything said about a person becomes biographical.

5. The ordinary meaning assigned to biography by the average reader is a relatively detailed researched study about the life, thoughts and activities of an individual within the context of a society with its social, economic and political features.

6. When thinking of a biography the average reader will form a mental image of at least a fair-sized book. Others will have in mind a four volumed book by Tony Cliff on the life of Lenin. Of course, the most famous biography is the three volumed “Prophet” series by Isaac Deutscher’s on the life of Trotsky. The latter series runs into over 1500 pages, while Anthony Sampson’s biography of Mandela is close to 700 pages.

7. To the best of my knowledge, the longest biographical writing on Tabata was the “Tribute” Apdusa Natal paid to him in 1991. That “Tribute” with photographs and bibliography numbered 18 printed pages.

8. So let us be clear what we are talking about. Tabata’s so-called biography amounted to no more than biographical sketches which were designed to give the reader *some* idea as to who the writer or speaker, as the case may be, was. It was meant to be no more than that, namely an introduction. It was not meant to be a history of the liberation struggle or the history of the country or of the times when Tabata lived.

9. There can be no basis of comparison between the self-hero worshipping of a Mandela, dying to go down in history as the world’s greatest statesman or the craving to go down into history as a great thinker or architect of a great Africa to-be like Thabo Mbeki or of the supremely egotistical writings of a Mac Maharaj who believed that he almost single-handedly won the struggle to unseat the Nats.

10. Writings about Tabata during his lifetime are thus almost non existent. If they do exist beyond sketches, they are about the *most modest* on a leading revolutionary, thinker and intellectual.

By what stretch of the imagination does one even begin to talk about biographical sketches in the same breath as those seeking immortality!

11. There are millions, if not billions, of biographical sketches done about people all over the world, everyday! At every event of importance, like marriage, death, graduation, 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, birthdays (for adults), the assembled people are given a biographical sketch of the person who is the centre of the event. Sometimes there are more than one sketch – one for the celebrant and another for the parents. In the older days, it was not uncommon for the Master of Ceremonies at

an Indian marriage ceremony to consume the greater part of the ceremony singing the praises of the families of the bride and groom. Do all the sketches count as biographies? That would really do violence to the meaning of the word “biography”.

12. Until the formation of APDUSA (1962), Tabata held no position in any of the organisations of the Unity Movement except as an executive member. This was the position he adhered to for a period of almost thirty years.

13. To the youth who had just joined the Movement, this attitude turned out to be different from the normal or average attitude. When we questioned it, we were given a lesson illustrating humility, service to the organisation, eschewing glory and position of rank.

14. At least two generations of recruits religiously adopted that attitude to organisation and office of positions and kept away from such positions. Karrim Essack throughout his career was never more than an executive member. Enver Hassim also kept away from position except when he was pressurised to accept Treasurership of the All African Convention in order to raise funds. Ally Fataar would only accept secretaryship because it involved rigorous daily work and a dedication in which he excelled.

15. When the idea of launching Apdusa was born, there was to be a complete transformation in our attitude towards a mass organisation based on individual membership. The Unity Movement did not have any previous experience in this field. Everything about the new organisation had to assail one or other of the senses of sight and hearing. The name as written and stated had to be attractive. The organisation had to have a HUMAN FACE, so that with the passage of time, just the presence of the face would inform about the presence of the organisation.

16. Thus it came about that the organisation’s most dynamic leader who was highly experienced, was an accomplished orator and an extremely competent speaker on virtually any subject, was chosen as its president.

a) Presidents have been elected from time immemorial in organisations all over the world.

b) Why did the election of this president suddenly become an issue? Was there anything unconstitutional about the decision taken, or was there a special clause in the constitution which prohibited people like Tabata from being elected president?

c) *Why did the election through democratic procedure of a president suddenly become “presidentialism”?*

d) The problem of the status of your leading spokesman appeared with a vengeance when backward Africa confronted the exiled

Unity Movement delegation. After the explanation of the federal nature of the organisation which placed the Non European Unity Movement as the overarching and supreme body, Tabata's position as President of Apdusa placed him in a position of a chieftan. Africa was interested in the "Supreme Chief", viz. the president of the NEUM.

e) Since the last elected president of the NEUM was LL Sihlali, it was not practical to produce Sihlali each time a head of state or important state official wanted to meet the president of the Unity Movement. For one thing, Sihlali was in South Africa and he had no passport. Another was that he was banned and house arrested.

f) The problem was then presented to the Head Unity Committee with the suggestion that Tabata be given permission to use the title of NEUM president to facilitate the work of our oversea delegation. An extended Head Unity Committee meeting, (the supreme decision making body in the absence of Conference) took the decision to elect Tabata as president of the Non European Unity Movement.

g) Here again, there is no mystery, nor a craving for position. There were hard practical problems to solve, problems which arose because of a clash of political cultures from different milieus. In Africa of those days, if you presented any official less than the president, it meant that you were holding back an important person.

h) Notwithstanding the above, let it be made abundantly clear that with no opposition at all, the organisation would have accorded Tabata any position he was nominated for with motivation. Apart from the fact that that respect would have been accorded to him without hesitation, there was no other person apart from Jane Gool who would have earned that respect.

i) It was a reality of life that the committed members of the WPSA were super intellectuals. They spent many years of disciplined and intensive study of politics in all its ramifications – history, economics, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, jurisprudence, literature and other related fields of study using dialectical materialism as their tool of analysis.

j) Upon graduation, the hardcore persisted in study and kept upgrading its knowledge.

k) In the political field this hardcore stood heads and shoulders above the best of the new generation.

l) While the new crop of radical intellectuals entered careers and found less time for study and political work, a person like Tabata was fully involved in the struggle. He in turn would inspire and update people like Jane Gool and Dora Taylor with the latest political developments.

m) The gap between the Old Guards and the new generation was never reduced. If anything it grew wider.

n) It is a known phenomena that a small hardcore of individuals, dedicated in their function and outstanding in their understanding of the happenings both in and out of the country carry a far heavier weight than their size when it comes to influencing and making decisions. This will explain why, although in a minority, the position of people like Tabata and Jane Gool carried the day.

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## **Mr Livingstone Mqotsi**

### **Introduction:**

Mr Mqotsi was asked by the Unity Movement in exile to leave South Africa and serve the organisation abroad in 1964.

Prior to Mqotsi leaving the country, and from about 1963, he was very much on his own. The Head Unity Committee in the country had its back against the wall as a result of the fascist onslaught. It was unable to deal with the day to day problems of the Unity Movement. Mqotsi did what he could politically. He became quite accustomed to acting according to his needs and ability to get things done. One of the functions he performed with admirable skill was to publish a regional newspaper which became very popular in the Eastern Cape, especially in the Transkei and Ciskei. This little paper, *Indaba Zasemonti* became the champion of human rights against the tyranny of the notorious Matanzima brothers.

On his escape from South Africa and arriving in Zambia, being assisted all the way by the structures of the Unity Movement in the country and in Botswana. His arrival in Zambia was warmly welcomed by the leadership because Mqotsi was highly thought of by them.

Initially all went off well. Mqotsi was being groomed by the senior leadership to take his place with the exiled leadership. But within a relatively short time after his arrival strife and bitter fighting broke out between Mqotsi and the exiled leadership.

According to Rassool, from around 1960 there was a change in the attitude of the leadership of the Unity Movement, expressed by:

- The closing of ranks
- “guarding its gates”
- More emphasis on discipline
- Little room for internal disagreement
- Frequent use of expulsions and suspensions
- A transition from collectivity and anonymity to individuation and presidentialism
- Tabata’s life had taken on an autocratic turn

It seemed to have escaped Rassool that the Unity Movement had just gone through a very difficult period in its history. The organisation was rent from top to bottom. The most obvious remedial step to take was to “guard the gates” and tighten discipline.

It has also escaped Rassool that when members choose to go on a rampage, fomenting splits and recruiting members for their faction and doing everything to harm the organisation, suspensions and expulsions are the logical and sensible route to take.

Or would Rassool have preferred physical beatings and assassinations?

What other remedies are available?

Yet if you were to turn to page 472 seq. of Rassool’s thesis, you will find him describing in detail how Tabata sought to use the power of knowledge and persuasion to win people to his way of thinking rather than the tool of expulsion and suspension. Rassool cannot have it both ways.

The initial complaints against Mqotsi relate to:

- a) The establishment of an Apdusa Branch in Lusaka
- b) The publication of a newsletter called *APDUSA Newsletter*

He was instructed by the leadership to close the Branch and to stop publishing the Newsletter.

Before permitting Mqotsi to level accusations about *bureaucracy*, Rassool as a historian ought to have asked Mqotsi:

- a) Was consent required for the establishment of an Apdusa Branch?
- b) What was the purpose of forming an Apdusa branch in a foreign country?
- c) Was such consent obtained, if it was require?
- d) If no consent was obtained or sought to be obtained, on what basis does Mqotsi base his complaint?

My recollection of the Apdusa Constitution is that establishment of branches requires prior consent of the executive. My recollection goes further – even membership of an individual requires the consent of the Executive.

Concerning publication, no organisation gives carte-blanche to members to publish in the name of the organization without control and consent.

When we in South Africa were inundated with complaints and denunciations from Mqotsi about the leadership, we refused to support him. We had little doubt that Mqotsi was acting unconstitutionally in forming a branch and publishing a journal in the name of the organisation without the required consent and authority.

If “The Unity Newsletter”<sup>60</sup>, the successor of the “Apdusa Newsletter” is anything to go by, Mqotsi had already crossed the ideological line as far as Unity Movement ideology and conception of the struggle was concerned. Mqotsi was already advocating ideas which were foreign to those of the Unity Movement:

- Mqotsi’s attempt to advocate the building of a “United Democratic Movement of Africa” or a “continental liberation movement.” That sounded more like the PAC position<sup>61</sup> or that of Kwame Nkrumah.
- Mqotsi’s constant reference to an “African revolution” without describing the nature of that revolution. We are aware of the twin processes of decolonisation and neo-colonisation where with a little pressure from the nationalistic movements the colonial powers reached a neo-colonial deal.<sup>62</sup> But African revolution? Is decolonisation being elevated to a revolution?

Rassool does some public relations work for Mqotsi and his group. He tells us that:

- The Lusaka branch raised funds, but omits to tell us how much.

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<sup>60</sup> Volume 2 Number 8 September-October 1967

<sup>61</sup> In 1960 the PAC believed that there would be a United States of Africa by 1963!

<sup>62</sup> There were exceptions in countries like Algeria where more than just a little pressure was applied

- Movement literature was reproduced and distributed but omits to inform us which documents and in what quantities
- The Newsletter was plagiarized, received favorable comment, provoked spirited discussion
- Mqotsi's group enabled the voice of the AAC and Unity Movement to be heard (Why not Apdusa's?) in Africa, UK, Europe, Asia, and the Americas.
- He tells us all these things but omits to tell us the quantities of the newsletter sent to each continent. Technically 5 issues sent to Asia would qualify for "distribution in Asia" but omission of the information of the number 5 would amount to act of fraud!
- On page 5 of the Unity Newsletter, Mqotsi describes Kenneth Kaunda as "*one of the most consistent fighters for human rights*". Those who have taken the trouble to study a little about Kaunda will know that:
  - He was a ruthless man covering himself with the mantle of being the exponent of a phoney African humanism
  - He made life for the Unity Movement exiled leadership a living hell. By letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> May 1967, one of Kaunda's bureaucrats from Home Affairs wrote to the exiles:
    - "I am directed to inform you," he said, "that this Government is not prepared to renew the recognition of your Party in Zambia. In the circumstances you are required to ensure that the Party is disbanded and that its members and office bearers do not indulge in any further political activities in Zambia."
    - The Unity Movement exiles were instructed to join the African National Congress.<sup>63</sup>

The true face of Kaunda as a ruthless tyrant exposed itself after the murder of Herbert Chitepo.

- He made massive arrests of Zanu members including its top leadership
- The arrestees were subjected to brutal torture.
- Thirteen of ZANU members "were shot dead, cold bloodedly"<sup>64</sup>

When Rassool wrote his thesis the above facts about Kaunda were known throughout the world. Did he question Mqotsi about the wisdom of awarding the accolade of "*most consistent fighter for human rights*" to a man like Kaunda?

Rassool further omits to ask: If the Newsletter was so grandly successful, why was its publication not continued under a changed but recognizable name?

One gets the distinct feeling that the glowing description of the Newsletter is meant to distort the truth and to mislead.

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<sup>63</sup> W.M. Tsotsi; "I was an refugee or was I?" pages 6-7

<sup>64</sup> Allegation made by Robert Mugabe to Robin White in a BBC interview on 21 January 1976 and partly recorded in "The Struggle for Zimbabwe" by David Martin and Phyllis Johnson page 210

For some reason, the name of the Chairman of the so-called Lusaka Branch of Apdusa is never revealed.

In taking it upon himself to pronounce on the matter of continental unity, Mqotsi was traversing territory which was foreign to the Unity Movement. The Unity Movement took an internationalist position on all matters outside South Africa. This is in keeping with the Marxist position of proletarian internationalism. Hence its support for the struggle of oppressed workers and peasants from all over the world. The call for a united States of Africa is based on the premise that there is something special or different about Africa. This special feature makes it possible for the unity of African countries on no other basis than the fact that the country is in Africa. Various vague and woolly-minded reasons are put forward for this mystical quality – common suffering at the hands of the West in the form of exploitation, slavery and oppression; sometimes it is brazenly (and absurdly) claimed that there is a common culture binding all the people of Africa together.

The contradictions prevailing in African countries which constitute the principal source of all the terrible massacres and crimes against humanity for which this continent is so notorious makes a mockery of the call for continental unity.

Time has shown that the road to Continental Unity is a road to the land of swamps and deadly quicksand. The area is littered with corpses of well meaning politicians who believed that the shortcut of Continental Unity was Africa's salvation.<sup>65</sup>

According to Mqotsi, "The prospect of such continental unity must have frightened the bureaucrats out of their heads."<sup>66</sup>

This was a cheap shot at the leadership of the Unity Movement in exile. Serious revolutionaries would have no reason to be frightened. They were fully aware of the futility and childishness of the clamour for continental unity.

*Forty two years* have gone by since the charge of "frightened out of their heads" was made. One would have expected Rassool as a historian to have asked:

- Did Mqotsi and his group pursue the vision of a United Democratic Movement of Africa? If so would he be able to present a political balance sheet of activities in that field?
- Was there any link between that vision and the one that Karrim Essack had proposed and pursued in the 1970s?
- Where did that vision of the United Democratic Movement of Africa end up?

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<sup>65</sup> Today (3/2/09) we hear the call for continental unity come from the Libyan dictator Gadaffi. Such a call will always reap an applause. But that is where it ends

<sup>66</sup> The third paragraph on page 474 of Rassool's thesis

- Upon the Apdusa Branch in Lusaka being dissolved, why did Mqotsi and his colleagues not simply form an organisation under a different but appropriate name?

### **THE IMPACT OF THE MQOTSI EPISODE ON THE LEADERSHIP OF TABATA, JANE GOOL AND DORA TAYLOR.**

1. The senior leadership of the Unity Movement enjoyed a high reputation in countries giving sanctuary to liberation organisations.
2. Of the senior leadership, Tabata enjoyed a special reputation. Apart from being an elder in the world of freedom fighters, he enjoyed the reputation of being a formidable intellectual and a captivating orator. When Tabata left the country in 1962 and visited Tanzania, he had occasion to address a meeting. To his surprise cabinet ministers and Members of Parliament attended the meeting. They had come to listen to a leading thinker, a revolutionary and an orator, the likes of which that part of Africa had not previously encountered.<sup>67</sup>
3. Tabata was the doyen of the members of the emigrant community of exiles from all over Southern, Central and East Africa. No matter how much the Stalinists and nationalists hated his political ideology and his position on various issues, he was respected for his age, his decades long service to the struggle and for all his other outstanding qualities.
4. One can imagine how proudly Tabata and Jane Gool would have welcomed Mqotsi into their home and how proudly would they have introduced him to members of the other organisations.
5. When therefore Mqotsi chose to make a public attack on Tabata and the Unity Movement leadership through: “An indictment of IB Tabata and his clique” in May 1966, it would have come as a deafening thunderclap in the small community of Lusaka where people lived cheek by jowl. The news of the attack on the Tabata leadership swiftly spread through the length and breadth of Lusaka. Friends of the Unity Movement would have been shocked and dismayed; the enemies, especially the Stalinists, would have been whooping with joy. There would be gossiping galore, matched only by the sniggering and sneering.
6. Tabata, Jane Gool and the leadership in Lusaka would have been deeply hurt and embarrassed. Most of all it would have been Tabata who would have to leave his house and go out into the

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<sup>67</sup> I was informed by one of Tabata's aides of occasions when President Nyerere, would by chance meet Tabata in Tanzania he showed his respect by bowing to Tabata!

street and face people, knowing full well that they would have heard of his public humiliation.

7. Mqotsi and Mpehle would have received many admiring glances and smiles from the Stalinists and the unsaid words: “WELL DONE!” Their popularity in those quarters would have rocketed sky high. In the words of Rassool on page 478 of his thesis:

“...he (Mqotsi) continued to have close relationship with members of the MPLA and Freelimmo as well as with radicals in the PAC and the ANC with whom he and Mpehle had enormous influence.”

8. The long and short of it all was that Mqotsi and Mpehle were expelled from the Unity Movement. Mpehle made a bee line for the ANC. To the best of my knowledge, he remains a member of the ANC.<sup>68</sup>
9. Mqotsi was on a different route. He, by design or accidentally, sent out signals that he was not averse to joining the ANC/SACP. The net result was that the ANC asked him to allow Chris Hani to live with him and his family. Mqotsi had Hani as a guest living with him for nearly three years at no cost to Hani or the ANC.<sup>69</sup> When I met Mqotsi in November 2006, I asserted that Hani’s purpose in living with Mqotsi (apart from free board and lodging, was to observe him and then to lodge a report on the suitability of Mqotsi’s membership of the ANC/ SACP. Mqotsi’s response was that he was aware of that! Hani lived with Mqotsi until the latter left for the United Kingdom.  
Mrs Barbara Masekela, another leading ANC personality also sampled Mqotsi’s hospitality by staying with him until she left for the United States.<sup>70</sup>
10. The matter of the Apdusa Branch in Lusaka and the publication of the Newsletter must have been matters of the utmost importance to Mqotsi. They were so important that he was quite willing to make an all out attack on the leadership of the Unity Movement. He was further willing to turn against his political mentor, Tabata, and subject him to painful humiliation.
11. When, therefore, Mqotsi was expelled, he had also sloughed off restraints concerning the formation of a vibrant political organisation and the publishing of a newsletter containing material of his choice. He was free to indulge himself to the fullest with no Jane Gool or Tabata looking over his shoulders with a fistful of interdicts.

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<sup>68</sup> Since writing the above, it has been reported that Mpehle has passed away.

<sup>69</sup> A biographical sketch by Mqotsi of himself and which he sent to the Editor of Apdusa Views on the 18/5/2004, page 9

<sup>70</sup> Ibid

Did he do this? There is some evidence that Kenneth Kaunda's government did not allow him to do this. Then the question must be asked why did not persist with the publication of his newsletter after he left for the United Kingdom?

12. Rassool tells us that Mqotsi continued publishing his newsletter until January/February 1968, i.e. for a period of only two years after his expulsion. No reason is forwarded for the cessation of publication. The claim that it was "widely read in the southern African liberation movements" is contested. Not a word is said about the formation of a political organisation in place of the dissolved Apdusa Branch. For all practical purposes no such organisation was formed. The assertion that the publication was published until 1968 is, typical to Rassool's style, couched in absolutely vague terms. We are not told how many issues were published and at what intervals. We are not told of the average size of each issue, i.e. the number of pages. It is left deliberately vague in the hope of misleading the reader into believing that the publication appeared frequently; that it was of reasonable size and its cessation was a blow to the cause of the Unity Movement.
13. The failure to publish the newsletter after 1968 and the failure to form a political organisation raises vitally important questions. What then was the *real reason* for the attack on the Tabata leadership and the Unity Movement?
14. It appears that Mr Mqotsi was really after *total freedom* from any restraint concerning his political activities. He did not wish to be answerable to anybody for what he wrote in his newsletter. He wanted to be totally free to associate with anybody he chose. He wanted to be answerable to no person about his political views and actions.<sup>71</sup>

Here we are talking about a person who is par excellence *an individualist!*

But this is couching an assessment in broad terms, the details not being available to those who had not lived in Zambia at that time. However the details have now emerged in Leonard Nikane's autobiography

Let it be recorded that when Mqotsi arrived in Zambia, he, with the consent of the Unity Movement obtained employment as a teacher in a non racial school. As Nikane puts it in his autobiography, "for the first time he (Mqotsi) earned well."<sup>72</sup> He was awarded a free house and could even employ servants. The trouble began when Mqotsi was asked to relocate to Algeria as a representative of the Unity

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<sup>71</sup> This was written before Nikane's autobiography in manuscript came to hand.

<sup>72</sup> Leonard Nikane: "My Life Under White Supremacy and in Exile" in manuscript Chapter 15 page 11 et seq

Movement. Mqotsi refused to leave for Algeria. One thing led to another and ended with his and Mphehle's expulsion. According to Nikane, Mqotsi "needed to be free! Free from revolutionary duty. Free to enjoy his "freedom".<sup>73</sup>

It appears that the real reason for the strife fomented by Mqotsi was his refusal to give up the comfort of his new life. He was not prepared to exchange that for the austere life of full time revolutionary representing the Unity Movement in Algeria!

15. In the end all that talk of Mqotsi's popularity and his enormous influence with members of liberatory movement<sup>74</sup> came to nothing. By 1970, Mqotsi packed his bags and went off to London where he stayed for over twenty years. Throughout those years, Mqotsi remained the individualist. His contribution to the liberatory struggle was desultory; he belonged to no organisation; his political work amounted to a fraction of what he was capable of.

16. Was it all worth it? This refusal to be bound by the rules of an organisation? This turning on his political mentors with a rage and viciousness which made reconciliation impossible? This damning of the senior leadership of the Unity Movement and thereby the Unity Movement itself?

17. Tabata had his name severely defamed by the Guardian newspaper. In defence of his dignity and reputation Tabata, very correctly in our view, sued the Guardian for damages for defamation. Among the many defamatory allegations made by the Guardian were those made by Mqotsi against Tabata.

18. Mqotsi was invited to give evidence in Court in support of the allegations made by Mqotsi.

19. Here was an excellent opportunity for Mqotsi to denounce Tabata to the very wide readership of the Guardian for all the terrible things Tabata and his clique had allegedly done to him.

20. Mqotsi, being a lawyer must have realized that getting the burden off his chest by giving evidence was only half the story. The other half was he would have to face cross-examination in which his own role and actions would be rigorously scrutinised. Cross examination would also involve being controverted and challenged and one's his truthfulness ruthlessly questioned and tarnished.

21. As it happened, Mqotsi declined the invitation to give evidence against Tabata and his "Clique". This was conveyed to us by Tabata and Jane Gool when we visited them in October 1985. They were very pleased at his attitude which had all the hallmarks of a move towards reconciliation.

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<sup>73</sup> ibid

<sup>74</sup> First paragraph of page 478 of Rassool's thesis. Rassool is so desperate to give Mqotsi and Mphehle good character reference that he is quite prepared to quote a source which refuses to be named and even refuses to be recorded on a tape recorder. What can be the value of that testimony? And why present it?

22. As stated elsewhere, the “Guardian” folded and issued a handsome apology in political terms. It also paid a certain sum by way of also pleased us to no end. Conflicts between exiles are a common feature. Both sides seek the support of the home base which was not involved at all in the conflicts. We were not in Zambia to feel the hurt and humiliation suffered by our leadership by the attacks on them by Mqotsi. Hence there was no animus towards him from our side.

23. Mqotsi’s accusation of Tabata and his clique in the end turned out in reality to be Tabata and the entire leadership (both in exile and at home) against just *two* individuals. Who then constituted the clique?

24. Therefore, when he returned to South Africa, we continued to look to him as our senior leader and offered him all the assistance we could by way of supplying him with publications. We also encouraged him to write articles for publication. Two of his articles were published in *Apdusa Views*. The first had a substantial biographic sketch about him as an introduction or rather a re-introduction to readers.

25. One can then imagine the shock and horror at coming across, towards the latter part of last year, the contents of his interview with Ciraj Rassool in 1992.

26. Mqotsi did not say a word to us about the interview, especially its contents, when we met him in November 2006.

The contents of the interview, as reported by Rassool, revealed that Mqotsi had forgotten nothing; he had forgiven nothing - his hatred and animosity for Tabata and the exiled leadership remained undiminished... He seized the opportunity presented by Rassool to disgorge his hatred towards them.

Why now and not when the “Guardian” invited him?

27. *Now* because Tabata was dead and incapable of mounting a defence or counter attack. *Now* because Jane Gool was sickly and her death was round the corner.

*Not then* because Tabata was still alive and capable of a counter attack through cross examination!

28. For the sake of record, let it be said that had we known of the contents of the interview between Mqotsi and Ciraj Rassool prior to meeting Mqotsi when he returned, *we would have had nothing to do with him.*

### **Mopping up Odds and Ends of Lies and Distortions**

1. page 471 of Rassool’s thesis, paragraph 1 – “...Suspensions and expulsions were chief mechanisms of creating order..”

Rassool gives no figures of the number of members expelled and/or suspended but seeks to give the impression that these constituted a large number.

My recollection is that few were suspended and were expelled, not more than 10 in all over a period of almost 30 ears!

2. “Tabata was depicted as a dictatorial leader who demanded loyalty and obedience.”

These are broad allegations with no facts to support them.

3. Footnote 101 on page 472 of Rassool’s thesis – Mqotsi’s name may have been used for acceptance of responsibility of political comment but the actual work of editing and preparing for printing was performed in Durban by Enver Hassim.<sup>75</sup> The editorials were written mainly by Tabata.

4. Page 472 paragraph 2: “Establish a central command”

This was a sine qua non if an armed revolutionary struggle was to be conducted. No armed struggle anywhere in the world has been conducted without a central command. There is therefore nothing sinister in the idea of a central command. In our daily public political work, the phrase “central authority” was used.

*What is clear is that no autocratic powers were sought.*

Tabata spoke about the people seeking out the *leadership*, not a leader!

5. page 472 paragraph 4 quotes about a long lecture and political lessons delivered by Tabata. This is hardly the modus operandi of a person with dictatorial tendencies!
6. Page 473 paragraph 3: When Tabata rejected an article by Mqotsi, there was no gloating or mocking whatever. Mqotsi must have been jolted. He was most certainly not accustomed to having his articles rejected.

7. “United Democratic Movement of Africa”

- a) It is clear that the idea of the United Democratic Movement of Africa did not originate from any of the established structures of the Unity Movement. It was Mqotsi’s brainchild made public without going through proper channels.

- b) Rassool does not even bother to inquire whether the conference took place, and if it did not, the reason.

- c) The sarcasm in describing Jane Gool as Tabata’s personal representative is more a reflection of Rassool’s attitude towards Jane Gool. As far as I am aware there was no person who would have been a more worthy personal representative. If Rassool thought otherwise then he ought to have stated who he thought was more worthy than Jane Gool to occupy that position.

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<sup>75</sup> The writer was at that time serving articles of clerkship with Enver Hassim. He was recruited to assist Enver Hassim in liaising with the printers, cutting and pasting and dispatching the Ilizwi.

- d) The idea of forging unity with other segments of the liberation movement was a woolly and ill-conceived notion. Those other organisations, except for ZANU, did everything in their power to deny the Unity Movement recognition by the Liberation Committee. How on earth could Mqotsi imagine for a second that he would be able to unite with the Stalinist controlled ANC and its partners in ZAPU and MPLA to fight against imperialism?
8. According to Mqotsi, the closure of the branch and the newsletter had been precipitated by his criticism of Tabata's "bureaucratic tendencies and practices". No details are given of the alleged "bureaucratic...." Nor did Rassool seek to pursue the accusations. The probabilities are that the accusations of "bureaucratic tendencies etc" arose after the closure of the so-called branch and the "Apdusa Newsletter".
  9. It seems highly improbable that Tabata would take important decisions without consulting the leadership in exile. That is not how he functioned. If the exigencies of the situation made it necessary to take certain decisions, I have little doubt that he would have reported the decision and sought ratification.
- Page 476: "Rewarding" his brother-in-law stinks of nepotism. For the sake of honesty and completeness it ought to have been recorded that:
- Tsotsi was a committed Unity Movement member *before* he married Tabata's sister
  - Apart from Jane Gool and Tabata, Tsotsi was longest serving Unity Movement member
  - Tsotsi was president of the All African Convention for 10 years
  - He served a term as the President of the Unity Movement
- Thus the person appointed as Vice President did not appear from the blue. He had a long track record in the service of the Movement. Apart from Jane Gool, Honono, Fataar and Dora Taylor, not one of those in exile was more worthy than Tsotsi to occupy that position.
10. "Despotic and arbitrary powers, including the power to expel.
    - By the mid 1960's, fascism had entrenched itself in South Africa
    - Killer squads were established to hunt down and kill troublesome freedom fighters
    - The old days were gone; as were the old ways
    - Survival meant adapting and adjusting to changed circumstances
    - To talk of the supremacy of conference at a time when there was no possibility of holding a conference was being plain dishonest. The concept of "internal democracy" is as foreign to Unity Movement traditions as it is meaningless. The

- relationship within the organisation was always governed by the principle of *democratic centralism*. There can be no right of freedom to debate and differ without the corresponding obligation of being bound by the majority decision.
- If the exigencies of the situation demanded immediate and urgent remedial or corrective steps, the old methods had to give way to the demands of the times. All this subject to the condition that the executive or its equivalent was given a full report and ratification obtained. Let us illustrate:
- WM Tsotsi fled in 1960 from South Africa into Lesotho to escape arrest and detention
- His stay in Lesotho was most tenuous. He lived under constant threat of deportation to South Africa for a number of years.
- Finally it was agreed that he ask to be allowed to travel from Lesotho to Zambia where the Unity Movement in exile had its headquarters.
- This was soon after Mqotsi had launched his attack on the leadership of the Unity Movement.
- The plan was to get Tsotsi into Zambia as the vice president of the Unity Movement

For some inexplicable reason, the initial warm welcome was replaced a prolonged and systematic persecution of both Tsotsi and his wife for over 10 years, who experienced:

*“every conceivable human emotion in turn - anger , fear, anxiety , frustration , horror , shock , hope , joy , disbelief , disgust , etc. It is a wonder that in spite of it all we still managed to preserve our sanity.”*<sup>76</sup>

Those were murky and sinister days. The Stalinists in Zambia who had influence with the Zambian government had recognition of the Unity Movement withdrawn The latter were instructed to disband; to cease all political activities as Unity Movement and *were instructed to join the African National Congress!*<sup>77</sup>

In all these circumstances, can Mqotsi say nothing more than that Tabata chose his brother-in-law? Did the persecution of Tsotsi and his wife not merit consideration? Mrs Tsotsi was actually arrested and jailed for 20 hours in free and liberated Zambia, while Tsotsi had to go into hiding to escape imprisonment in a Zambian jail.

Was it just a coincidence that Mpehle went running to join the ANC? Was it just a coincidence that Mqotsi himself was being groomed for ANC membership?

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<sup>76</sup> “ I was a refugee or was I?” by Dr WM Tsotsi (Google 30283883134)

<sup>77</sup> Ibid page 7

I repeat those were murky and sinister times!

### **“The ousting of Leo Sihlali”<sup>78</sup>**

- This is one of vilest accusations made, more so because it sought to foul a long and comradely relationship spanning fifty years.
- By 1963/4, Leo Sihlali was banned and house arrested. To put it differently, he was bound hand and foot and his mouth gagged. He had become totally non functional politically.
- Rank and title meant nothing to the man
- When therefore the exiled leadership requested that Tabata be allowed to use the title of President of the NEUM, there was not a murmur of dissent from those in the country. The title served no purpose in the country. If it could serve a useful purpose outside the country, well and good!
- Apart from Mqotsi and Mpehle, nobody in the Unity Movement believed for a second that Leo Sihlali was ousted as president. The position lapsed in view of his inability to function politically due to the stringent banning and house arrest orders. Later there was his prison sentence.

It is engaging in vulgar abuse for Mqotsi to use words like “political assassination”; to “discredit and depose Leo Sihlali”. I have not come across a word of criticism of Leo Sihlali from any quarter of the Unity Movement.

Neither Mqotsi nor Rassool give any reference or source of such remarks. I have no hesitation in rejecting the accusations as malicious fabrications levelled against people who are no longer able to defend their name and reputation.

### **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEO SIHLALI AND TABATA AND JANE GOOL**

1. The close political comradeship spanned about 50 years
2. Leo Sihlali was the protégé and apprentice of Tabata
3. Throughout the forties, fifties, and part of the sixties, they worked closely together
4. When Sihlali was banned and house-arrested, instead of seeking to depose him, he was invited to join the exiled leadership in Zambia. That is precisely what Sihlali sought to do. He and Louis Mtshizana attempted to flee the country. Unfortunately, they were betrayed by a traitor in their ranks. Both were arrested and imprisoned. Common sense will tell you

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<sup>78</sup> See Ciraj Rassool’s thesis, page 476 paragraph3.

that Sihlali would hardly risk arrest and imprisonment to join persons who assassinated his character and who sought to “discredit and depose him”.

5. When Sihlali was released from Robben Island, he chose to live in Mount Frere in the Transkei, where he obtained a teaching post

6. When Transkei became “independent” , one of the consequences of this Bantustan was that its rulers sought to put on a face of true independence. One such consequence was the issuing of passports to its “citizens.” Taking advantage of this, Sihlali was able to travel to Zimbabwe in the 1980. There he enjoyed a reunion with Tabata and Jane Gool whose guest he was. When our two children visited Tabata and Jane Gool in Harare in 1980, they found Sihlali there

7. The formation of the New Unity Movement was not the brainchild of any single individual or group. It was most certainly not an act of revenge on Sihlali’s part for his alleged removal as president of the NEUM. That thinking is so absurd that it belongs to the realm of deranged thinking.

There was a spontaneous desire from ALL sections in the country of the people who considered themselves Unity Movement to work for the revival of the Unity Movement.

Sihlali like most other Unity Movement persons in the country showed a keen interest in the progress in the New Unity Movement, but as stated above he did not attend a single meeting of NUM nor any of its Conferences. *The question is: did it not strike Rassool as being odd that Sihlali did not attend a single meeting or conference session of the New Unity Movement? Why has he not commented on that?*

Why did he not investigate the reason why Sihlali did not attend a single meeting or conference session of the New Unity Movement? The probabilities are that he knew, or at least suspected that the answer would seriously undermine his claim of a rivalry between Tabata and Sihlali. So Rassool very conveniently walked away from it..

## **DORA TAYLOR AND THE NARRATION OF I.B. TABATA’S LIFE.**

This deals with Chapter Seven of Rassool’s thesis.

From the outset, it is necessary to clear the decks about the so-called biography to which Rassool makes constant reference throughout his thesis.

What biography are we talking about? When the word biography is used ordinarily, it conveys a detailed and comprehensive account of a person's life from childhood. It seeks to explain to the reader who the subject matter of the biography is. To be able to do that the biographer has to go the roots from which the subject has emerged. A detailed description of the environment in which the child grew up in; the description of the people, especially the adults who influenced the child and shaped the child's character traits. The biography will also give a narration of events taking place in the country or world which would impact on the child's thinking.

When therefore we talk of a biography we will have in mind Isaac Deutscher's trilogy on Leon Trotsky which runs into about 1 500 pages. Or that of Thabo Mbeki. Actually three biographies running again into hundreds of pages. Finally there are those of Nelson Mandela also running into hundreds of pages.<sup>79</sup>

So what is nature of Mrs. Taylor's biography of Tabata? For some reason, we who have been in the Unity movement for decades have not seen a single copy of Tabata's biography written by Mrs. Taylor. We are informed by Rassool that a copy of an unpublished biography of Tabata by Mrs. Taylor was found lying on the pavement! This is an indication of the seriousness with which the matter of the biography was treated by the exiled leadership.

Actually what Rassool describes as biography is more correctly called a *biographical sketch*!! The only completed sketch I have come across is the one drawn by Dr Rajah in a tribute to Tabata after his death. The text of that tribute is about 14 ½ A5 printed pages!

## **WRITING ABOUT I.B.TABATA**

1. In keeping with a principled aversion to the creation of the cult of the personality, very little was known about the key figures in the Unity Movement.
2. As members of the Unity Movement we learnt from older members about details of the lives of the individual members of the leadership.
3. With the passage of time, there were no dramatic revelations. We knew the bare essentials.
4. The need to write biographical sketches about Tabata arose from the simple need to introduce the Unity Movement to the world,

## **THE UNITY MOVEMENT CAUGHT OFF GUARD**

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<sup>79</sup> Mandela's biography by Anthony Sampson is close to 700 printed pages.

1. When Tabata illegally left the country in 1962 to seek support for the armed struggle, he found that the Unity Movement was relatively unknown to the outside world. In particular it was unknown to Africa.
2. The reasons for its anonymity are not relevant to the point in issue.
3. The problem to be solved was how to get the Unity Movement known to Africa in the quickest possible time.
4. You publicise the organisation by telling Africa its history, what it stands for, its achievements. This is done in writing and by way of speech.
5. You also tell Africa about the leading personalities of the organisation – who they are, their background and upbringing, their involvement in the struggle and the ideas they stand for.
6. Telling the people from whom you seek assistance about your organisation and its leading personalities is something done all over the world. There is nothing “presidentialistic” about it.
7. Propagating the history and ideas of your organisation, highlighting the struggle and sacrifice of the leading personalities of the organisation, the storage of documents and publications of the organisations in centres used by scholars and research students are normal activities of any organisation. They are not out of the ordinary, nor are they peculiar to the Unity Movement, as Rassool consistently tries to make out.

## **DORA TAYLOR AND THE NARRATION OF TABATA’S LIFE.**

### *A SPECIAL NOTE TO THE READER*

*What appears below is an exposure of Rassool for seeking to manipulate facts and make untrue and exaggerated claims on behalf of Mrs. Taylor who is no longer able to refute them.*

*In seeking to present the truth, it may seem that we are belittling or minimising the contribution of Mrs. Taylor. Far from it. We are doing no more than what Mrs. Taylor would have done had she been alive – setting the record straight by laying out the truth.*

*In exaggerating Mrs. Taylor’s contribution, Rassool seeks to kill two birds with one stone:*

- a) *To blot out the role and contribution of Jane Gool, Dr Goolam Gool and other members of the WPSA*
- b) *To reduce Tabata’s contribution to the struggle by allocating a substantial portion of what he had accomplished to Mrs. Taylor*

*Our position and assessment of the work of Mrs. Taylor has been clearly publicised in Apdusa Views No 90.*

1. I take issue with the very first line: "...the history of Tabata's biography".

There is not much of history. It is as I have stated above under the heading "The Unity Movement Caught off guard". Equally there is not much of a biography. What Dr Rajah has stated in his "tribute" was common knowledge obtained through the verbal passing of information over the years.<sup>80</sup>

2. "Tabata's biography was produced through quite definite biographical relations." What does "biographical relations" mean?

3. Actually Rassool was leading up to what he was dying to reveal, namely, the close personal relationship between Dora Taylor and Tabata which went beyond comradeship and the friendship flowing from such comradeship.

4. According to Rassool the "most significant" "biographical relation" was "his connection" with Dora Taylor. Rassool is indulging in superlatives about a biography far less than a hundred pages and which did not see the light of day in a printers shop.

5. Rassool describes Taylor as Tabata's "primary biographer". Actually long before Mrs. Taylor put pen to paper of a *biographical sketch*, the ordinary members of the Unity Movement were the verbal purveyors of Tabata's biographical sketch. We all knew that he had spent a very short time at Fort Hare University. We knew that he joined the WPSA in the mid 1930s; that he became a full time worker for the WPSA; that he sold socks and items of clothing in Langa; that he made regular trips to the eastern Cape to do organizational work among the peasantry; that he was arrested and charged at Mount Ayliff; that he drove an old battered matchbox shape Ford; that he had amazing oratorical skills; that he could speak without notes on almost any subject; that he was highly respected and feared in the world of black politics etc.

6. The archival collection had nothing or little to do with any so-called biographical work. The archival collection was in all probability following a tradition or practice of the great Russian revolutionaries like Lenin and Trotsky who made it a point of collecting and retaining letters, notes and writings. When Trotsky was driven from country to country, his one big concern was the safety of his collection of documents. Lenin and Trotsky would have learnt the value of the collection of documents from Marx and Engels.

7. Thus the archiving of written material considered to be useful and relevant was not driven by biographic needs. *It stands on its own as an invaluable resource.*

8. At the request of a member of Mrs Taylor's family, Rassool has written an article meant to be a review for a magazine. It is entitled: "The Selflessness of Dora Taylor".

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<sup>80</sup> Interestingly, no body has picked up what Tabata once told us in passing, viz., how the Communist Party unsuccessfully tried to recruit him when he first arrived in Cape Town

In this article Rassool goes overboard in his description of the alleged sacrifice that Dora Taylor made by devoting most of her time “for the cause of social justice.” As if the cause was thrust upon her and she, poor woman, much against her will, had to sacrifice her creative skills in the field of literature! How Mrs. Taylor would have rejected this gratuitous and insulting pity!

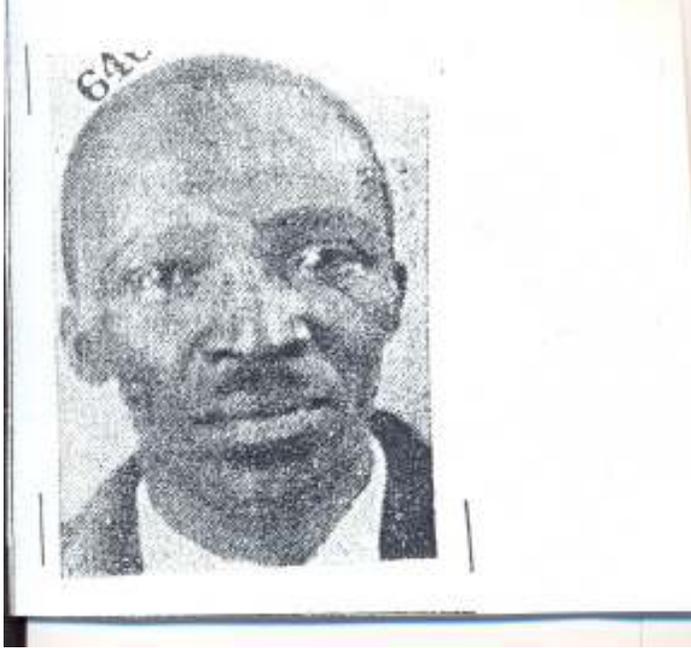
We leave aside this “feel good” article and return to the thesis.

### **DORA TAYLOR – POLITICAL COMRADE AND ASSISTANT**

In the second paragraph of page 395 of his thesis, Rassool makes the following points:

- a) From 1941 Mrs. Taylor’s political energies were directed almost exclusively to assisting Tabata in his correspondence and political writing
- b) It was possible to argue that Mrs. Taylor was co-author of ideas and strategies as well as a range of written works published in Tabata’s name.

These are serious allegations. If true they mean that works which were the products of both Mrs. Taylor and Tabata were published only with Tabata’s name as author. This is tantamount to saying that Tabata engaged in a form of plagiarism! And what is worse to have maintained that plagiarism until he died.



I.B. Tabata – Photograph probably from his “Pass Book”

### **TABATA’S POSITION IN THE WPSA.**

1. Very early on Tabata’s potential qualities as a serious and committed Marxist political thinker would have been evident. This was confirmed to me by the late Mr. Abbas Ally formerly of 30 Lorne Street Durban who spent a few years in Cape Town as a student in the 1930’s. He was initially a boarder with the Gools in Searle Street Cape Town. He related to me his memory of a young Tabata who was “blossoming as an intellectual” and already then people were openly talking about a great future for him as a leader.
2. Tabata’s formal education was not much to speak of. He had matriculated and spent, at most, a few months at Fort Hare University which he left and went to Cape Town in the 1930’s where he remained until his departure for exile in 1963.
3. The senior leadership of the WPSA would have spotted great talent and potential in the young Tabata who needed to be trained and groomed for top leadership.
4. The political training would have been taken care of by people like Clare Goodlatte.
5. The leadership would have realised that Tabata needed to hone his skill in writing and formulation. They would have also realised that he be not burdened with the time consuming drudge of secretarial work.

6. When he was appointed as a full time organiser for the WPSA, Mrs Taylor was assigned to him to do the secretarial work and help him develop his writing skills.
7. Both Mrs Taylor and Tabata were responsible and accountable to the WPSA for all the political work they did. There was therefore no such things as a two-person “production unit” functioning on its own.
8. Mrs Taylor’s assigned function was that of a amanuensis, a teacher in the use of the English language, a comrade with whom Tabata would have discussed what he was writing. Mrs Taylor would have even gone to the extent of rewriting what Tabata would have done.
9. Does all that make her a co-author? I think not. To be co-author you will have to make an original and substantial input.

### **DID DORA TAYLOR SACRIFICE HER LITERARY CAREER FOR THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE AND/ OR FOR TABATA?**

1. Dora Taylor drew no distinction between her literary career, the political struggle and the assistance she rendered to Tabata. It was all part of one thing – the pursuit of social justice.
2. Dora Taylor was a highly talented individual with tremendous capacity to perform many functions at the same time.
3. Far from sacrificing her literary career at the time she was assisting Tabata, Mrs Taylor was prodigious in her literary production.
4. According to Dr Corinne Sandwith<sup>81</sup>, from 1939 to 1946
  - *She did two book reviews each month (168 all in all) and 70 full length articles.*
  - *She completed 3 novels – “Kathie”, “Rage of Life” and “African Odyssey” , a long narrative poem Tristan and Iseult,*
  - *many short stories, plays and poems”*
  - A groundbreaking researched history, “The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest”
6. According to her daughter, Sheila Belshaw, during the 1940s and 50s, more than a 100 of Mrs Taylor’s literary and political critiques were published in the magazine *Trek*. “Among her works on literary criticism is a 148 page piece on Gorky and an almost complete study of Nadine Gordimer.”<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Chapter 3 of her book, the title of the Chapter being “Dora Taylor- South African Marxist”

<sup>82</sup> From a note on Dora Taylor by Sheila Belshaw in 2007 to be found at the end of Dora Taylor’s novel “KATHIE” published by Penguin.

On what basis then does Rassool claim that Mrs. Taylor sacrificed her literary career in the service of Tabata?

Add to the above the birth and upbringing of three children; assisting a physically disabled husband; running and managing a home with the multifarious functions of cleaning, washing clothes and dishes, gardening, (or at the very least overseeing and supervising all these activities); preparing and delivering part-time lectures at UCT; preparing and delivering lectures to organisations linked to the Unity Movement. We do not exaggerate when we describe her capacity to work as tremendous!

On page 396, we are regaled by Rassool about how he made Kobus sing one of the songs allegedly composed by Dora Taylor. What does Rassool know about the songs of those years? Was he (Rassool) in a position to verify the authenticity of that song?

One would have thought that Rassool would be more interested in questioning Kobus about the change in his role from that of a committed revolutionary socialist who trained as a lawyer to defend the underdog to becoming a paid hireling of the notorious Matanzima regime as a magistrate to enforce all the draconian laws of a bantustan.

### **TESTING A SPURIOUS CLAIM**

1. We have shown that Mrs Taylor had a highly productive literary career. There is no evidence of her career being sacrificed.
2. It could be said that if Mrs Taylor did no work for Tabata her literary output would have been much greater. But this approach is not helpful. Mrs Taylor chose *deliberately* to engage in political activity and while she may have protested at being made to research and write a history treatise, that too was considered by her as her contribution to the cause.
3. We have shown that Rassool does not produce a single iota of evidence that Mrs Taylor co-authored any of Tabata's works as distinct from corrections, reformulating sentences and the normal exchange of ideas between comrades.
4. Rassool then uses another phrase to promote his fabrication. He describes their working relationship as "a single unit of production"!
5. One is struck by the paucity of political writings from members of the liberatory movement. The ANC and PAC, and even Azapo leadership has produced virtually nothing by way of research and productive writing.
6. As against the almost total intellectual aridity from these organisations, the Unity movement has been prolific in the production of fertile groundbreaking and stimulating political literature.
7. Yet when compared to other liberatory movements like the parties of the Russian Revolution, the production of political literature by the Unity Movement is not impressive. Very knowledgeable intellectuals like Dr

GH Gool, Jane Gool and BM Kies produced relatively little. BM Kies wrote the *Background of Segregation*, the *Basis of Unity* and the *Contribution of the Non European Peoples to World Civilisation* and a great many editorials for the “Educational Journal” and “The Torch”.

8. Compared to the leadership of the organisations mentioned above, Tabata was prolific and productive in bringing out well researched and formulated political writings.

Yet compared with people like Lenin and Trotsky, Tabata’s output was tiny. In his tragically shortened life of 54 years, Lenin’s collected works, consisting of books, articles, booklets, letters and notes, number about 27 000 printed pages. Just one book by Trotsky on the History of the Russian Revolution numbers close to 1300 pages.

9. Without having counted the number of pages of all of Tabata’s writings (booklets, pamphlets, leaflets, editorials papers for conferences and meetings, letters and notes), I would estimate them *not to exceed one thousand pages!*

This estimate is given not to belittle Tabata’s political output in writing but to reject Rassool’s *constant refrain* that Dora Taylor sacrificed her literary writings because she spent almost all her time assisting Tabata.

9. Tabata’s known and published writings up to the time that Dora Taylor was still in the country in 1962 are the following:

- His speech to the All African Convention in 1941- 12 pages typed and cyclostyled
- The Building of Unity 1945 -5 pages- closely printed
- The Rehabilitation Scheme 1945 typed and cyclostyled – 15 pages
- The Awakening of a People 1950 – printed 126 pages
- Youth and The Nation – An address to the opening conference of the Society of Young Africa in 1951 -13 printed pages
- The Boycott as a method of struggle – printed 65 pages
- “Let us Rally” an AAC leaflet – printed 4 pages
- The National Situation – 1958 – printed 12 pages
- Education for Barbarism 1959- printed 63 pages
- The PAC Venture in Retrospect 1960 – printed 15 closely printed pages
- The Apdusa Presidential Address 1962 – 17 printed pages

Add to the above letters, editorials, articles of which there are not a very large number for a full time intellectual over a period of twenty years. It is absurd to the extreme to conclude that Tabata’s output listed above could have kept a highly energetic person like Dora Taylor so occupied for *twenty years* that she would have had to sacrifice her own career in the literary field.

The *irony* is that Mrs Taylor who is alleged to have sacrificed her career for the political output by Tabata was far more productive (in terms of quantity) than Tabata himself!

It will therefore be seen that the sacrifice that Mrs Taylor is supposed to have endured is a fiction created by Rassool.

It is necessary to try and seek an explanation for Rassool's claims that:

- Tabata and Mrs Taylor were a single unit of political production.
- Mrs Taylor co-authored documents which have appeared in Tabata's name. Again no evidence of any kind is advanced to sustain that claim.

Let me attempt an explanation:

1. There appears to have been an irresistible urge on Rassool's part to divulge and to delve into the close relationship between Tabata and Mrs Taylor. How was he going to do that without inviting the accusation of gossipmonger or verbal paparazzo?

Rassool chose to inextricably bind that close personal relationship with the political work that was being done.

In other words he seeks to show the impact of that relationship on the output of political work. That then would make it legitimate to delve into the personal relationship.

That may have had some validity if their falling in love with one another *took place prior to the creation of a political relationship*. But Rassool has cast his die for the personal relationship to have developed *years after* the existence of the political relationship.

2. The concept of a single unit of production was designed to consolidate the love relationship and to justify ejecting Jane Gool from the side of Tabata at the District Six Museum and placing Mrs. Taylor next to Tabata.

3. The claim of co-authoring works under Tabata's name was to show a strong streak of dishonesty in Tabata, a sort of engaging in a form of plagiarism. It was also to show Mrs. Taylor as a victim of a selfish and opportunistic Tabata.

4. The consequence of that approach was also to exclude Jane Gool from any contribution to Tabata's writings. That would also justify her being supplanted at the District Six Museum.

5. It will be seen that when Rassool gets going in his description of the relationship between Mrs. Taylor and Tabata, he goes so far as to place them on an island – just the two of them. They did all the writing together; they worked through the ideological and practical consideration together. *They had become a two person party functioning on their own!*

6. In weaving a romantic account of the interaction between the two, he seems to have missed the fact that Mrs Taylor and Tabata were

part of the underground WPSA to whom they would have reported and accounted for all their political activity which would have included political writing. Where did JG Taylor fit in? And Dr GH Gool, Jane Gool, BM Kies, Burlak? Was there no input from the WPSA? We know that any important document written by a member of the group to be published would first have had to obtain approval of the WPSA.

7. As one wades through Chapter 7 of Rassool's thesis, what comes across strongly is that Mrs. Taylor was constantly complaining of one thing after another. She comes across as a vulnerable person who Jane Gool described as a "wounded bird" who was heavily dependent on Tabata for her psychological wellbeing.

8. But one needs to be careful before general conclusions are drawn from a few letters complaining of loneliness and of being left out. All human beings have "blue" days. It is only when the "blue" days becomes chronic that a diagnosis of depression can be made.

9. The close personal relationship between Tabata and Mrs. Taylor becomes relevant only if it can be shown that it was that relationship and NOT a commitment to justice and implementation of the aims and objects of the WPSA which produced the political writings of Tabata. To put it differently can it be said that if there had not been such relationship, Tabata *would not* have produced his political writing?

10. If it cannot be so claimed then the close personal relationship is not relevant to the political contribution made by both Mrs. Taylor and Tabata.

### **WERE TABATA'S MAJOR WRITINGS THE PRODUCT OF JOINT AUTHORSHIP OF HIMSELF AND MRS DORA TAYLOR?**

It is Ciraj Rassool's view that Mrs Taylor made a substantial input into, in fact co-authored Tabata's major political writings.

Whatever his motives were, the situation was such that it played right into his hands. And he was not slow in capitalizing it to his advantage.

What was the situation?

1. It has been described above how Mrs Taylor was assigned to Tabata to do his secretarial work and to make him proficient in the use of English.

2. For all practical purposes Mrs Taylor's assignment can be acceptably described as that of an *amanuensis*

3. Tabata and Mrs Dora Taylor were also comrades and friends. The friendship developed into a deep and intimate relationship.

It is this complex mixture of relationships that Ciraj Rassool seizes to drive home his pet theme of the co-authorship of Tabata's works.

## **RESEACHING OR DEVILLING**

Researching or devilling is part and parcel of the work of an amanuensis. It is done every day in a wide range of activities. The amanuensis is never known to have claimed co-authorship.

Judges in our courts are usually assigned amanuenses called researchers.. One of the principal functions of a researcher is to make available to the judge the researched material relating to the law applicable to the facts of the case. The judgement given is in the name of the Judge. No mention is made of the work or effort by the registrar. I am informed that the function of researching performed by persons other than the writer of the article or the person delivering the lecture is quite common. Very rarely, if at all, is the work of the researcher acknowledged.

### **DID MRS TAYLOR CO-AUTHOR TABATA'S WRITINGS?**

1. Had Mrs Taylor and I.B. Tabata been alive that question would have posed no problem. Much the same would apply had only one of them been alive. Clearly Jane Gool's word did not suffice. But Muskett's (Mrs Taylor's son-in-law) did. We will come to that.
2. With both dead we will have to rely on what lawyers call secondary evidence:
  - a) The diaries that both Tabata and Mrs Taylor kept.
  - b) Letters to each other and to other persons
  - c) Draft documents or sections of these documents which have been corrected and rewritten/reformulated.
3. When dealing with documents published in Tabata's name which are in Mrs Taylor's handwriting, it has to be determined whether that handwriting was the result of dictation by Tabata or was it something Mrs Taylor wrote independently of Tabata. Usually there is no way to make that determination. The logical thing to do in the absence of clear evidence that the handwriting was NOT a product of dictation is to assume that it was not a piece of independent writing by Mrs Taylor.
4. The same reasoning must apply to corrections, rewriting or reformulation to draft documents published in Tabata's name.

### **CIRAJ RASSOOL'S APPROACH.**

1. On page 358 of his thesis, Rassool makes the assertion that "Tabata's writing, whether or not in his own name was not entirely individual." According to Rassool, the "The Tabata Collection provides ample evidence that his writing emerged out of his

relationship with ...Dora Taylor, one that was marked by intense and on-going political and personal interchange.”

One waits *in vain* for the “ample evidence” to be produced. Instead we are given details of how the Taylor residence was made available to Tabata presumably to study, research and to write which was “one of the core elements of his full-time political work.” Rassool informs us that according to Jane Gool it was with Taylor’s encouragement that Tabata started to write.

So far there is no ample evidence. Instead we are told that it was Mrs Taylor who encouraged him to write. This was one of the aspects the WPSA assigned her to do and which she no doubt would have done without necessarily having first to undergo an “intense and on-going ... personal exchange.”

Using Jane Gool’s description of Mrs Taylor’s duties –“became his secretary, took down the writing and criticised and so on” does not provide “ample evidence” of co-authorship.

2. On page 359 of his thesis, Rassool informs his reader, *inter alia*, that Mrs Taylor and Tabata appear to have adopted “an intellectual division of labour with Taylor as the cultural critic and Tabata as political analyst.”

This an amazing statement to make bearing in mind that both Mrs Taylor and Tabata were members of the WPSA, a tightly controlled underground group and that they could never have taken such a decision on their own. It may well be true that there was a division of intellectual labour, but this would only have taken place on the instruction of the WPSA. That would have made a lot of sense. Mrs Taylor’s forte was literature and culture while Tabata would have developed sufficient writing skills to launch off on his own. Then Rassool does a turn around and claims that the “energies of Taylor’s political analyses” (whatever that may mean) “ became directed towards assisting Tabata in the production of political interventions under his pseudonyms.”

- a) Rassool does not tell us what became of the energies of Mrs Taylor in the field of literature and culture.
- b) No details are given as to what the energies of Mrs Taylor’s political analyses entailed. Did it entail:
  - i) Taking dictation?
  - ii) Making corrections on formulation and grammar?
  - iii) Doing research for Tabata’s writings?
  - iv) Typing documents drafted by Tabata?

OR

v) Does it mean substantial original and independent contribution to the writings by Tabata?

If it is i), ii), iii), and iv) that is old news and need not detain us.  
If it is v), then that is an important revelation and it is obligatory on Rassool to provide concrete proof.

Just as with the case of “ample proof, we will wait in vain.

3. Then comes the bombshell: Still on page 359:

“Tabata’s writings were thus not those of the lone, self sufficient writer. They were produced in a relationship with Dora Taylor, at her encouragement, with her active assistance...”

I would regard this statement as the mother of all *non sequiturs*.  
Compounding his blunder, Rassool goes on to say at the bottom of page 359 and continuing on page 360:

“At times, this help was merely that of the secretary, wordsmith and grammarian. Sometime she was the amanuensis and at others, *the silent, unacknowledged co-author.*” (My italics and emphasis).

“the silent unacknowledged co-author”! Rassool presents a conclusion but has omitted to provide the evidence for his conclusion. He has failed to substantiate his claim of Mrs Taylors co-authorship.

4. Rassool claims that Mrs Taylor became

“immersed with Tabata in the almost daily work of written composition as politics (sic!): letters and telegrams to national and local leaders and activists inside and outside the movement, letters to newspapers, political manifestoes, reports of meetings, drafts of written texts for the monthly pamphlet, *The Voice of the All African Convention*, articles for *The Torch* and texts of conference speeches.”

The above statement is designed to (and in fact does) give the impression of a tremendous amount of work done by Mrs Taylor. It is a great pity that no numbers are attached to each category of work That would truly give the reader some idea of the amount of work done. Did those categories in total figure in the hundreds or thousands or was it tens of thousands? Rassool must have some idea of the numbers. The question is why did he not divulge those figures? The reader will recall that Rassool uses the word “immersed” and later “immersion”. “immersed” and “immersion” mean occupying oneself *totally or completely*. If that be so

how does Rassool explain the very large number of articles Mrs Taylor wrote at a time she was supposedly immersed in Tabata's work? Both Dr Corinne Sandwith and Mrs Taylor's daughter, Mrs Sheila Belshaw have testified of the high literary output by Mrs Taylor? I refer the reader to the figures given by Dr Sandwith and Mrs Belshaw and which are to be found above.

In short Rassool is wildly shooting in the dark hoping to make a hit.

5. On page 361 Rassool makes a statement designed to mislead the reader:

“Drafts of letters were often prepared in both Tabata and Taylor's script, but mostly solely in Taylor's script, indicating the possibility of dictation or the work of an amanuensis.”

The question is why mere “*possibility*” as if that was an uncommon occurrence. Why not the *overwhelming probability* since taking dictation was one of the assigned functions of Mrs Taylor? The reason is clear. Rassool is slowly edging towards his spurious claim of “a single productive knowledge-producing unit.”

6. Emboldened by the repetition of his claim of the presence of Mrs Taylor's handwriting in Tabata's documents, Rassool takes the plunge and states:

“Indeed, it can be argued unequivocally that at crucial moments, Taylor participated directly in the setting out of political policy and in the production of meaning (sic) in what was a single knowledge-producing unit.”

So far Rassool has not produced **any** evidence of Mrs Taylor's direct participation in setting out political policy, what gives him the right to use the word “unequivocally”?

What crucial moments is he referring to? He has not as yet mentioned any crucial moments.

Is Rassool making the claim that Mrs Taylor acted on her own outside the WPSA or the Head Unity Committee, the caretaker body in between Conferences of the Unity Movement? Is Rassool in fact claiming that this “two person” “productive knowledge-producing unit” was in fact controlling and running the Non European Unity Movement?

Nothing can be more preposterous!

7. On page 361 of Rassool's thesis, going on to page 362, Rassool gives us what is intended to be an eye-witness account of how Tabata and Mrs Taylor worked together.

- a) Muskett does not tell Rassool at what stage of the drafting of the document they spent fifteen minutes on one sentence. Was it during the first draft or was it after the first draft was done?
- b) We are not told whose document that was in the first place. Was it Tabata's or Mrs Taylor's?
- c) We are not told when Muskett was alleged to have observed this writing in slow motion. Was it during Tabata's first overseas visit? If so then we have not seen any sign of documents written by him in 1962 in England.
- d) Was the process of "teasing out precise meaning" etc. the performance of one of Mrs Taylor's function assigned to her by the WPSA? Or is it suggested that that particular working together is what constitutes joint authorship?
- e) In the absence of answers to the questions above, we are left with an account of a quaint practice of how word perfectionists worked together.
- f) The fifteen minutes for one sentence would explain the relatively low rate of production of political writing when compared with the output by revolutionaries like Lenin and Trotsky!

8. On page 362, Rassool refers to a 16 page document (The Rehabilitation Scheme) written by Tabata with a gratuitous comment by Rassool "undoubtedly with Taylor's assistance.

Since the nature of assistance is of crucial importance in deciding whether Mrs Taylor's assistance was that of an amanuensis or that of a co-author. Rassool is obliged to clarify the matter. Instead he obfuscates the issue by deliberately leaving the meaning open to further his objective of making her the co-author.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Rassool's claim of "ample proof" has been put to the test and failed all down the line.

The three sources of information and of intention of their working together apart from the functions of an amanuensis are:

- a) The documents themselves and the drafts
- b) The diaries kept by Tabata and Mrs Taylor
- c) The correspondence between them

These sources refer only to letters and to only one pamphlet "We Accuse" ( See footnote 90 on page 361) I am not acquainted with

the pamphlet or its size and have no idea whether it was distributed on a mass scale.

Is it not significant that not one of the above sources refers or even hints that in any one of Tabata's major writings, Mrs Taylor made an independent, original and substantial contribution. So on what does Rassool rely on to make the very serious assertion that Tabata's works were co-authored by Mrs Taylor?

He relies on bluff and bluster.

Is it not even more significant that he has completely effaced Jane Gool from any contribution to Tabata's works? To any person who knew Jane Gool and who witnessed Jane Gool and Tabata interacting would find it absolutely incredible that she has been relegated to the cleaning closet – a non person, an inarticulate being with no more importance than a vacuum cleaner!

It is in his treatment of Jane Gool that Rassool reveals his malevolence for a member of the Gool family.

In blocking out Jane Gool completely from Tabata's intellectual and political life, Rassool only succeeds in undermining the integrity and credibility of his entire argument of co-authorship on Mrs Taylor's part.

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## **CHAPTER EIGHT OF RASSOOL'S THESIS**

After using Tabata's denigrators (Hirson, Alexander, Anthony, Mqotsi and Levinson) to his full satisfaction, Rassool enters the scene as a direct denigrator of Tabata. He employs three concepts as lances to inflict harm and injury to Tabata's revolutionary reputation. These are:-

- Presidentialism
- Patronage
- Paternalism

Nowhere does Rassool give a definition of these terms so that the reader knows what he means and what he is trying to convey

Rassool's use of the English language is best described by Lewis Carroll:

*"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less."*

*"The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things."*

*"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master - that's all."*

*(Through the Looking Glass.)*

In other words, Rassool will take a word which is a common word with an accepted and established meaning and attaches it on to a person by giving it a *totally different meaning*.

### **PATRONAGE:**

Take the word "patronage." Its use and meaning is well known. It refers to a practice where rewards in various ways are given to a person not because of merit or a case where a person deserves it but because of loyalty shown in the past and expected to be shown in future.

Its modern day meaning denotes a form of corruption and is a scourge of our present South African society under the African national Congress.

Rassool attributes the use of patronage by Tabata to retain support or to win over support.

The question to be asked is: What is it that Tabata has, in at least moderate abundance, which he has used as reward in his patronage?

Money? The man lived the life of a poor man all his life. He earned no wealth. For many decades he earned a stipend to enable him to function as a fulltime organiser for the WPSA. His writings earned him miserly royalties and then too probably only for his work "Education for Barbarism."<sup>83</sup>

Jobs? Lucrative appointments? Tabata had no such powers.

Tucked away in his verbiage Rassool claims that *Tabata used his knowledge and experience as a reward to sustain his patronage!*<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> To the best of the writer's knowledge and belief

<sup>84</sup> Page 447 paragraph 2

For Tabata to have used his knowledge and experience as reward to those he chose to bestow his patronage means that there are in existence at least two sets of writings. One for ordinary public consumption and the other for his chosen favourites?

Is there any evidence of the existence of two sets of writings? If there is none then has Rassool the knowledge and understanding to distinguish between documents by claiming that a particular set was used as a reward and that other set was used for ordinary consumption?

Rassool was quick to pin a label on Tabata of patronage because that practice goes against the very grain of decent and transparent governance and the stench of corruption hangs heavy. But when he has to provide evidence of this patronage, he ends up presenting a ridiculous example.

### **THE USE OF THE WORD PROXY**

The word proxy has a perfectly clear and uncomplicated meaning, namely a replacement or substitute or power to another to act for a person. When Tabata was banned he and Jane Gool had moved into their place at 8 Milan Street, Cape Town. It was common sense to assume that letters addressed to Tabata or Jane Gool at 8 Milan Street were likely to be intercepted by the Security Police. So the logical step was to use a “safe” address. There was no law prohibiting Tabata from reading and responding to letters. In fact one of his finest writings, “The PAC Venture in Retrospect” was written and read out while he was banned! Dora Taylor was no more than a “safe” post box. The letters would reach her and she would pass them on to Tabata. AK Tom’s letter to Dora Taylor is another matter. Those two had a special relationship. Tom was the migrant worker who by dint of hard and diligent work was able to obtain a BA degree. Dora Taylor was the one who helped him all the way with his studies, especially English.

Instead of using the term “post box”, Rassool elevated Mrs. Taylor into Tabata’s proxy. It did not occur to him to ask why did Tabata need a proxy to read letters and to respond to them.

But Rassool had a hidden agenda. By elevating Mrs. Taylor into a “Proxy” Rassool was pursuing his agenda of establishing a special relationship between Tabata and Mrs. Taylor which was responsible for Tabata’s political writing.

## **Presidentialism versus collective leadership**

### **COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP.**

1. Leadership is a process of debate, discussion and arriving at a decision concerning the aims and objectives of the organisation of which persons constitute leadership.
2. The participants in this process are a number of individuals chosen or elected to participate in the process and to reach decisions which are binding on the organisation which chose or elected them.
3. The idea of a collective leadership was brought sharply into focus with the emergence of the monstrous practice of the personality cult under Stalin. Here there was no collective leadership; Stalin's view became law. No person in the leadership dare oppose that view upon pain of imprisonment or death.
4. Because the WPSA adopted the position held by Trotsky in the conflict between Stalinism and the Left Opposition, it was natural that the WPSA leadership developed a strong abhorrence of the personality cult or anything resembling it.
5. One can go so far as to say that there was an over-reaction on the part of the WPSA leadership and its successor generation. It is the over-reaction which made Tabata, Kies and others avoid photographers. It was the over-reaction which made people like Tabata and Kies avoid taking normal leadership positions like president or chairperson.
6. There has not been nor there ever be a perfect collective leadership where all are on par and none more outstanding than the other.
  - In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Marx and Engels stood out as leading thinkers and leaders of communism and the working class struggle.
  - At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Russian Marxist movement was led by a vibrant and challenging collective leadership. Yet people like Plekhanov, Lenin and Trotsky stood head and shoulders above the others.
  - The great Chinese Revolution led by Mao Zedong had a strong collective leadership which challenged Mao on numerous occasions.
  - Similar examples are to be found in Vietnam, Cuba, Algeria and Guinea Bissau.

The point has been made. The existence of a collective leadership is not negated or rendered ineffectual simply by the presence amongst it of individuals who are charismatic and who have outstanding qualities. Most collective leaderships have individuals who stand out amongst them.

1. On page 436 of his thesis and on in the first paragraph Rassool subjects us to a lecture on how the AAC and the Unity Movement were like a family structure and in fact took on the features of a school<sup>85</sup> where there was enlightenment and enablement as well as discipline and constraint. Actually there is nothing profound in that supposedly erudite formulation. All organisations formed by human beings do both - enable and discipline. There is no organisation that does not have objective/s nor is there an organisation that gives its members *carte blanche*. So one wonders what the purpose of pronouncing the obvious was!

2. The next sentence needs to be tested and challenged. It reads:

“The contests and challenges over Tabata’s leadership in the 1950s and in Lusaka in the 1960s emerged out of these ambiguities and contradictions.”

What ambiguities? Who said anything about ambiguities?

This is followed by mention of accusations of leadership cults and autocratic leadership.. What is the meaning of “leadership cults”? I have not come across that phrase before! As for “autocratic leadership”, this is a contradiction in terms. Autocratic is singular. A person can be accused of being an autocrat (single ruler) or being engaged in autocratic rule where he or she is answerable to no other person. Rassool gives the impression that the leadership of the Unity Movement spent all its time warding off contests and challenges to Tabata’s leadership. The facts will show how baseless that accusation is.

## **HOW MANY CONTESTS?**

Just how many contests were there? And how many of these contests has as their true basis accusations of leadership cults and autocratic leadership?

- The split which ended in the Unity Movement in 1958 was a direct consequence of the split in the WPSA in the early 1950s when the minority section represented by persons like Tabata, Jane Gool, Dr GH Gool, JG Taylor, and Dora Taylor left the organisation. This had nothing to do with the cult of Tabata or his alleged autocratic style of guiding the organisation.
- The event which preceded the actual split was the **SUSPENSION OF HOSEA JAFFE BY THE HEAD UNITY COMMITTEE IN 1957.**

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<sup>85</sup> It was Dr GH Gool who was fond of saying that the function of a political movement was to take the nation to school.

- i. Tabata had been banned since 1956. Since his banning, there was an onslaught on his revolutionary character. Those who attacked him did so in the safe feeling that Tabata would not be able to attend meetings to reply in person.
  - ii. An Head Unity Committee meeting was summoned in 1957.
  - iii. Karrim Essack and Enver Hassim as HUC members were present at that meeting and on their return gave us a report of the meeting.
  - iv. The HUC meeting was held in a private house, probably Alie Fataar's if I am not mistaken.
  - v. There was a full attendance of HUC meeting. As the meeting started Tabata walked in much to the consternation of people who did not expect a banned person to attend a political meeting.
  - vi. Tabata mounted a powerful attack on Jaffeism which he claimed was the ideology of the new brand of Colouredism. BM Kies sought to defend Jaffe and denied the emergence of a new brand of Colouredism.
  - vii. In the end, the meeting by a majority took the decision to suspend Jaffe from the NEUM.
- The next year the Anti-Cad delegation walked out of the conference of the AAC and kept away from the Unity Movement until its (Anti-Cad's) demise a few years later.

This split had little to do with a challenge to Tabata's leadership. It was a split in the WPSA which covered a large number of ideological areas:

- The land question - was land to be nationalized?
- The structure of the organisation – unitary or federal?
- Was English to be the universal language or was there an honourable place for languages of the people?
- Was the nature of the struggle one for land and liberty (national liberation with the agrarian struggle at the centre) or was it a straight class struggle of labour versus capital
- Was the peasantry a reactionary force?
- Was there a sizeable peasant class in South Africa?

It will thus be seen that the polemic raged on the issues mentioned above and had nothing to do with the alleged cult of Tabata. The latter accusation was no more than a swear word hurled at a man who was unable to attend meetings and defend himself.

The next split involved Neville Alexander and his group. Again this had nothing to do with leader cults and bureaucratic practices. The plain truth

was that the senior leadership took action to save the Unity Movement from being the target of ruling class repression following Neville Alexander's ill-considered zeal in wanting to engage in guerrilla warfare. Again, accusations of leader cults and bureaucratic practice were hurled without substance and as a smokescreen to conceal the real issues.

The third involved Livingstone Mqotsi in the mid 1960s. It all boiled down to two issues:

- a) The publication of the Apdusa Newsletter in which ideas foreign to the Unity movement were propounded.
- b) The formation of an Apdusa Branch which the leadership ordered be closed, as it was entitled to do.

The only body which had the power to do so was the exiled leadership headed by its recognised president. There was no other body or organ. The days when a national conference was the supreme body were long gone. Fascism had the country in its grip. It is for this reason that those of us who remained in the country did not intervene when Mqotsi and Mpehle were expelled. Clearly both Mqotsi and Mpehle did make an appeal to people they considered to be supreme. It came to nothing. They were supported by nobody!

There were other tensions and acts of ill discipline which no organisation is free of, especially in exile politics.

### **BUILDING OF A LEADERSHIP.**

On pages 447 seq, Rassool demonstrates how Tabata (and the WPSA) were bent on training a leadership and to this end Tabata had proposed the setting up of a study group to train men and women "to satisfy the crying need for leadership." We are told that Tabata invited a certain Mangoaela to benefit from his *patronage* and join the programme in leadership training. The use of the word "patronage" is Rassool's invention. It is most unlikely that Tabata would have referred to his skill and experience in leadership training as "patronage"!

On pages 449 et seq Rassool goes into a long description about how Sihlali sought to make a suggestion to make it easier for people to read and understand documents like "The Rehabilitation Scheme" and "The Boycott" by publishing what he called "fore-runners" This suggestion was turned down. According to Rassool Tabata had prevented Sihlali from emerging as a "movement educator".

Rassool has not paused and asked why would Tabata do this? Especially when he had been urging the the training of a leadership.

According to Rassool:

“Only Tabata’s reading of political conditions was permissible...”<sup>86</sup>

This conclusion reveals the shallowness of Rassool’s own reasoning. Let Rassool read the minutes of conferences of the Unity Movement, the Anti-Cad and the All African Convention and he will see that Tabata was not the only or the dominant speaker. There were others who put forward their own analyses of the political situation. He may be surprised to note that Tabata did not contest what was said to take over the discussion. Others also did a “reading of the political conditions” without a hostile reaction from Tabata.

But there was another reason. This was based on the Marxist-Leninist characterization of political literature it considered to be *propaganda*..

1. Those who attended Marxist study classes will readily concede that the study of Marxism entails considerable application, study and understanding
2. There is no such thing as “Marxism simplified”
- 3 “Propaganda” was designed to deal with a topic in an all encompassing and comprehensive manner.

Lenin in his “WHAT IS TO BE DONE?” explains it as follows:

The propagandist , dealing with, say, the question of unemployment , must explain the capitalistic nature of crises, the cause of their inevitability in modern society, the necessity for the transformation of this society into a socialist society, etc. In a word, he must present many ideas. So many, indeed, that they will be understood as an integral whole only by a (comparatively) few persons.”

The Unity Movement excelled in the publishing of first class propaganda pieces. Tabata’s “The Boycott” was one of those pieces. It is not possible to dilute or simplify the work without doing injustice to the document as a whole.

It was the function of the agitator to take one or two ideas relevant to a set of circumstances and present it to a mass of people who from their daily existence would be able to readily recognise the policeman-intellectual or policeman-chief.

4. All serious theoreticians would guard against over-simplification or vulgarization of important analyses since these practices can only boomerang and do damage to the organisation.

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<sup>86</sup> Page 455, paragraph 3 of Rassool’s thesis

5. It therefore appears that the real reason for the rejection of Sihlali's forerunner to "The Boycott" was to counter oversimplification and vulgarization and in Tabata's words: "literature of lasting value be placed in the hands of the people".
6. It should also be noted that Sihlali's pamphlette was not rejected out of hand. It was given consideration. It was even given to Dr Jordan, the Xhosa-linguist, to study.
7. It is in keeping with Rassool's general attitude of hostility towards Tabata that he would give an event involving Tabata the worst meaning and interpretation.
8. I recall that in 1961, Tabata and the old guard prepared a comprehensive document "The Birth of Apdusa". A large portion of that document dealt with the split in the Unity Movement and a characterization of the Coloured intelligentsia. Our group had become weary of the polemic and criticised the document for its heavy emphasis on the nature of the TLSA membership.
9. The reply we received was that we should not just skim through the document but study it seriously as a whole document. We accepted the advice and found the document indeed was a powerful exposition of the national situation showing fascism cracking the whip and forcing the petty bourgeoisie among the oppressed to retreat.
10. I would classify that document as a fine piece of propaganda which did not deserve "simplification".

### **PATERNALISM**

This word is yet another example of how Rassool chooses to *give a word the meaning he wants it to have*.

1. Tabata and members of the WPSA of the 1930s were deeply committed revolutionaries.
2. They were also revolutionaries who took their task of studying and understanding the political situation in all its ramifications. A hallmark of these members was their ability to stand up in a public meeting and deliver a spellbinding lecture on virtually any subject. It was this ability, amongst other, that drew people towards them.
3. One of the consequences of their outstanding qualities as leaders and teachers was the inevitable admiration that ordinary rank and file members had for them, their knowledge, their dedication and their ability to communicate in a manner which excited young people.
4. Let it be understood that they did not invite or encourage the intense admiration. On the contrary, they repeatedly railed against hero-worshipping of individuals and consistently placed principle before individual.
5. The reality was that there was a vast gap between the products of the WPSA of the 1930s and those who were trained by the old guard to take up the function of leadership.

6. Sadly not one of the new generation came anywhere near the standards of the WPSA class of the 1930s. One has to merely compare the political output (speeches and writings) of these two generations to see the validity of our claim. The inequality was glaring. The gap remained and not even the death of the old guard closed the gap.

7. Hence throughout the existence of a relationship between the old guard and the successor generations, the former occupied a position of superiority in the fields of knowledge, ideology, experience and political wisdom.

8. This, however, does not mean that the old guard was intolerant of debate and discussion of differences. In 1980, WM Tsotsi wrote to the old guard a longish letter which dealt, inter alia, the role of individuals in history. The old guard differed with him in a number of respects and conveyed their differences in constrained and measured tones. Their letter was then circulated amongst those who might benefit from the points raised.

9. In 1985, Nina and I visited Zimbabwe. Our base was the home of Tabata and Jane Gool. At that time we were already members of the New Unity Movement, against the express wishes of the old guard. We debated endlessly. There was no rancour or resentment even on matters where they came in for stringent criticism. Tabata and Jane Gool relished debates.

10. Talking about our 1985 visit of Zimbabwe, it is necessary to record that a New Unity Member, Dr Yusuf Chikte, had pitched up at the home of Tabata and Jane Gool. He very quickly made himself at home and being uninhibited, plunged into discussion on various matters. He had no qualms about calling Jane Gool by her first name and while I cannot now recall how he addressed Tabata was certainly not "Mr President" I addressed him as Mr T and Nina called him Uncle T. There were no eyebrows raised at these forms of address and no hint that Tabata wished to be called "Mr" or "My" "President."

11. The long and the short of it all is that for half a century, the old guard was superior in all relevant respects to the successor generations. In the end what they said was accepted. Not all their decisions were valid, but this was not challenged by the leadership abroad or internally except those who had ulterior motives.

12. This, no doubt was a grave weakness in the leadership but blame cannot be laid at the door of the Old Guard just because they knew more: they had greater experience and they could mount their argument with greater force and clarity than the younger generation.

13. The fault lay entirely with the younger generation of the Unity Movement. Not one of them chose the path of a full time revolutionary. Most had married and raised a family. They worked full time in their professions and had no time or very little time to make a serious study of politics. There was even less time to do serious political work. With these kinds of encumbrances, there was no hope that they would ever

catch up with the Old Guard in knowledge and experience. So the gap remained.

## **WAS TABATA PATERNALISTIC TOWARDS THE YOUNGER GENERATION?**

What does “paternalism” mean? It is not a complimentary word. It is used only in a pejorative sense to indicate domination of a person by another in a relationship which is based on the inferiority of one person and the superiority of the other with the basic intention which is detrimental to the dominated, but which is cloaked by a profession that it is for the good of the dominated.

One refers to the relationship of the colonialist to the colonised as being based on paternalism. An outstanding example is the relationship of the white Australian rulers towards the first people or aboriginal people of Australia when the Aboriginal children were virtually kidnapped, i.e. taken away from their parents against the latter’s will and brought up as finished products of a western society.

Rassool has shown a propensity to use words with shocking and anarchistic irresponsibility. We have referred to this propensity by describing it as licence to give a word whatever meaning he chooses to give it. And that is the sense used by Rassool in describing Tabata’s relationship with the members of the Unity Movement and potential recruits. The outstanding feature of paternalism is that the victim is *dragged into that relationship against his or her will.*

The relationship Tabata had with intellectuals younger and less experienced than himself – that of mentor and learner, master craftsman and apprentice, principal and articled clerk, teacher and student or pupil, parent and child, is a universal relationship going far back to the time of arrival of human beings on earth and even before that! It is a relationship which is designed to transmit knowledge from one generation to another. It is designed to ensure survival and to avoid the necessity of testing and experimenting with everything afresh.

All thinking creatures engage in that activity including species of the animal kingdom.

Can one imagine calling that relationship “PATERNALISM” with any modicum of seriousness?

Rassool has never met Tabata: never had a discussion with him; never asked him any questions. All he knows of Tabata is what he has picked up from others, and then conveniently used mostly the

denigratory information from people who had developed deep animus towards him – Baruch Hirson, Neville Alexander, Livingstone Mqotsi, Frank Anthony in his phase of insanity. From my long association with Tabata and Jane Gool, I am in a position to reject out of hand the vile and untrue allegation by Rassool when he refers to Tabata's relationship with the younger generation as "*paternalistic*".

I believe that I have the qualifications to make that repudiation since I have had a relationship with him for over thirty years. During this period there was continuous interaction with him, either directly or through Jane Gool. Our last meeting was in Harare in 1985 when my wife Nina and I were guests in the home of Tabata and Jane Gool.

Tabata was the mentor of many young intellectuals over a period of more than four decades. It was my good fortune that my life intersected with his in 1952. I was just 18 years old. I was politically moulded by him, directly or through his political disciples like Karrim Essack, Enver Hassim, Zulei Christopher and Dr Limbada.

Those of us who have had their political training through him became formidable Unity Movement partisans. Our understanding of political events placed us streets ahead of our rivals. In debates and polemics, we stood head and shoulders above our rivals. In matters of knowledge, our training was a rounded training which included local and world history, literature and the experiences of other oppressed and exploited peoples.

These attributes were acquired not because of personal characteristics but the soundness of the training which filtered down from the Old Guard.

Through my involvement in the struggle which spans over fifty years, there was never a single occasion when political events were totally beyond my understanding.

Tabata's association with the younger generation was always to the advantage of that generation. The association enriched their lives and enhanced their understanding of the political forces. Take a man like Livingstone Mqotsi. For all the ugly accusations he made about Tabata, yet even very recently when he did an article on tribalism he quoted copiously from Tabata's writings. Tabata has become indispensable.

In forging a relationship with the younger generations, Tabata had only one motive. That motive was to preserve the revolutionary traditions in order to bring about the social revolution. There was no other motive. He was only interested in passing on to the younger generation what he and others like him had learnt from people like Clare Goodlatte and all the other great revolutionaries.

The bond between mentor and pupil in pursuit of what is in the end for the good of society is universally cherished.

Only a perverted mind can interpret that relationship as “PATERNALISM!”

### **MY ASSOCIATION WITH TABATA, GH GOOL AND JANE GOOL OVER THE DECADES.**

1. I first met Tabata in 1952 when he and Dr GH Gool came to Natal after the second round of anti-Indian pogroms which took place in Natal in 1951. They had come to Natal to address rallies against racial pogroms and to combat the policy of divide and rule. I have had a relationship with him and Jane Gool for over 30 years. Let me at once record that I was not press-ganged into that relationship and for most part the initiative in meeting them came from me.

2. Since that occasion, I was at every conference of the All African Convention, of the NEUM and APDUSA that he attended and in which he participated. His “National Situation” and Jane Gool’s “International Situation” were the highlights of each conference.

3. From 1957 I was a regular visitor to Cape Town during University vacation and 8 Milan Street (the home of Tabata and Jane Gool) became a daily/regular place of visit. We went there to satisfy our thirst for knowledge. We learnt a great deal from the informal discussions at 8 Milan Street or at the beach or at the side of the mountain where Jane Gool would produce an ancient but well preserved picnic case which held a flask, crockery and cutlery.

4. I had been with other leading intellectuals of the Unity Movement including BM Kies, Van Schoor and Alie Fataar. It was different with Tabata and Jane Gool. There was no mistaking it. I was clearly aware that I was in the presence of greatness when Tabata and Jane Gool and Dora Taylor were around.

5. One learnt very early on that one did not get familiar with either of them. There was a certain distance which remained. With Jane Gool, one could take a scolding in stride. Nobody was spared that. Not even Tabata. I recall her scolding him once for stumbling over one of those long words either “octogenarian” or nonagenarian”. He took the scolding in good spirit.

6. In 1953 I attended my first conference of the All African Convention in Queenstown. Tabata led the discussion on the National Situation and Jane Gool the International Situation.

7. The 1954 conference of the All African Convention was a somber affair. The delegation was small and there was a certain grimness of atmosphere. The Bantu Education Act was going to be implemented in 1955, and among the consequences expected was the mass dismissal of CATA teachers by the Bantu Affairs Department. I recall two major contributions by Tabata. The first dealt with the expected blow against the active CATA members. The Tabata’s theme was a recounting of the achievements of the Unity Movement and its victories. According to

Tabata it was important to do so because it would made the effort, sacrifice and pain of the immediate future bearable when weighed against the victories.

8. Then there was a strong demand from certain of the CATA teachers like Don Kali and Maja that teachers should boycott teaching by not attending school. The overwhelming feeling of disgust and revulsion against what the system of Bantu had in store for them made one sympathetic to their position. Tabata rose to oppose that position. He stated that the job of the teacher was to stand with the students. Abandoning the class room meant leaving the students to government stooges to brainwash, to alcoholics and sexual predators. It would be tantamount to desertion and to putting the students directly in the firing line in front. Tabata had to fight for his position all the way. There was not the case of a great leader making his proposal and having it accepted meekly. There was a fully fledged debate. In the end Tabata's view carried.

9. After Conference, Tabata, Jane Gool and Tsotsi came to visit Dr Limbada who was banned and confined to a one street village called Pomeroy situated between Greytown and Dundee. I was invited to be present and shared precious moments with the senior leadership. I was surprised to learn from Tabata that the Unity Movement did not advocate that the whole country had to be ready before the call for the revolution could be made. According to him, one needed about a third of the country to want to engage in the armed struggle for it to be politic to call for a revolution.

10. Before the year was fully out, our group which had broken off from the Study Group hijacked by the Natal Indian Congress elements, organised a meeting at the large joint family home of Vahed Ally in Boom Street Pietermaritzburg for Tabata to address. Tabata was pleasantly surprised by the very large turnout. The large front room was filled to capacity and the overflow had to be accommodated in another room. Admittedly, many had come to hear a powerful "African" who had a great command of the English language. They were not disappointed. Tabata eagerly debated with members of the audience who wanted to know of the achievements of the Unity Movement.

11. I recall Tabata's joyous reaction: "Maritzburg was ready for plucking!"

12. At the end of 1955, the All African Convention again held its conference in Mallet Hall Queenstown. On this occasion there was a large delegation from Natal, mainly of youth of Indian origin. Tabata had occasion to remark about the size of the delegation and expected the youth to taste the thrill of being participants in a struggle for liberation.

13. This conference was the last Tabata attended before he was banned in 1956. I recall an irritable response of his. That happened when Victor Wessels tried by convoluted reasoning to show that Nehru was in fact

dictating to Britain on matters of Britain's foreign policy. Tabata's reply was that that was not the position. "The tail does not wag the dog!"

14. At the end of 1956 the All African Convention held its last conference in Queenstown. Tabata was not present because of his banning orders. His absence was most keenly felt because it was at this Conference that revisionism openly made its presence felt. The attack came from a group of articulate members of SOYA from Johannesburg led by Vutela and supported by Cameron Madikizela, Tukwayo and others. Kobus and Jayiya from the Western Cape who were members of WPSA were the older members who took part in the attack. It was left to people like Jane Gool, Leo Sihlali, Enver Hassim, Karrim Essack to defend the so-called orthodox viewpoint. They were ably supported by Soyans like Andrew Lukhele, Bongo Mputulo and Victor Sondlo from Johannesburg. I recall Jane Gool being tripped by the wily Kobus on some technical matter, much to the embarrassment of the pro Tabata faction. There is little doubt that the Jaffe faction saw Tabata's forcible absence as an opportunity to deliver the *coup de grace* to its rival.

15. But the Convention loyalists stood firm. There was the crucial vote for the position of Secretary General. For the first time I witnessed a contested position. The Tabata faction wanted Kobus removed as Secretary and put up Leo Sihlali as its candidate. Conference voted 30 to 15 in favour of Sihlali.

16. The SOYA conference which followed was acrimonious and less constrained. At the end of that conference, there was a feeling that some were not just comrades who differed but ENEMIES!

17. 1957 saw the polemic continue unabated, if anything more intensified. The TLSA became the battleground. The Jaffe faction put up R.O. Dudley as a rival to Alie Fataar who had excelled as Secretary General. The man had tremendous charisma and the TLSA members loved him, especially those from the rural areas. Alie Fataar owned a car which he put to effective use in his organizational work. The outcome of the contest was overwhelmingly in favour of Fataar. For a short period the president of the TLSA went over to the Tabata faction. Hence on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1957, at a New Year's Eve fund raising party, Tabata could proudly announce that the party was graced by the presence of two important presidents – Van Schoor of the TLSA and Tsotsi of the All African Convention.

18. For the sake of continuity we repeat that it was during 1957, that the Head Unity Committee formally suspended Jaffe from the Unity Movement.

19. 1958 holds fond memories. I travelled to Fort Hare with physics lecturer Ambrose Pahle and his wife Margaret Kara. I lived with them and met the Fort Hare Soyans in whose presence Dr Jordan and I debated the polemical issues affecting our movement. Later that year we attended a regional meeting of the All African Convention at Lady Frere. The large peasant delegation was in a ferocious mood frequently threatening

to kill quislings. The Chairman, Mr Tsotsi, had to calm them and warn them of the dangers of terrorist action.

20. Then in December was the show down with the Kies/Jaffe/Dudley faction. Dudley led a large delegation of Anti-Cad members. I recall Kobus, Victor Wessels, Dawood Parker, Combrink, GL Abraham. There was also Vutela, Tukwayo, Nota, Mphehle and Amanullah Khan. The Tabata faction was led by Jane Gool and supported by Enver Hassim, Karrim Essack, Dr Limbada, AK Tom, Bongo Mputulo, Vusani, Edna and Gwen Wilcox. For reasons not entirely clear to me, the most senior members of the AAC, namely, Tsotsi, Honono, Sihlali were effectively cut off from the debate because of their tactic to allow the attack on them and not respond and then to let conference make a decision. Dr AC Jordan interpreted.

21. Jane Gool led the attack on the Jaffe faction. It was a massive attack. I have little doubt that the nature and form of the attack must have been carefully worked out with Tabata's input. It won over the large peasant delegation. All of us who were articulate piled into the raging debate.

22. The result is now history. The Anti-Cad delegation walked out in protest. Chunks of revisionist Soyans were expelled. The Non European Unity Movement was split into two.

23. A much weakened SOYA met after the purge. Jane Gool attended the conference as a member of the Old Guard and sought to rally the flagging spirits of exhausted youth. The split before their very eyes gave them a taste of the harsh reality of struggle.

### **GENESIS OF APDUSA.**

1. During the course of 1959, the group in Durban received a visit from Leo Sihlali. It was always a pleasure to have him around. He was a great raconteur. We used to hear interesting and often very funny accounts of the happenings in the Transkei.

2. Leo Sihlali had been appointed as organiser of the All African Convention. He narrated his experiences and I recall the haunting phrase used by him: "Comrades, we are marking time. The countryside is ready for a revolution!"

3. It was during this visit that mention for the first time was made of a unitary political organisation to be formed. He had just come from a meeting of the HUC where the idea of a unitary political organisation was mooted and discussed. His mandate was to convey this idea and solicit reactions from the rank and file.

4. The mass character of the unitary organisation demanded that membership be conditional upon accepting point One of the Ten Point Programme and the policy of non collaboration. It was no longer necessary for the recruit to know and understand all ten points of the programme. According to Sihlali, the balance of the programme would be

taught through the process of political education after the person had joined the organisation.

5. The significance of Sihlali's visit lay in the fact that decisions were not simply handed down from the leadership. There was consultation and discussion.

6. The Unity Movement conference at the end of 1959 was a placid affair. There were no fireworks except those provided by Comrade Alie Fataar who made his first appearance on a platform at a conference of the Tabata wing of the Unity Movement. WM Tsotsi was replaced as president of the Unity Movement by Leo Sihlali.

7. Almost from the very beginning 1960 heralded itself as a year of great importance in the history of the liberatory struggle. To the best of my recollection, it began with the clash between the people of Cato Manor and the police, a number of were killed. The ANC called for a pass burning day. The PAC pre-empted that with its own Pass protest. This triggered the massacres at Durban, Sharpeville and Langa. The ANC and PAC were banned and a State of Emergency was declared with martial law being applied.

8. Our student group led a batch of 75 students to join the massive column of protestors from Cato Manor. Soon after our group joined the March, the army opened fire killing marchers at the corner of Syringa Avenue and Berea Road, Durban. No member of our group was shot or physically harmed. On that same day Rabbi Bugwande, an articulated clerk of Rowley Arenstein and member of the Natal Indian Congress, averted a massacre at the Durban Prison where the marchers had assembled and demanded the release of detainees.

9. In July the leadership of the Unity Movement including its youth representatives met in Cape Town to make sense of what was going on in the country.

10. Tabata had just completed his famous "PAC Venture in Retrospect".

11. Milan Street became the centre. At a packed meeting in the lounge of the humble abode of Tabata and Jane Gool, Tabata read out his analysis what had just happened in South Africa. A full discussion followed. Tabata, incidentally, was a far better speaker than a reader. The analysis is important because it was done within days of the events happening and was published in September of the same year.

12. For decades to come the analysis was used as an ideological foundation of the national situation. The analysis had done all the hard work and future analysis simply updated by slotting in further events to the unfolding political process.

13. Looking back at those events, one wonders what precautions had been taken to protect Tabata against a raid by the police and charges of breaking his banning orders by attending a gathering.

14. The same year the preliminary meeting for the formation of APDUSA was held. It was held on the sloped of Chapman's Peak with Tabata being

present, again in contravention of his banning orders. The preliminary body was called APDU – The African Peoples’ Democratic Union.

15. A subsequent meeting was held, I think at the end of 1960 where APDUSA was launched. Each letter in the acronym was explained fully. The words “Southern Africa” projected the position when countries like Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland which were very much part and parcel of Southern Africa would want to claim a place in a new entity called Southern Africa.

16. It was the first time that Tabata indicated that he would be willing to serve as president of the new organisation should the organization wish it. It must also be remembered that standing as president of an organisation those days was not, unlike the old days a position of honour and glory. In 1961 a president stood a good chance of facing harsh administrative reprisals from the state and the consequences which entailed unbelievably harsh penalties.<sup>87</sup> I also believe that by that time Tabata realised that his stay in the country was numbered and realistically expected exile. By that time he realised that backward Africa placed a high regard for positions in an organisation, the highest regard being reserved for the president of the organisation. I believe that the sole reason that Tabata opted to stand as president was to facilitate his passage through Africa for the purpose of recognition and access to resources to pursue the struggle.

17. In 1961 Tabata’s banning orders had expired. He did not waste a minute. He was out meeting people and addressing meetings of Apdusa groups and branches. His message was clear. Apdusa had to be a mass organisation with membership being open to all irrespective of race colour or creed. At a meeting at the Leatherworkers’ Hall in Pietermaritzburg, there was a raid by the security police while the meeting was in progress and while Tabata was speaking. For some weird reason, the police went nowhere near Tabata. They looked around and then left.

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<sup>87</sup> A banned person who failed to report his/her presence at a prescribed police station could be sentenced up to ten years imprisonment.



*I.B. Tabata at the marriage ceremony of Nina and Kader Hassim in Durban in September 1961*

18. In late 1961 and early 1962 the Unity Movement was involved in another polemic/split. This time it was with Neville Alexander and his group.

19. Just prior to the conference of SOYA in December 1961 or early 1962, Tabata called a meeting of the Durban SOYA group. With great care and finesse, Tabata avoided all mention of the dangerous aspects of the polemic like engaging in guerrilla warfare as Castro did. He formulated an attack on the Neville Alexander group solely on matters of discipline, of sowing trouble and unjustly accusing the leadership of being a bureaucracy. There was no mention of the Fourth International or of Michel Pablo. It is this approach which saved the young members of the Movement from being detained and from being called as witnesses against Neville and his comrades.

20. At the Unity Movement Conference held in January 1962, Tabata explained the social ferment in South Africa by using the analogy of a

volcano which had recently caused the inhabitants of Tristan de Cunha to evacuate the Island. Just as there were pressures building up in a volcano which cause it to erupt and spew out rocks and molten lava, so too there contradictions which caused pressure to build up in society and when these erupt we call them revolutions.

21. During Easter 1962, the first and sadly the only Apdusa public conference was set down in Cape Town. We drove down in a borrowed car and in that cursed stretch of road from Lainsburg to Touws River, our vehicle capsized. Looking the wreck later it was a miracle that not one of us suffered serious injuries or death.

22. We spent the night on the verandah of the police station while waiting for a car from Cape Town to fetch us. Those days not many people owned cars. Tabata had acquired a used DKW which he sent to fetch us. The journey from Lainsburg to Cape Town was nightmarish with cross winds buffeting the car. The DKW held steady and we told Tabata how safe we felt in the car. He was pleased to no end. Just as he did not allow criticism of their mongrel Jock with its most obnoxious habits, he would not hear anything ill about his DKW!

23. The highlight of the Apdusa Conference was Tabata's presidential address which opened new vistas for our understanding the role of Africa's slaves and how it was the profits from the slave trade that accumulated sufficient capital to enable the European capitalists to launch the industrial revolution. Even more important was the formulation of the role of Apdusa in the struggle and its location in the midst of the toiling masses. "With the masses you are everything; without the masses you are nothing."<sup>88</sup>

24. At some stage thereafter Tabata left the country illegally. He was then 53 years old, having spent most of his time in a city centre. The Unity Movement did not have an escape organisation in place. Everything had to be done from scratch. There were many dangers facing an escapee, not least of all the danger of arrest.

25. We knew that for months he was out of the country. During this time he was in touch with the HUC from which he took his instructions. I recall that his request that he be allowed to visit the Soviet Union was not approved. The memory of what happened to Lazar Bach was not forgotten.<sup>89</sup>

26. 1962 sped swiftly to its end. Our group of young intellectuals drove down to Cape Town. Tabata was not back. Dora Taylor had left the country. Jane Gool asked us to make a trip inland somewhere near Paarl. Our convoy of two small cars wound its way to a small station. When the train stopped, Tabata got off. The old guard had planned his return to perfection.

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<sup>88</sup> A rough paraphrase

<sup>89</sup> Lazar Bach was a member of the Communist Party who held opposing views to the ones held by Moses Kotane. They were summoned to Moscow. Kotane returned but Lazar Bach and his friends, the Richter brothers, did not. Lazar Bach a South African ended his life in front of a Russian firing squad.

27. The reunion was very touching, sometimes very sad. At other times they were like children thrilled to be with each other. It was sad because during Tabata's absence Dr GH Gool had died. Tabata comforted Jane Gool and when Jane Gool mocked grief for turning 60 years, Tabata would tease her: "What is a century in the life of China?"

28. Members of the Unity Movement began streaming to greet Tabata and he would narrate bits and pieces of his fascinating and adventurous journey and experiences. None of us wanted to miss a session.

29. Our young group barged into 8 Milan Street on New Years Eve ( end of 1962). The old couple had already gone to bed. They nonetheless tolerated our gate crashing. There was just a large mango to share. I heard Tabata ask Jane Gool about where did that piece about "our country sinks beneath the yoke" come from. I chipped in and said "Macbeth". They looked at me disbelievingly. Since they had the book, I was able to show them the passage. Tabata could not restrain himself from exclaiming: "I did not think that you would know this." I then reminded him that he had quoted this passage at the 1954 AAC conference. He looked stunned and then burst out laughing. "Can you imagine it. Learning Shakespeare at a Convention Conference! The ANC can never make such a claim." He was extremely pleased.

30. A day or so later we held that historic meeting at the Kommetjie Beach on the shores of the dangerous and inhospitable Atlantic Ocean. The subject matter of what was discussed at that meeting had kept the Security Police occupied for many days in their interrogations later.

31. Tabata was shrewd in presenting his report. He merely stated that Africa was prepared to give any assistance, including military training and resources. He said nothing about how the Unity Movement ought to respond to the offer. The point he emphasised was that we were not alone in our struggle. Africa was waiting for us to ask what assistance we required.

32. There is one point that Tabata made about Africa. He was led to believe that Africa was not too concerned about what ideology an organisation followed. All it was interested in was whether the organisation was prepared to fight against apartheid. This was a monumental error of judgement on Tabata's part. Actually the African petty bourgeoisie was very concerned about the class position of organisations. The truth of this dawned only after Tabata and the leadership went into exile and sought recognition. Door after door was slammed in their faces by the Kaundas and the Ja Ja Wachukus of Africa. There is little doubt that Tabata would have grievously rued his error over the next three decades and up to the day he died. The African petty bourgeoisie in power ensured that the Unity Movement was denied until the very end the resources and assistance to conduct a revolutionary struggle.

33. The post Kommetjie period was a hectic one. Over-enthusiastic members went about openly talking about going "out for training". The

Old Guard came to hear of the over-enthusiasm and had to call us to order. It was explained to us that:

- a) The political function of politicizing, educating and organizing had to remain priority number one
- b) The military aspect had to be subordinated to the political requirement
- c) The political wing of the movement had to remain firmly in “control of the gun”

34. A special meeting was called in either January or February 1963. At this meeting Tabata warned about loose talk about military training and then gave us a “model speech” about how to present what was called the New Approach.

35. It was a masterly model speech where the idea of the armed struggle was presented by the use of non military analogies and imagery.

36. We tried out this model speech at public meetings where members of the Special Branch were present. They could see where we were heading with our speech which on the face of it was militant but not military. They must have ground their teeth in impotent fury since they could not arrest us for speeches which did not advocate violence.

37. The ruling class already had wind of the fact that Tabata had been overseas on a mission to solicit aid and support. The time for Tabata to remain in the country was running out. When we taxed him about still lingering in South Africa instead of fleeing, we were told that the HUC had to sanction their leaving the country. They (Tabata and Jane Gool) were waiting for the HUC meeting. He had by this time left Cape Town and was cooling his heels in Durban. I recall Tabata and Jane Gool being left at our flat in Pietermaritzburg. Nina drove them down to Durban. That was the last we saw of them until 1985 when we visited them in Harare.

38. They left South Africa for Swaziland with Honono who had been banned and house-arrested in the Transkei. Swaziland became the centre for the Unity Movement. There were no travel restrictions. Certain important meetings were held there including one with the leaders of the Makhuluspan. But their time in Swaziland was also coming to an end. South Africa intended passing legislation which would make it compulsory for planes to and from the so-called Protectorates of Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana and which had to fly over South African territory had to make compulsory landings at South African airports. The idea was to enable the security police to arrest persons whom they believed acted in the pursuit of violence or illegal activities.

39. The flight of Tabata, Jane Gool, Honono and AB Ngcobo from the PAC who was given a “lift” from Swaziland made national and international headlines. Their plane landed in Botswana and from there a plane was taken to Tanzania where the party was welcomed by the Tanzanian Minister of Home Affairs, Mr Oscar Kambona, to “free Africa”.

40. As subsequent events would show this grand escape and even grander welcome was a cruel anti-climax to what lay ahead.

41. From 1963 until 1985 there was no physical contact between the writer and Tabata although contact and communication was maintained as much as was possible taking into account the circumstances of that period. There was an ongoing exchange of letters between Nina and Jane Gool; there were regular visits between Minnie Gool (Nina's mother) and the exiles, there was communication between Iyavar Chetty and the writer, including telephone calls. We sent our children to visit Tabata and Jane Gool after I had come out prison in 1980.

42. Throughout this period I found no trace of "paternalism" in Tabata's attitude towards me. Is it then possible that Tabata cleverly concealed his paternalistic attitude towards me but practised it on others? If that is so, then it must be explained what was it so special about me that made Tabata conceal his paternalism?

43. The more I examine Rassool's claim about paternalism, the more I am convinced that Rassool fabricated a slander to besmirch one of Tabata's most endearing qualities – his commitment to train a successor generation of leadership. I have only benefited from our relationship. I learnt vast amounts of knowledge. I learnt the meaning of dedication to the cause from him. I learnt from him endurance in the face of severe problems.

44. Tabata was a great teacher and mentor.

### **BETRAYAL OF THE MOST SHAMEFUL KIND OF THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS OF RESISTANCE TO OPPRESSION AND STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION.**

Introduction: There are few instances of struggle in history so protracted and which stretched over 350 years, with so much of sacrifice, suffering, loss of life, imprisonment and persecution as the one conducted in South Africa.

Tragically close on 100% of those struggles conducted in the world have ended in the betrayal of the interests of the toiling masses who made the greatest sacrifice. It was almost invariably the middle class (bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie consisting mainly of the civil servants, the clerks, and members of the profession) which reaped the harvest.

Today in South Africa that betrayal is at its most obscene when persons elected to government office engage in what they call inauguration ceremonies. These grotesque ceremonies cost anything from R75 million in case of President Zuma to R10 million<sup>90</sup> for the premier of Kwazulu Natal.

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<sup>90</sup> As compared with a frugal inauguration of Helen Zille as premier of Western Cape costing R50 000.

The Kempton Park agreement which ushered in the African National Congress in power, a deal hatched by imperialism, the local white capitalist class and the ANC was a result of the following phenomena:

- a) The collapse of so-called socialism in Europe and the abandonment of the ANC by Russia. The latter had her hands full and told the ANC in no uncertain terms that it had to come to an agreement with the de Klerk government
- b) Imperialism had begun the real sanctions against South Africa and instructed de Klerk to settle the matter with the ANC. or face drastic consequences.
- c) The Nationalist Party had no more stomach to engage in confrontation with the black masses as rulers and preferred giving that dirty work to the ANC so long as the interests of capitalism were not placed in jeopardy.

So the ANC got into power, not as a victorious liberation movement but from a position of weakness in that there was no future in the so-called armed struggle.

The settlement was in the final analysis a betrayal of the most important interests of the toiling masses. For all practical purposes it was a blatant betrayal of the goals of the Freedom Charter save for the formal franchise.

While it was a betrayal of the interests of the toiling masses, the settlement ensured that the doors or shall we say the vaults of the treasury of the country were flung wide open for the new elite to fill their bags with wealth well beyond their wildest dreams.

The first act legitimizing inequality between the masses and the so called leaders was the salaries the politicians were to receive.

It will be recalled that at about that time all fulltime workers for trade unions and political organisations of the oppressed had accepted the sum of R3 000 per month which was worked out as the average earned by a skilled worker in South Africa. The politician was considered a skilled worker and in accordance with the Marxist Leninist approach was entitled to no more than the salary of a skilled worker.

This was the position and accepted by the ANC (at least on the face of it) until the wily de Klerk produced the recommendations of the Melamet Commission concerning the salary to be earned by politicians, judges etc.

This was the poisoned chalice offered. The leadership of the ANC must have had eyes popping with large R's. embossed on them.

Nelson Mandela as president was recommended a salary of about R750 000 per annum – about 21 times more than the “Marxist” R36 0000 per annum.

The barely audible faint murmurs of protest at the largeness of the salaries were soon lost in the din of celebration.

Thus the first act of corruption was the acceptance of a salary of R750 000. It was a burning brand of inequality sunk into the flesh of this nation.

Inequality was thus given the seal of legitimacy.

### **WHAT IF THE “MARXIST” R3000,00 WAS NOT ABANDONED?**

During the 1990s, I met Mr Laurence Gandar, that courageous and noble newspaper editor, who together with revolutionary Harold Strachan and journalist Benjamin Pogrud struck a mighty blow against the abuses perpetrated in a Pretoria prison. I met him while he was a patient at one local hospitals. I recognised him and struck up a conversation. We came to discuss the “marxist” three thousand. I put the view that had Mandela insisted in implementing the “Marxist R3000”as salaries for all political appointments regardless of position, it would have had a dramatic effect on the demand for higher wages. If the president of the country was content to earn R3000 a month then no person whose appointment was a political one, could demand more? If then all the political appointments followed suit, the demand for increased wages and salaries would have been extremely subdued.

### **The consequences of abandoning the “Marxist” R3 000,00.**

This is what the Human Science Research Council had to say:

In the past inequality in South Africa was largely defined along race lines. It has become increasingly defined by inequality within population groups as the gap between rich and poor within each group has increased substantially The Gini coefficient for the African population has risen from 0.62 in 1991 to 0.72 in 2001. *This level of inequality is comparable with the most unequal*

*societies in the world.* The white population has a Gini coefficient of 0.60 that is extremely high for a group whose education and occupational profile matches that of societies in highly industrialised countries.<sup>91</sup> (Our italics and emphasis)

The wealth of the country has been unashamedly appropriated by the new elite – the most expensive dishes of food and the finest liqueurs; the most ostentatious and luxurious mansions; the most powerful and expensive German motor vehicles; the but gigantic four by fours; the up market fashionable suits, shirts, dresses and clothing generally. Their children are sent to exclusive private schools where boycotts and terror tactics by gangsters don't take place; where teachers are found to be busy with teaching and other school activities; where toyi-toyi-ing by teachers or students never takes place.

The meaning of the sharp contrast between the life styles and living standards of the new elite and the toiling masses is a reflection of the theft or usurpation of the fruits of the freedom struggle by the new elite.

*But the theft of the fruits of the freedom struggle is not the only act of pillage and plunder by the new elite.*

### **THE NEW ELITE HAS ALSO STOLEN THE CREDIT FOR THE EFFORT AND SACRIFICE INVOLVED IN THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE.**

The ruling party claims a massive lion's share of credit for liberating South Africa. All other formations which are not part of the tripartite alliance or which did not support the ANC are cast aside. To them is accorded miserly bits of scrap, if at all.

To ensure that the lion's share of credit goes to the ANC and its supporters, the ANC government has hired an army of functionaries and praise singers to perform that task.

About 95% of Municipalities, airports, streets, public buildings, have been renamed after persons whom the ANC regards as its heroes. When they run out of "heroes" names they use non-heroes and when they run out of that they uses and re-use the same name a number of times. We invite the reader to count the number of places and institutions named after Nelson Mandela.

### **THE POSTSCRIPT**

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<sup>91</sup> Fact Sheet :Poverty in South Africa by Human Science Research Council 26/7/09

When wading through from page 502 of Rassool's thesis the reader is regaled about all the honours heaped on Rassool from various quarters, not least of all his appointment by "the Cabinet of the South African government to the council of SAHRA".

Clearly Rassool does not appear to have acquired the virtue of modesty.

The "cabinet" that he so proudly speaks about is the cabinet of the usurpers and the new elite consisting of Stalinists and those appointed by them. Rassool appears to have made peace with these Stalinists.

We are also regaled about Robben island, the island of grief and pain not just from the whips of the oppressors but from the corruption, venality and gross inefficiency which is rapidly destroying the South Africa society and to which the great white sharks patrolling the icy cold Atlantic ocean around Robben Island are no barrier or obstacle.

The promoters of Robben Island to the world have gone out of their way to depict Robben Island as housing one prisoner, namely Nelson Mandela. The many hundreds of other prisoners are of no account. What was promoted was the single cell bearing the Prison Number 466/64.

Through Rassool we sense the importance to him was his work in the Nelson Mandela Museum . We sense this when he related his being "summoned" to "the Umtata and Mvezo sites."<sup>92</sup> The "seriousness" of these visits had to do with the prevention of destruction of the "material remains of the homestead where Mandela was born."

Why was it important to prevent the destruction of the homestead where he was born? How many of the homes most people were born in are still standing?

But there is a difference.

Nelson Mandela had been falsely elevated to the status of the man who saved South Africa from a bloody civil war. Nelson Mandela has been hailed as a revered statesman of international repute on par with Gandhi and Mother Theresa.

And who decided to confer these honours on the man?.

According to Rassool, he was conducting research on how Mandela's biography was being "translated into the domain of national heritage."

Surely before we can talk about national heritage, should we not ask :-

- What were Mandela's political ideas?

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<sup>92</sup> Page 507 of Rassool's thesis , paragraph 2

- Precisely what was his contribution to the liberation struggle which entitles him to be in the “domain of national heritage?”
- What activities did he engage in so as to entitle him to be considered as a world statesman?

As a political prisoner I lived in the same section on Robben Island as Mandela for about seven years. Throughout the time I was in that section I saw Mandela every day of the year – not once but many times each day.<sup>93</sup>

Apart from the various discussions I have had with the man, I was also able to observe him and his actions.

### **THE BUILDING OF A LEADER.**

It has been part of our early training to understand that oppression relied on physical restraint only as a last resort. First and foremost oppression relied on the mental enslavement of the oppressed. To enslave a people mentally, the ruling class had at its disposal powerful tools of fashioning the thinking of people. The ideas of the ruling class were delivered through the mechanisms of the press, the radio, the pulpits of religious institutions and the education system. But most effectively through the willing and brainwashed leaders of the people.

From the contents of the letter Tabata wrote to Nelson Mandela in June 1948<sup>94</sup>, it is clear that Tabata believed that he was addressing a politically unsophisticated young man. In a matter of a few years that young man was being hailed as a political leader of great influence. What was the explanation for this dramatic transformation?

The imperialists through their local agents, the liberal bourgeoisie with its very powerful press initiated a campaign of LEADER BUILDING. Mandela, like Chief Luthuli before him was given massive press coverage. Daily the oppressed people were presented with features of image building. Mandela was presented as their leader. We knew this and said so openly. To provide hard proof was a different matter. What hard proof could we have got of decisions taken verbally behind closed doors with no minutes of the contents of those private meetings?

Yet things have a way of revealing themselves in the most unexpected ways.

In a footnote No 7 on page 507 of Rassool’s thesis we learn that Luli Callinicos who wrote on Nelson Mandela discovered a decision by Oliver

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<sup>93</sup> We greeted each other each time we passed one another in the passage. This was a source of great amusement to Jaftha Masemola who could not understand the need to to greet each time you passed the other person. According to Jaftha Masemola greeting once a day was more than sufficient.

<sup>94</sup> Document No.67 Letter from Tabata to Mandela – “From Protest to Challenge” Volume 2 by Karis and Carter – Hoover Institution Publication

Tambo and the ANC in the 1960s to *“build up” Mandela as a figurehead to galvanize anti-apartheid solidarity work*” (Our emphasis and italics). Here is a very rare instance of hard evidence to “build up Mandela as a figure head.” The basic idea is to generate sufficient propaganda to make people accept Mandela as a leader. The reader must note that people were made to accept Mandela as a leader not through merit but through an avalanche of opinion moulding propaganda.

### **Mandela and his politics**

1. My arrival on Robben Island found the ANC deeply split into two factions. The one was led by Mandela and the other by Govan Mbeki.
2. The principal issue dividing the factions was the question of acceptance or rejection of the government created institutions like the Bantustan structures, the South African Indian Council for South Africans of Indian descent and the Coloured representative Council for members of the so-called coloured people.
3. The Mandela faction advocated participation in all these government created institutions, while the Mbeki faction called for the rejection and boycott of those institutions
4. The Mandela faction advocated calling for a National Convention to arrive at a political settlement between the oppressed people and the white ruling class, while the Mbeki faction came out against a compromise conference.
5. On the first day of my arrival in “B” section, I was called by Raymond Mhlaba, right hand man of Govan Mbeki for an “initiation” talk. One of the things impressed on me by Mhlaba was never to criticise the notorious Matanzima brothers in Mandela’s presence upon pain of making a life-long enemy of Mandela.
6. It transpired that the Matanzima brothers were very close relatives of Mandela who considered Kaiser Matanzima as his role model.
7. Mandela had advocated to the prisoners what virtually amounted to peaceful co-existence between the prison authorities and the prisoners. His advice to prisoners regarding their legal rights was that they for all practical purposes had no rights against the authorities. Our (Apdusa members’) successful challenge in the Cape High Court to the Prison Authorities left Mandela fumbling for an explanation.
8. It became quite clear that the polemic about participation in the government created structures was in reality a fight about being released from prison.
9. So desperate was Mandela to get out of prison that on one occasion he even seriously put forward a plan to get the MPLA to release

about eight prisoners who were captured from the South African Army in exchange for the release of eight prisoners from Robben Island! This hare-brained scheme was rejected out of hand by the prisoners in “B” section. As was his proposal that he be allowed to meet Kaiser Matanzima on a “family visit” on Robben Island.

One could go in this vein to demonstrate that Mandela’s politics were at the kindest, moderate, but in reality they were reactionary. He would have been howled down had he dared to present his politics in a South Africa (outside prison) which was like a boiling cauldron. He got a whiff of that when, at his first public meeting in Natal, after his release, he asked the members of the public to throw their weapons into the sea.

Upon release from Prison, Mandela was no better. One of the first public statements made by him was that everything was up for sale. There was nothing that was no negotiable.

*"I have pointed out to you that everything is negotiable which is of importance. Otherwise we ought not to talk about negotiations." (On S.A. television on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1990 soon after his release from prison.)*

When the US invaded Afghanistan as punishment against the Taliban for not surrendering the Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, there was a call that the US should desist from launching attacks during the Holy Month of Ramadan, Mandela at the prompting from George Bush made the following public statement:

*"It would be disastrous if the president gave in to the call that the army must now withdraw before he has actually flushed out the terrorists. I support him to continue until those terrorists have been tracked down."*

( Nelson Mandela speaking in support of the US-led campaign in Afghanistan after meeting US President George W Bush - The Natal Witness 17th November 2001.)

When Ken Saro Wiwa and eight others were sentenced to death by the very brutal regime of General Sani Abacha, there was a call for public condemnation against the Abacha regime. Mandela refused believing that his image and reputation would be effective through “quiet diplomacy” to save the life of Ken Saro Wiwa. Well it did not. Ken Sao Wiwa and is compatriots were duly executed. Mandela reacted in fury but that did not help the victims.

Mandela is credited with making the Mbeki government change its stance on HIV Aids. Nothing is further from the truth. The Mbeki government had become the laughing stock of the world when it came to its position on this dreaded disease, which position was based on ignorance and arrogance. The only people who supported Mbeki on his stand were the Aids denialists – the lunatic fringe. There was literally a revolt in the ranks of the leadership of the ANC on the position the Mbeki took on the HIV-Aids.

Mandela's own position was to tread very gingerly. For example instead of saying that the government policy was causing the death of many thousands of people he made the remark that there was *a perception* that the ANC was *insensitive* to the suffering of the sick and dying.”

But the mild tap on the wrist was compensated by the most lavish and dishonest of praises of Mbeki:

*“There is nobody in the history of this country – no Prime Minister, no President can ever boast that he has done better than Thabo Mbeki. And that is why I support him and that is why I will strongly support him for the second term...”*

There came a time when Mandela got tired of all the infighting in the ANC and the strong disrespectful attacks on him. He decided to retire from day to day to politics.

## **THE PERSONALITY CULT**

Somewhere along the way Mandela got the taste for publicity for himself and with publicity came the praise and adoration. He became the symbol of resistance just by being in prison. The more praise, publicity and adoration were showered on him the more he came to really believe in his own greatness.

When Soweto erupted on June 16<sup>th</sup> 1976, the attention of the whole country and the world focused on the youth and their unbelievable bravery. It also meant that attention was taken off Mandela and for a while he was relegated to the shadows. It is something he clearly did not relish. Hence he hatched a plan. He approached members of all the organisations in “B” Section on Robben Island and told them that he intended embarking on a course of action which would *make June 16<sup>th</sup> look like a tea party!* We all wondered what was it he had in mind which would have such a dramatic effect. Was he planning a staged suicide? Was he intending to kill the Minister of Justice?

When he finally unravelled his plan, it turned out to be a one-man defiance campaign on the Island and his being sent into isolation. To call it an anticlimax would be describing it mildly. The ANC moved in swiftly and dissuaded him from that campaign upon pain of being disciplined!! The point is that Mandela honestly believed that his one man defiance campaign would have shocked South Africa and the world with far greater impact than the Soweto massacre. The campaign referred to by Oliver Tambo to fashion Mandela into a figurehead was having an effect on Mandela himself!

In an article written by MHAMBI which appeared in Facebook on the 24th June 2008, the author relates how he met George Bizos and asked him about Mandela. Bizos replied that Mandela was now a *very old man* and that his doctors had advised against *activity which was stressful*.

That may be the reason why Mandela announced (publicly, with television cameras in attendance)

On the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2004, Nelson Mandela announced his retirement from public life. Instead of a statement to the media by his office or spokesperson, Mandela made the announcement of his retirement in the full glare of the media, both print and electronic.

*Mandela is reported to have quipped: "Don't call me. I'll call you."*

*(Sunday Times Business Section page 16, dated 6<sup>th</sup> June 2004)*

As it turned out, the announcement of his retirement turned out to be just another occasion for the media to focus on Mandela. As for the man himself he retired from nothing. He kept going as before garnering praise and publicity on every possible occasion including meeting with Charlise Theron after she won the Oscar and *after* she had a meeting with President Mbeki.

### **THE TERRIBLE AFFLICTION WHICH CRAVES INCESSANT PRAISE AND PUBLICITY.**

This affliction is not a rare disorder. There are numerous cases in history where those in power sought immortality in numerous ways. Usually it is by portraits, statues and the naming of places, streets, institutions, impressive buildings, highways, poems and songs.

Mandela's professed modesty and humility is not supported by his acts and deeds.

To my knowledge there is one other case of this affliction reaching the level of a serious pathological condition. That other case is that of Joseph Stalin.

Here is a description of that affliction by a highly talented biographer, ISAAC DEUTSCHER.

In his book, “STALIN”<sup>95</sup>, Deutscher writes:

*“He was addressed as Father of the Peoples, the Greatest genius in History, Friend and Teacher of All Toilers, Shining Sun of Humanity, and Life-giving Force of Socialism. Poems and newspaper articles, public speeches and party resolutions, works of literary criticism and scientific treatises – all teemed with these epithets. In the apostolic succession of Marx-Engels – Lenin, he seemed to dwarf his predecessors....Day in day out Pravda carried on its front pages adulatory “Letters to Stalin” and its example was faithfully followed by the rest of the press. On the occasion of his seventieth birthday, the flood of congratulatory messages was so great that Pravda went on publishing them in almost every copy for years thereafter...In order that this massive adulation should not defeat itself by monotonous repetitiveness, the sycophants had to strike ever new flatteries from their arid imaginations and startle the public with ever new and ever more bizarre superlatives. And finally this incomparable touch: **‘Stalin never allowed his work to be marred by the slightest hint of vanity, conceit or self adulation.’** Like a drug addict he craved the incense burnt for him and administered to himself in ever-increasing doses.”*

Let us not get carried away by the comparison. Stalin’s drive for adulation was drowned by a river of blood of his former comrades and millions of peasants. Mandela has no blood on his hands. Mandela through the Nelson Mandela Foundation and through his very favourable image with the capitalists and financiers of this country and abroad did not balk at soliciting massive donations. Through powerful public relations activity, Mandela was able to dragoon the powerful press of the local financiers and industrialists and the press of the imperialists to build his image.

Stalin used the political power he wielded to galvanise the resources of the State, the Communist party and a servile press to build his image into gargantuan dimensions.

## **DUTY TO COMBAT THE PERSONALITY CULT.**

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<sup>95</sup> STALIN BY Isaac Deutscher, a pelican book. Revised edition 1982 pages 593 et seq

It is the unspoken duty of all enlightened people, especially if they are intellectuals and believe in the in the enforcement of the right to equality of people and the practice of democracy in their day to day lives.

All the teachings of the great sages over the millennia focus on the virtues of humility and modesty. People are taught from childhood to aspire to practice these virtues.

Hence persons practising humility and modesty are praised and accorded great respect from the people.

The personality cult directly attacks the concept of equality. And if some are accepted to be “more equal than others” then the logical concomitant is that such “more equal” people are entitled to privileges not given to the ordinary people.

From what we have said above, Nelson Mandela’s politics does nor befit the ethos of socialism. The man and his Foundation and sycophants demand extraordinary treatment for him. The most recent example is that of his 91<sup>st</sup> birthday. For most human beings the occasion of a birthday is expressed by greetings by family members and close friends, a gift from his/her spouse and collective one from the children. The day ends off with a special meal. That is where it ends. All in all only a handful of persons are involved.

As against that, take the case of Mr Mandela’s 91<sup>st</sup> birthday. Hereunder is a list of events organised to celebrate his birthday.

1. A public lecture called the Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture to be delivered by a celebrity of varying degrees. This year it was Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus from Bangladesh.
2. A party at Mandela’s Houghton home for special friends and relatives.
3. Another party to be held at Qunu, his Transkei home.
4. A musical concert at Madison Square Garden New York in honour of Mandela.
5. The Mandela Foundation have launched the Mandela Day TV that lets viewers take part in the Mandela Day Concert in New York..
6. A Mandela Day with the gimmick of rendering 67 minutes service. The Mandela Foundation actually asked the day to be declared “Mandela Day” and when that was acceded to Mandela has responded by saying how honoured he was. The kind of thing you say when unsolicited honour is bestowed upon you.
7. The next move is to get the United Nation Organisation to declare Mandela Day an internationally recognised holiday.

The most recent manifestation of the cult of the personality is the bizarre and ghoulish idea of promoting *at present* with copyright all signed and sealed the death and funeral of Mandela. Human beings being what they are often surmise what happens at their funerals – who will attend; what

will those who pay the tributes say; will there be genuine grief. So common is this wishful thinking that Mark Twain immortalized it in his “Tom Sawyer” when he portrayed Tom Sawyer attending his own funeral.<sup>96</sup>

That the preparation for his funeral has his blessing is evidenced by the fact that his own family and “the Nelson Mandela Foundation have already completed their own preparations for the funeral.”<sup>97</sup>

What can be more satisfying to an addict of praise and adoration than to be able to witness a dress rehearsal of his own funeral?

I have no idea where the craving for praise and acclamation will end. After having Mandela day declared an international holiday, what next? To beam into outer and deep space the praise, flattery and panegyrics about Nelson Mandela?

A ruling class has tremendous power especially material wealth and patronage by way of positions, honour and public acclaim. There will always be a section of the intelligentsia who will be attracted to rewards of this kind and will do all the groveling necessary to get the rewards.

During the time of the tyrant George III honour was bestowed on persons of letters who wrote sycophantic poems and praise. They were awarded the title of Poet Laureate. But there were always those intellectuals who refused to grovel. Poets Shelley and Byron were examples. The Poets Laureate were considered with contempt by those who loved and fought for liberty.

This is Byron’s judgement:

“Bob Southey! You’re a poet – Poet laureate  
And representative of all the race,  
Although ‘tis true that you turn’d out a Tory at  
Last – yours has lately been a common case –  
And now, my Epic Renegade! What are you at?  
With all the Lakers<sup>98</sup> in and out of the place?  
A nest of tuneful person to my eye  
Like ‘four and twenty Blackbirds in a pye;  
Which pye being opened they began to sing  
A dainty dish to set before the King’.”

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<sup>96</sup> The community in which Tom Sawyer lived believed that Tom had died through drowning and his body never found.

<sup>97</sup> The Times 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2009

<sup>98</sup> This is a reference to a group of poets – Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey- who lived in the Lake District

Rassool with his training in the Trotskyist group that he belonged to would have learnt about the cult of the individual and the terribly devastating consequences of it through the actions of Stalin. Why has he failed to see signs of it in Mandela? Was he not aware that what he believed to be an honour bestowed on him was in fact in pursuit of the glorification of a single individual? What makes him compare (or repeat a comparison based on ignorance), Mrs Cissie Gool with Joan of Arc? The latter has been honoured officially as “the most famous fighting woman in European history.” In the end she had to be physically destroyed. She was merely 16 years old; she was a military expert without training; she led the French forces successfully against the English. She lifted sieges which were considered by experienced military generals as impossible to do. In the end she met her death because she defied those who had imprisoned her by wearing the attire of a male, her favourite outfit in battle

Mrs. Gool was blessed with attractive features and could hold an audience spellbound with her power of speech. But there it ended. She has left nothing for posterity by way of her thoughts or writings to ponder what really went on in her mind. Apart from a short sojourn in the Unity Movement, Mrs. Gool chose Stalinism as her political home. Instead of destroying the structures of oppression, she spent most of her life as a City Councillor in the racist City Council of Cape Town. When therefore Stalin gets thrown into history’s dustbin, all his followers must follow suit.

To persist in the comparison between Joan of Arc and Mrs. Gool is to perpetrate a historical fraud.

It is in honour of such a person that Rassool announces with obvious pride that he drew the guest list when the University of Cape Town decided belatedly to bestow an honour on Mrs. Gool.

### **THEIR TURN WILL COME!**

Today the Rassools and the Callinicos’ and the Serotes strut the platform as honoured recorders of the alleged deeds of heroism. By recording such alleged deeds, they hope that some of the glory will rub on to them. But sooner or later the truth will be out. There will emerge the true searchers of the truth. Isaac Deustcher, famous historian, reminds us of a well known saying of Thomas Carlyle. The latter stated that in seeking out what really took place in the French revolution required firstly the removal of a “mountain of dead dogs.” Our seekers of the truth will remove their mountain of dead dogs placed by the Rassools to hide the truth. When the dead dogs are removed, the truth will be revealed. Then there can only be unconcealed contempt for the purveyors of falsehoods. When that time comes, Nelson Mandela’s true role and contribution will

be assessed and the gigantic presentation of the man will be whittled down to its realistic proportions. Harsh judgement will be passed on all those praise singers, your South African poet laureates, who rendered their services in the fabrication of a creed based on falsehoods and designed to dragoon people to worship false gods.

When that time comes the seekers of truth will devote much time and effort in the unravelling of the narrative spanning decades of honest endeavour, of daily labour in the cause of liberation, of devoting an entire life time in pursuit of ideals which have always been designed to benefit, not self, but the toiling masses who created the wealth of this country. This narrative will serve as a role model for future generations of the intelligentsia.

Tabata was always a modest man. Modest in dress and living quarters, modest in what he ate and modest when it came to publicity for self as distinct for the organisation. Circumstances and let us be blunt about this - the political backwardness of Africa's leaders and their low level of cultural development – compelled Tabata and the leadership of the Unity Movement to engage in practices which they had shunned all their lives. It was survival or complete marginalization. Yet those departures from a previous position have been blown totally out of proportion. Take the question of the photographs of Tabata used in the Unity Movement publications. I can only recall about THREE. and Rassool gets his teeth into these and does not miss an opportunity to make snide remarks about the most used photograph. Yet there are literally millions of photographs of the leadership of the ANC/SACP, concentrated most heavily on Mandela, Sisulu, Tambo, Slovo etc. But not a word of rebuke for engaging in the cult of the individual.

But then we credit Rassool with intelligence to know that you do not get honours for being critical of those who bestow them.

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