

THE DOCTOR OF DISTRICT SIX:

Exploring the Private and Family History of Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman,
City Councillor for District Six of Cape Town (1904-1940)

EVE WONG
WNGEVE001

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the
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Department of Historical Studies
Faculty of the Humanities
University of Cape Town
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This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signed

EVE WONG



02 DEC 2016

DATE

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This thesis is for my 好婆 and 爷爷.

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MILESTONES IN ABDURAHMAN'S LIFE

»— *Timeline* —«

- 1872 / 18 December
Abdullah Abdurahman was born
Wellington, Western Cape
- c. 1877 – 1880
Attended Huguenot Seminary's Sunday School
- c. 1881 – 1887
Studied at Marist Brothers
& South African College School
Gardens, Cape Town
- 1888 – 1893 ♣
Registered in Medical School at the
University of Glasgow
Graduates MB, CM in 1893
- 1892 - *Cape Franchise further restricted*
- c. 1894 ∞
Married Helen 'Nellie' Potter James
London, England
- 1893 – 1895/1901
Internship & Postgraduate Study in London
Setting up Medical Practise in Cape Town
LRCP, MRCS, Chemistry
- 1896 / 8 May ♀
Waradea 'Rosie' was born
At Abdullah's Medical Offices at 99 Loop Street
- 1897 / 6 November ♀
Zainunnissa 'Cissie' was born
At Albert Lodge
- 1898 ∞
Abdul (father) Passed Away
London, England
- 1899 to 1902: *Second South African War*
1901: *Plague Outbreak / Forced Removals to Ndabeni*
1902: *African Political Organization founded.*
- 1902 / c. Jul ∞
Khadija (mother) Passed Away
London, England
- 1902 / September
- Permanent Residence at the Cape
- 1904
Elected City Councillor of District Six
Holds office until 1940, except for years 1913-1915
- 1905
Becomes President of the APO
Begins printing its official vox, the eponymously named *APO*
- 1906
First Delegation to British Parliament
- 1907 / November
Queenstown Conference
First major attempt for non-white political coalition
- 1909
Second Delegation to London
- 1910: *Union of South Africa*
- 1912 / 12 January
Trafalgar High School established
- 1913
Rahmaniyeh Muslim Institute is founded
First of 9 Muslim primary 'institutes' Abdullah founded
- 1914
Elected to Cape Provincial Council
- 1914 to 1918: *World War 1*
- 1919/ 19 June ∞
Cissie marries A. H. Gool
- 1921: *Communist Party established*
- 1923
Became Chairman of the Streets and Drainage
Committee
- 1923: *Urban Areas Act segregate African residence*
- c. 1925 ∞
Marries Margaret May 'Maggie' Stansfield
Married by Muslim rites, by Sheik Abduragiem

c. 1925 ∞

Divorces Nellie

1925 / 16 November

Deputation to India

1926 / 10 January ♀

Begum Jehanara Gadija is born

1927: Cape Town Agreement with India

1927

Resignation as a member of the Health and Building Regulations Committee.

1929 / 8 November ∞

Rosie marries Ebrahim Abdul Kader

1930

Proposes plans for Moslem School

For Pentz Street

1930 / ♂

Abdullah Dara Shikoh is born

1933

Medical Misconduct Case against Abdullah

See Appendix P.

1934 / ♂

Nizamodien Ebrahim Stansfield is born

1934

Livingstone High School is founded

In Claremont, Cape Town

1934

Appointed to Wilcox Coloured Commission

First commission for discussion of coloured conditions, etc.

1937

Pushed out of the Streets & Drainage Committee by M. J. Adams & the New Reform Party

1937

Schotsche Kloof negotiations with the city

Notes?

1939 Sept: World War 2 begins

1940 / 2 February ∞

Abdullah Abdurahman Passes Away

Cardiac arrest in his home on Kloof Street

Posthumous ♂

1999 / Awarded Order for Meritorious Service

Class 1 (Gold); awarded by Nelson Mandela 'for his work against racial oppression'.

SOURCES:

Death Indexes of England and Wales, UK Board of Trade Incoming/Outgoing Passenger Lists, William Hendrickse (grandson), G. Lewis' *Between the Wire and the Wall*, B. Nasson, *Oxford Dictionary of Biography*, NWU/AFP, Ottoman State Archives, Censuses of Scotland; England and Wales, British newspapers, E. Digby, 'Early Black Doctors', *Cape Times*, *Cape Standard*, *Cape Argus*, *South African News*, V. Bickford-Smith et al, *Making of Cape Town*, Cape Town Archives Depot, *South African Medical Journal*. R. R. Edgar, ed, *An African American in South Africa*.



FAMILY TREE

- GEN 1
- GEN 2
- GEN 3
- GEN 4

"Old Abdol" Jamal ud-Din
(b. ~1800's - d. 1862 - 1875)
greengrocer

"Betsy" (née ??)
(b. before 1834 - d. 1876 - 1888)
greengrocer & fruiterer

Abdul "Hadjie" Rahman
(b. ~1834 - d. 1898)
Islamic theology teacher, merchant & fishmonger

Khadijah (née Dollie)
(b. ~1847 - d. 1902)
schoolteacher & seamstress

UNKNOWN DOLLIE PARENTS

"Hadjie" Mahommed
fish merchant

unknown

Khairun Havva Nisa Beyan
Studies medicine in London

Khadijah
Studied embroidery in a London art school, marries an Indian prince and becomes India's first Muslim woman justice.

Mehmet Fuat Ataullah

Abu Bakr Rusdu Ataullah

Gacilla Mohsena
(b. ?? - d. 1943)

Ahmet Ataullah Bey Effendi
(b. Mar 1865 - d. 10 Nov 1903)
Arabic teacher & diplomat

Ataullah is the only surviving son of Abu Bakr Effendi & Rukea Maker
(Ataullah is the second-born, his elder brother died during childbirth)

Hanmid
(b. ~ 1860s - d. ??)
pharmacy assistand

unknown

Rushdi

Ashi

Sally (née ??)

Abdullah "Sonny" Eshaam

Rukehha

Gamat Misbagh

✦ **ABDULLAH ABDURAHMAN** ✦
(b. 18 Dec 1872 - d. 20 Feb 1940)
doctor & politician

Helen "Nellie" Potter (née James)
(b. 2 Sept 1872 - d. 1953)

Margaret May "Maggie" (née Stansfield)
(b. 31 Dec 1899 - d. 16 Apr 1974)

See next page

Ismail
(b. 16 Oct 1888 - d. ??)
doctor

Rukea (née ?? Dollie)

Himli

Drowned in childhood in a reservoir in the Transvaal

Remzi pharmacist

Nora nurse

Edmund Overend wire worker

Ebrahim
(b. 1890's - d. ??)
chemist assistant

Nothing further is known about Ebrahim

Remzi is reported to have never married.

Karrim
(b. ?? - d. ??)

unknown

Gertrude Gadeja Rutherford
(b. ?? - d. 1943)

Yusuf and "Bibi" had one child, Mohammed Saaid.

"Bibi" Noor

Yusuf Mohammed Hamid Gool
spice trader

Likely Khadijah & Mohammed's niece.
Waghieda's mother was a Dollie.

Fatima

Ismail Amod Patel
"businessman from the Transvaal"

Abdullah Ismail Patel

Waghieda née Tal-Aj

Rukea

Shaykh Muhammad Salieh Hendricks
imam



FAMILY TREE

From previous page

- GEN 2
- GEN 3
- GEN 4
- WIFE

ABDULLAH ABDURAHMAN
(b. 18 Dec 1872 - 20 Feb 1940)
doctor & politician

Helen "Nellie" Potter (née James)
(b. 2 Sept 1872 - 1953)

John Cumming James
(b. ~1829 - 1881/1891)
accountant

Harriet Stout
(b. ~1839 - 1891/1901)

Margaret May "Maggie" (née Stansfield)
(b. 31 Dec 1899 - 16 Apr 1974)

Waradea "Rosie"
(b. 6 Nov 1897 - ??)
doctor

Ebrahim Abdul Kader
(b. 1903 - d. ??)
bookkeeper

Jehan
(named after Shah Jehan of the Taj Mahal)

"Albert"

Abdul Hamid Gool
(b. 1887 - d. 1973)
pediatrician

unknown

Zainunnissa "Cissie"
(b. 8 May 1896 - 1 Jul 1963)
politician & lawyer

Rustum (b. 1923) - *doctor (in Australia)*
Shaheen (b. 1926) - *medical student committed suicide*
Marsinah - *(in New York)*

Edward Stansfield

Sam Kahn
(b. 15 Dec 1911 - d. 25 Aug 1987)
politician

Begum Jehanara Gadija
(b. 10 Jan 1926 - 18 Dec 2009)
nurse & midwife

Ralph George Hendrickse
(b. 5 Nov 1926 - d. 6 May 2010)
pediatrician

Margaret May - *teacher*
Terry-Anne - *teacher*
Nerina Michelle - *dentist*
Sandra Helen - *manager*

William Alfred - *psychologist (in Texas)*

(in Canada)

brother? →

John?

Gracie Stansfield Fields
(b. - d.)

Goolam H.
(b. 24 Mar 1905)
doctor

Abdullah Dara Shikoh
(b. 1930)
doctor

Muriel (née Ross)
(b. 19 Apr 1938 - 22 Dec 2013)
Canadian politician

Gadija "Diji"
teacher & social worker taught at the Muir Street Moslem School

Jainup "Jane"
(b. 19 Mar 1902)
studied at Fort Hare

Amanda Cheryl - *housewife*
Ross Dara - *engineer*

Lucinda Ann - *teacher*
Vanessa Ann - *librarian*

(in Canada)

Mariam "Marji"
midwife

Zobeida "Billy"
studied at Fort Hare

Nizam Ebrahim Stansfield
(b. 1934)
chemist

Sylvia Jane (née Vaselaneck)
teacher

Amina "Minnie"
nursing and midwifery

Waghieda (née Tal-AI)

From previous page

Yusuf Mohammed Hamid Gool
spice trader

Sources
William Hendrickse; Censuses of the United Kingdom & Canada; Cape Archives Depot: Home Affairs Western Cape Index, Marriages, Births and Deaths, Registry Archives; Y. S. Rassool, *Let We Forget*; S. Gool, *The Gools of Cape Town*; R. E. van der Ross, *Say it Loud*; B. Nasson, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; University of London's Senate Libraries' Institute of Commonwealth Studies (ICS2); Northwestern University's Melville Herskovits Library of African Studies (Abdullahman Family Papers); H. Gençoğlu, "Abu Bakr Effendi"; Records of the former Transvaal Province.

* With current, living generations, some details, if not publicly available, are not given for privacy reasons.

Prelude
HIS GRANDFATHER'S 'TISANNE'

In 1861, 40-year-old Lady Lucie Duff-Gordon (née Austin),¹ voyaged to the Cape to seek relief from her tuberculosis. Blaming her distress on the damp English weather, Lucie's doctors recommended she travel to warmer climes. At the time, Cape Town was advertised as a health resort.² Lucie set sail in July of 1861 and landed in Cape Town in September.³ During her travels, Lucie befriended Abdullah Abdurahman's grandparents, "Old Abdol" and "Betsy" Jamaalee.⁴ Lucie's earliest mention of the Jamaalees was of how Old Abdol 'compelled me to drink herb tea, compounded by a Malay doctor for my cough. I declined at first, and the poor old man looked hurt, gravely assured me that it was not true that Malays always poisoned Christians, and drank some himself. Thereupon I was obliged, of course, to drink up the rest; it certainly did me good, and I have drunk it since with good effect; it is intensely bitter and rather sticky'. Old Abdol of Bengal⁵ and Betsy of Simonstown⁶ operated a 'fruit-shop of a rough sort, with "Betsy, fruiterer", painted on the back of an old tin tray, and hung up by the door of the house' near Hope and Roeland Streets.⁷ Odds are the trio met at the Jamaalees' shop. While in town, Lucie had lodged on Roeland Street.⁸ Betsy and Abdol were both once slaves to Dutch owners. Because slaves could not marry, 'Abdul first bought himself, and then his wife, whose "Missis" generously "lumped in" Betsy's bed-ridden mother'.⁹ Lucie declared to her mother that Abdol 'is a fine handsome old man, and has confided to me that £5,000 would not buy what he is worth now'.¹⁰ Nearly 75 years after Lucie's visit to the Cape, Betsy and Abdol's grandson Abdullah¹¹ composed a speech to support a Mr. Pickard's bid for office. Building

¹ Lucie was a translator. Her works included translations of Barthold Niebuhr's *Studies of Ancient Grecian Mythology* (1839) and Wilhelm Meinhold's *Mary Schweidler, the Amber Witch* (1844). Lucie moved in literary circles of the time. Her home was frequently visited by, among others, Charles Dickens and William Thackeray, and Lord Alfred Tennyson. Later, after she married, Lucie and her husband, Sir Alexander Duff-Gordon, collaborated to translate L. von Ranke's *Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg* (1890).

² See *Health: The Voyage to South Africa and Sojourn there* (London: 1891) and J. Noble, 'The Cape as a Health Resort', in *Official Handbook of the Cape of Good Hope*, ed. J. Noble, (Cape Town: J. C. Juta & Co, 1886), 5-30.

³ L. Duff-Gordon, *Letters from the Cape*. Annotated by Dorothea Fisher. London: Oxford University Press, 1927), B, 18.

⁴ In Lucie's letters, Betsy is sometimes referred to by "Betty". "Betsy" might have actually been "Betje". Further, Arabic naming conventions are complex and the records reflect this in the multiple ways names were transliterated, recorded, and otherwise expressed. As Abdullah informed Dorothea Fairbridge, the editor and commentator of the 1927 edition of *Letters from the Cape*, the original name was "Jamal-ud-din", which is not conventionally a surname. "Jamaalee" is used throughout this thesis for the same of consistency. It is chosen for no reason other than that, Lucie, who provides the most details on "Betsy" and "Abdol", first recorded it thus. Numerous sources have alternative spellings, even within the same manuscript. Lucie, for example, also wrote "Abdol" as Abdool, and Abdul. To note [sic] or to correct, in author brackets, for every instance would be immensely distracting. For this reason, although the original in the source is preserved, the [sic] notation is elided for name variations unless necessary for identification.

⁵ Abdol is said to be from Bengal, according to Y. S. Rassool, *District Six - Lest we forget. Recapturing subjugated cultural histories of Cape Town (1897-1956)* (Bellville: University of the Western Cape, 2000), 22.

⁶ R. E. van der Ross, *In Our Own Skins: A Political History of the Coloured People* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2015) 67. Other than van der Ross, no one else gives this information. His source is unknown.

⁷ Dorothea Fairbridge's notes in Duff-Gordon's *Letters from the Cape* report their shop to be at Hope and Roeland Streets (54), so most historians have located their shop there. However, the *The Cape of Good Hope Almanac and Annual Register for 1852* gives more precise details, 'Abdol Jamaldien, green grocer, &c., hope-street, shop, grave-street'. Graves Street today is St. John's Street.

⁸ *Cape Argus*, 3 Dec 1999. Jackie Loos, 'The Way We Were' column, 'Malays the only people who were really interesting'.

⁹ *Ibid*, 42-43.

¹⁰ Duff-Gordon, *Letters from the Cape*, 43.

¹¹ I have made the decision to identify some individuals by given name and others by surname. Sometimes, such as the case of his wife and daughters, I use their nicknames or aliases instead. The reason for this is, in part, stylistic and in another part, pragmatic. Multiple individuals share the same surname and in these cases, forename is more useful for specificity. Once this decision was made regarding the multiple Abdurahmans, a stylistic choice followed to refer to closer family relations and known close friends by forename and everyone external to that by surname.

upon the foundation set by his remarkable grandparents and parents, Abdullah became a medical doctor, a City Councillor of Cape Town and a Provincial Councillor of the Western Cape. Perhaps thinking of his grandparents and their “fruit-shop of a rough sort”, Abdullah wrote, ‘I know Mr. Pickard does not like me to refer to the help that he has given to many of the poor people who started a little fruit shop or hawking fruit with very little money ... Some of you may remember that any non-European woman, whether she was a Malay or Coloured Christian, married to an Indian, had to appear before the Committee [when applying for a trading licence], and all kinds of humiliating question were asked her, and invariably the application for a licence by a non-European woman was refused if she happened to be married to an Indian’.¹²

Lucie and the Jamaalees bonded over their separation from family and children. The Jamaalees’ son and Abdullah’s father, Abdul was ‘now a student at Cairo, who has been away five years – – four at Mecca’. Lucie journeyed to Cape Town alone, without her husband and her “three darlings”. After only a week in Cape Town, she suffered “a dreadful heartache” from missing one of her children’s birthdays.¹³ Lucie confided to her husband, ‘[Cape Town] is a dreary place for strangers. Abdul Jemaalee’s tisane [sic], and a banana which he gave me each time I went to his shop, are the sole offer of ‘Won’t you take something?’ or even the sole attempt at a civility that I have received’.¹⁴ After Lucie had travelled away from town, she continued to correspond with the Jamaalees. At Caledon, she told her husband, ‘I received a message from my Malay friends, Abdool Jemaalee and Betsy, anxious to know “if the Misses had good news of her children, for bad news would make her sick”’.¹⁵ Lucie reminisced, ‘Old Betsy and I used to prose about young Abdurrachman and his studies at Mecca, and about my children, with more real heartiness than you can fancy. We were not afraid of boring each other; and pious old Abdool sat and nodded and said, “May Allah protect them all”! as a refrain; – “Allah, il Allah”!’¹⁶ When Lucie left the Cape, the affection between her and the Jamaalees was evident. Two days prior, Lucie wrote to her husband on their behalf, requesting their friend Ross,¹⁷ then in Cairo, to make some inquiries ‘among the Mollahs of Cairo for a Hadji, by name Abdool Rachman, the son of Abdool Jemaalee, of Capetown, and, if possible, to get the inclosed [sic] letter sent him? The poor people are in sad anxiety for their son, of whom they have not heard for four months, and that from an old letter. Henry will thus have a part of all the blessings which were solemnly invoked on me by poor old Abdool, who is getting very infirm, but toddled up and cracked his old fingers over my head, and invoked the protection of Allah with all form; besides that Betsy sent me

¹² Northwestern University, Melville J. Herskovits Library of Africana Studies, 001 Abdurahman Family Papers (hereafter NWU/AFP): Box 1, Folder 8 ‘Speeches Written by Dr. Abdurahman, (Incomplete), n.d.: ‘Conclusion’, Untitled speech: ‘I feel it my duty ...’

¹³ Duff-Gordon, *Letters from the Cape*, 45.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Of Lucie’s three children, two, Janet Ann (1842-1927), Maurice (1849-1896) survived to adulthood. But their youngest, Urania, died in 1877 and seems to have been sick frequently in her youth. Abdol and Betsy must have been inquiring after Urania’s health.

¹⁶ L. Duff-Gordon, *Letters from the Cape*, ed. J. Purves (London: Humphrey Milford, 1921), 108. It seems Lucie was trying to write the Arabic phrase, *lā ilāha illā allāh*, a statement and affirmation as well as an invocation of faith. She writes of this earlier in her letters, dated 28 October as she observed a Malay funeral, writing, ‘... and round me sat a crowd of grave brown men chanting ‘*Allah il Allah*’ to the most monotonous but musical air, and with the most perfect voices. The chant seemed to swell, and then fade, like the wind in the trees’, (Duff-Gordon, *Letters from the Cape*, 41-42).

¹⁷ This and the subsequent “Henry” is probably referring to Mr. Henry Ross, who married Lucie’s daughter Janet in 1860. Ross was in Egypt at the time as the director of the Sudan Company, later known as the Egyptian Commercial and Trading Company (est. 1863).

twelve dozen oranges and lemons'.¹⁸ Lucie's letters draw an image of a couple who honoured charity and was devoted to family. Their hospitality towards a woman in a foreign land who found herself alone and homesick for her family, reveals their kindness towards those in need. These are themes that surface again and again through the generations of the Abdurahman family: a pious devotion to Islam, charity and hospitality for those in need, an unrelenting affection and loyalty for family and friends, and a great reverence for education as a means for uplifting generations to greater heights.



Abdullah Abdurahman was an enormous presence in Cape Town and coloured politics throughout the early twentieth-century. Abdullah is well-known to scholarship for his education efforts: his activism against the School Board Act of 1905 and his contributions to the establishment of the Teacher's League of South Africa.¹⁹ To a much lesser extent, there has been brief attention to his involvement with women's activism, e.g. his response to the Bloemfontein Pass Laws protests in 1914,²⁰ and with the anti-Indian legislations – especially the 1924 Class Areas Bill.²¹ Marxist authors discuss Abdurahman's activities concerning "civilised" labour policies;²² while coloured political histories focus on his work with the franchise and the African Political Organisation (APO). Recent scholarly interest in African Islam has incorporated Abdullah's establishment of Muslim primary schools.²³ Interest and attention on Abdullah tend to be limited to thematic coverage in these topical volumes. His presence in scholarship is often flattened to a two-dimensional character who was "the first coloured City Councillor", or "the first coloured South African doctor practising in the Cape". If further discussion occurs, it is often in context of his political longevity: as President of the APO for 35 years, as City Councillor of Cape Town for 36 years, or as Provincial Councillor for 26 years. This shrunken representation diminishes the life of an important and influential man. There are only four short publications focused on Abdullah: a volume of his major speeches, a working paper on his role in the founding of the APO, a reprint of posthumous articles, and an annotated volume of Abdullah's popular column, *Straatpraatjes*, written under the pseudonym of Piet Uitlander.²⁴ These three items are prefaced by short political biographies of Abdullah. Two unpublished

¹⁸ Duff-Gordon, *Letters from the Cape*, 155. This passage is from Lucie's letter to her husband Alex. In a different letter about the same goodbye to her mother, she confirmed this number, writing 'You would have been moved by poor old Abdool Jemaalee's solemn benediction when I took leave to-day. He accompanied it with a gross of oranges and lemons', (154), presumably to fight off scurvy on the long ship journey.

¹⁹ See M. Adhikari, *Let Us Live for Our Children: The Teachers' League of South Africa, 1913-1940* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1993) and H. Willemsse, 'Identity, place and politics in the auto/biographies of two South African educators'. *Life Writing* 11, no. 2 (2014): 231-246.

²⁰ N. Gasa, 'Chapter 5: Let them Build More Gaols,' in *Women in South African History: They Remove Boulders and Cross Rivers, Basus'imbokodo, Bawel'imilambo*, ed. N. Gasa (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2007), 7, 10, 12.

²¹ M. Ajam, 'The raison d'être of the Muslim Mission Primary School in Cape Town and environs from 1860 to 1980 with special reference to the role of Dr. A Abdurahman in the modernisation of Islam-oriented schools' (PhD Dissertation, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1986)

²² See H. J. and R. Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950* (Aylesbury, UK: Penguin, 1969).

²³ See M. Adhikari, 'Protest and Accommodation: Ambiguities in the Racial Politics of the APO, 1909-1923'. *Kronos* 20 (1993): 91-106; G. Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall: A history of South African 'Coloured' politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987) and the entire oeuvre in the Bibliography from R. E. van der Ross; I. Goldin, *Making race: The politics and economics of coloured identity in South Africa* (Boston: Addison-Wesley, 1987); F. Esack, 'Three Islamic strands in the South African struggle for justice' *Third World Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1988): 473-498 and Ajam, 'Raison d'être'.

²⁴ Speeches: R. E. van der Ross, *Say it out Loud: The APO Presidential Addresses and other major political speeches 1906-1940 of Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman* (Cape Town: Western Cape Institute for Historical Research, 1990); Working paper: R. E. van der Ross, *The Founding of the African Peoples Organization in Cape Town in 1903 and the Role of Dr. Abdurahman* (Pasadena, CA: Munger Africana Library Notes) 1975; Posthumous articles: J. H. Raynard, *Dr. Abdurahman: A biographical memoir*, ed. M. Adhikari (Cape Town: Friends of the National Library of South Africa in Association with the District Six Museum, 2002; Abdullah's column: M. Adhikari, ed. *Straatpraatjes: language, politics and popular culture in Cape Town, 1909-1922*. Cape Town: Van Schaik Publishers, 1996.

theses with significant sections devoted to Abdullah round out the extant literature.²⁵ There is virtually no discussion of his early life before politics or of his life apart from politics. Even within political volumes, the long shadow of his association with the APO and his provincial work have obscured the other aspects of Abdullah's life and career. The body of literature on coloured²⁶ history is also slim. Notable volumes include Johannes Marais' 1957 *The Cape Coloured People: 1652-1937*, which inspired Stanley Trapido's 1970 PhD Dissertation titled 'White Conflict and Non-White Participation in the Politics of the Cape of Good Hope, 1853-1910'. Trapido's work, in turn, motivated Richard van der Ross' impressive four-volume work, 'A Political and Social History of the Cape Coloured People, 1870-1970'. Unfortunately, van der Ross' oeuvre has been criticised for lacking scholarly rigour. Van der Ross' narrative is often inadequately evidenced and sometimes sources are not referenced at all.²⁷ Some scholars accuse van der Ross of bias as he was involved with Coloured politics from the 1940's onwards. Building upon Trapido and van der Ross' early contributions, Gavin Lewis produced the influential *Between the Wire and the Wall: A history of South African 'Coloured' politics*, a cornerstone of coloured political history. A brief inchoate of interest in coloured identity and politics developed after apartheid.²⁸ Unfortunately, this soon fizzled.

Abdullah was celebrated for a while, in his time, then criticised towards the end of his life as the next generation of political activists radicalised and embraced new ideologies of Blackness and nationalism emerging out of the Atlantic World. Writers working out of this tradition began to characterise Abdullah as a cautionary tale of liberalism's limits and failures, especially with its promises of non-racialism. In this vein, Abdullah was painted either as too naïve, or less sympathetically, as a white adjunct and assimilationist. 'Abdurahman', one labour historian wrote, 'saw the process more clearly and gained a deeper insight into the structure of white power. Yet ... he maintained his trust in white patronage long after the futility of such an attitude had been revealed'.²⁹ A public froideur with his daughter, a member of the newly radicalised generation, damaged his image. His daughter's friend later wrote, 'Dr. Abdurahman, though still pre-eminent in the Coloured community, had discredited himself and his party by clinging to

²⁵ Ajam, 'Raison d'être' and P. van der Spuy, "'Not only 'the younger daughter of Dr. Abdurahman': A feminist exploration of early influences on the political development of Cissie Gool'. PhD Dissertation, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 2002

²⁶ The term "coloured" is a long contested term. It is a socially and historically constructed category built on a series of narratives and mythologies. There are four main strands of input into the group (1) there is the Cape Malay narrative of Indonesian Dutch East India Company slaves, but individuals have origins not just in the Indonesian Islands, but also India, Africa, Madagascar, and even Japan. (2) Another strand is the 'brown Afrikaner' narrative that sees coloured people and Afrikaners as a single ethnic group, differentiated by class-cum-colour through social machinations; or pejoratively as 'mixed-race' Afrikaners. (3) Yet another had been the attempt to reconstruct coloured identity as Blackness (see fn. 116), only distinguished from other African groups through false consciousness. The Blackness narrative had sparked the imagination of many elites and other activists during the apartheid era, but never really precipitated to the general populace. (4) The last is the new reclamations of Khoisan identity in an attempt to recondition colouredness as indigene. There is a black component that has generally been ignored and is in need of further study. Wider usage of the "coloured" label apart from the Cape populations have generally reflected the notion of mixed-race as constituting its own racial category. Another debate has been to capitalise or not capitalise the term. Outside of capitalisation in quoted source materials, the term is not capitalised in this thesis, nor is it problematised through inverted quotes, unless specifically invoking the contested nature of the category. The use of inverted quotes would litter the thesis and become bothersome.

²⁷ See, for example, fn. 6.

²⁸ See, for example W. James, D. Caliguire, and K. Cullinan, *Now that we are free: Coloured Communities in a Democratic South Africa*, South Africa: Idasa, 1996 and Z. Erasmus, *Coloured by History, Shaped by Place: New Perspectives on Coloured Identities in Cape Town*, Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2001; and a quantitative study from B. Pickel, *Coloured Ethnicity and Identity: A Case Study in the Former Coloured Areas in the Western Cape/South Africa*, Cape Town: Lit, 1997), and M. Adhikari, *Not white enough, not black enough: Racial identity in the South African coloured community* (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 2005 and *Burdened by race: Coloured identities in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: Juta and Company Ltd, 2009).

²⁹ Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*, 117.

the white³⁰ liberals ... The younger generation disputed his authority and made a bid for leadership on their own account. Members of his own family led the revolt'.³¹ An associate of Abdullah's remarked, '[Abdullah's daughter] was occupying Socialist platforms publicly denouncing her father (the Doctor) and accusing him of having betrayed his people'.³² This elite censure of Abdullah never trickled-down to the streets. Coloured communities proved their loyalty not by public speech or pronouncements, but by faithfully returning him to office election after election.³³ And yet, Abdullah left few personal traces. No diaries or journals exist, and few personal letters either from, or to, Abdullah survive. His manuscript collections are half-occupied by news clippings, and the remainder half-occupied again by his daughter's papers. Private items in the archives are scarce, and few individuals living today personally remember him. In recent years, this simultaneous availability of primary ephemera, but an absence of personal items have made Abdullah a near-perfect palimpsest.³⁴ Richard van der Ross and Mohamed Adhikari remain two of the few who have produced a more nuanced Abdullah into historiography.

This project is foremost a (partial) biography of Abdullah Abdurahman and his private and family life, limited in scope by the nature of a thesis. As a family history, it takes seriously, and by necessity, dwells on what is missing, why it is missing, and what its erasure and invisibility reveals. Indeed, the story of Abdullah's life is not only told through an easy cluster of named records and small sets of manuscript collections, but through an ever expanding series of concentric spaces – and archives – within which a single life was lived. This thesis dramatises the disjunction of the archive; the fragmentary anachronism mirrors the fragmentary nature of family histories, where discoveries are often made obliquely, through following breadcrumbs and residues left behind in seemingly unrelated archives and histories. To trace Abdullah's life, research for this thesis began with named-manuscript collections in university libraries in Chicago, London, and Cape Town. Materials in these archives were then enriched through archival fragments in Canada, Scotland, England, and even New England and Turkey. Abdullah's life, and the records that hold the precious details granting greater understanding about that life, lives in an international constellation of libraries, churches, universities, and state repositories. The lens on Abdullah's story must retract to reveal the intertwined and intersecting flows of local, national, and international histories within which he operated to understand Abdullah and his family's significance to global struggles for legal equality, social dignity and political acknowledgement.

³⁰ The use of "white" in this thesis is lower-cased in accordance with "coloured" and with the standard generally used in scholarly literature. However, it is noted that due its contemporary usage, an argument could be made for its capitalisation much in the same manner as "Black" to denote a political and social construction of "Whiteness" as a relatively new phenomenon that conflates a multitude of cultural, historical, and social imbrications into a singularity. For notes on other terms, see fn. 26 on 'coloured', fn. 58 on 'Cape Malay', fn. 116 on 'non-white'/'Black'.

³¹ Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*, 486.

³² Raynard, *Dr. Abdurahman*, 34

³³ Even Simons and Simons (*Class and Colour*), his critics, conceded that 'Abdurahman himself built a first-rate electoral machine, which kept him in the Cape Town municipal council from 1903 until his death in 1940'. But this statement was written as another criticism that because Abdullah earned and held the affection and votes of coloureds, 'He did not need the white worker's vote and, when obliged to choose between white candidates, preferred men of wealth or standing'. (Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*, 139-140).

³⁴ Some painted an image of Abdullah as an "Uncle Tom" (pg. 98); or benefactor: M. Ajam, 'Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman – Benefactor of the Bo-Kaap', *Kronos* 17 (1990): 48-58; a minority leader: G. G. de Salve, 'Uma história de traição: um projeto assimilacionista coloured na Cidade do Cabo, 1906-1910', (MA Thesis, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 2012); a popular hero: J. H. Raynard's articles and accounts in *Dr. Abdurahman*; a chauvinist *contra* his wife and daughters: van der Spuy, 'Not only "the younger daughter"'; a progressive Muslim (Ajam, 'Raison d'être'.) and others.

The pages that follow also stand as an attempt to explore the potential and limitations in writing a personal biography of Abdullah Abdurahman, and to unveil the ways marginalised subjects in the first half of the twentieth century in Cape Town had to navigate a multiplicity of identities. Through this, it hopes to peel Abdullah off the page and allow him to step into the round. Abdullah's family and politicisation is contextualised not only within the emergence of “coloured” politics, but within the context of changing Cape Islam, to reveal the continuity between the rising incorporation of Cape Muslims after Emancipation into formal Cape institutions and the emergence of “secular” coloured politics. Family histories unfasten conventional historiography through which the oft-repeated tenets of coloured political history and critical assumptions about minority identities are challenged. It resists conventional limitations to explore the dynamics of the early twentieth-century politics and considerations of women rather than men, “tradition” rather than “modernity”, and the role of emotion in politics. Ann Rigney, while critiquing Thomas Carlyle's works as ‘historiography in a negative key’,³⁵ nonetheless cautions historians against shrinking individuals to meta-history, social and political forces, and preconceived narratives. The processes of thematic history-writing have an essential tendency to set up opposing paradigms, imposing polarisations and divisions which may not have been as distinctive as it seems. Carlyle's “innumerable” biographies still bears fruit. Relieved of its position as mere adjunct to meta-history, biography can at last stand forward on its own legs. It can finally come into its own through its ability to show us the actual lived experience of the times – invariably “leaky”,³⁶ complicated, messy, and rarely a matter of easy ideology or definition.

Biography offers a narrative thread that highlights the imbrications between ontology and orientation, self and society and how the concept of personhood scaffolds notions of citizenship. It allows for the recovery of subjects as actors and enables a more subtle understanding of identities without collapsing into essentialisms ‘unfolding from beginning to end through all the vicissitudes of history without change’.³⁷ Through the re-incorporation of agency and discursive activity, the “basic stuff of everyday life” becomes the source of social and political processes.³⁸ The face-to-face interactions between Abdullah and his teachers, himself and his wife, his children and his friends are seen here to have more impact on intensifying or shifting political views and platforms. Altogether, a biographical or life history approach allows for a reconsideration of what makes an individual significant or extraordinary to South African history. But biography also presents challenges to both method and subject, archives and source materials. In the 1990's, a revived interest in the biographical approach permeated sociology as a response to increased interest in “lives”. Much of this interest was sparked by developments in anthropology, literary theory, cultural studies, and increased attention towards women’s and minority studies. In *The Auto/*

³⁵ A. Rigney, 'The untenanted places of the past: Thomas Carlyle and the varieties of historical ignorance'. *History and Theory* (1996): 338-357.

³⁶ The use of the term “leaky” here is taking from Gilles Deleuze’s cartographic perspective on subjectivity and personhood as an infinitely replicating field of becoming. Through this ‘becoming’, people inhabit immanent fields that are ambiguous and amorphous and in a constant process or reinventing its array data structure, leaking out on all sides. The leakiness is mediated by “viscosity”, which is determined by power and knowledge, but also impacted by rhetorical claims, and base human desires and emotions. For further reading, see T. May, *Gilles Deleuze: an introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Also see D. Smith and J. Protevi, 'Gilles Deleuze', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2015 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta. plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2015/entries/deleuze/

³⁷ S. Hall, 'Introduction' in *Questions of cultural identity* vol. 126. ed. S. Hall, and P. Du Gay. (London: Sage, 1996), 3.

³⁸ See, for example Rosalind O’Hanlon, 'Recovering the Subject: Subaltern Studies and Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia', *Modern Asian Studies*, 22 no. 1 (1988), 189-224. For the daily processes of social and political life, see: Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959).

Biography I: The Theory and Practise of Feminist Auto-Biography, sociologist Liz Stanley defines the term as a re-orientation of the autobiographical "subject" in which the tension between the writing (or speaking) and the reading (hearing) of lives is problematised.³⁹ This is done to highlight "selves" and subjectivities as co-constructed by both the individual and society, particularly in compulsory, state education.⁴⁰ She and other scholars extend this theoretical framework to foreground the ways power structures and by proxy, researchers, can silence or dismiss their "subjects". This refreshed concern with reflexivity and positionality is intensified in the social sciences where the researcher often works with live human subjects in interviews. Even when one works exclusively with archives, the concern remains salient.

In his doctoral dissertation, Ciraj Rassool used the theoretical lens of 'auto/biography' to challenge the genre's historical value and urged re-examination of how biography is produced. Rassool reminds us that all texts, images, recordings, archives are formed through a social process or "social moments" in which society mediates the individual, revealing even as it obscures. He argues there is no authentic person behind the text, and that the history of a life cannot be used as a window into history. Rassool suggests biography is little more than 'documentary history methods of archival sequencing and chronological narration'.⁴¹ Jonathan Hyslop quipped in the *South African Review of Sociology* that Rassool's work 'might be entitled "Why South Africanists Write Bad Biographies and Why They Should Not Write Biography At All"'.⁴² Hyslop defends biography against Rassool's criticisms, which he summarized as a 'desire to collapse the distinction between history and heritage [to imply] that we cannot say anything about the events of the past, only about what people have said about them'.⁴³ While both authors are in agreement that South African biography is primarily "obsessed" with "great men," Hyslop declares he 'part[s] company with Rassool ... in his attribution of these problems to the nature of biography itself ... [which Rassool wrongly claims] originates in the work of the American scholars Gwendolen Carter and Tom Karis' on South African figures in the struggle for democracy.⁴⁴ Rassool's dependence upon a single archive is a critical flaw. Hyslop rightly challenges this claim by pointing to a wealth of South African biographies influenced by neither Carter or Karis, including Brian Willan's excellent biography on Sol Plaatje.⁴⁵ This thesis takes cues from both Rassool and Hyslop's remarks. The methodological problem Rassool presents of the intellectual as interlocutor with its dangers of hegemonic reconstruction when

³⁹ *Auto/Biography*. (This is the journal of the Auto/Biography Study Group, a unit of the British Sociological Association. Their work appeared in *Sociology*, 'Special Issue: "Biography and Autobiography in Sociology" 27 No. 1 (February 1993).

⁴⁰ See, for example: M. Erben, ed, *Biography and Education: A Reader* (London: Falmer Press, 1998).

⁴¹ It is curious to note that Rassool never cites or references Liz Stanley, the sociologist who coined the term 'auto/biography' that sits at the center of his dissertation. This particular citation (313) is his remark on Allison Drew and Baruch Hirson's political biography of I. B. Tabata, which he explores as a case study to argue his theoretical criticisms of biography as a genre. See: C. S. Rassool, 'The Individual, Auto/biography and History in South Africa', PhD Dissertation, University of the Western Cape, 2004, especially 27-28, 48-50, 116-119.

⁴² J. Hyslop, 'On Biography: A Response to Ciraj Rassool', *South African Review of Sociology*, 41:2 (2010): 104.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 108.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 104-5, 110-111.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 110. B. Willan, *Sol Plaatje: A Biography* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1984). Also, see the Carter-Karis Collection, Northwestern University, Melville J. Herskovits Library of Africana Studies; S. G. Wynne, *South African political materials : a catalogue of the Carter-Karis collection* (Bloomington, Indiana: Southern African Research Archives Project, 1977). Microfilm of the collection is made available through the Cooperative Africana Microform Project. The related Karis-Gerhart Collection is housed at the Cullen Library at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

analysing or collecting oral evidence from marginalised populations is just a hop, skip, and jump away from Mark Sanders' framework of 'complicity' in *Complicities* (2002). As noted earlier, Abdullah's simultaneous presence and absence of manuscript materials has made him a palimpsest for authors with their own political ideologies who have written to recover racial, religious or gender histories, neo-Marxist scholars writing against British liberalism, or liberal authors writing in support of non-racialism. This thesis acknowledges these criticisms inherent in the biographical method. Without overemphasising Rigney's "negative keys", this thesis hopes to provide an alternative approach to the writing of life. It underscores the idiosyncrasies of the themes and archives, but it also pays homage to the idiosyncrasies of a person, and to make space for what has been erased and to question the forces and causes behind its erasure. Methodologically, it sets aside a "sequencing of documents" to create a "chronological list" of the "extraordinary" to emphasise the ordinary, the daily and the intimate history of Abdullah Abdurahman by orienting itself around 'biographical relations' as the map for space and place, and as 'pathways for the movement of ideas and goods between communities'.⁴⁶ The field of view expands to include his parents and grandparents as well as his children to reveal the adaptability of marginalised families. In Abdullah's case, his politics are examined through the influences of his identities and loyalties and how these worked in terms of generational changes, education, middle-class coloured social life, and civil and political societies in Cape Town.

This thesis suggests individuals may also be significant or extraordinary for his or her *being*; how their ethos were shaped by the in-between spaces of structure and agency, being and becoming. It deviates from the common structure of political biographies and takes its cues from works like the aforementioned *Sol Plaatje: A Biography* (1984) by Willan, it also considers Shaun Viljoen's *Richard Rive: A Partial Biography* (2013) and Charles van Onselen's *The Seed is Mind: The Life of Kas Maine, A South African Sharecropper 1894-1985* (1996). Taking from Viljoen, this thesis takes an interest in a portrait of Abdullah and his emotional and moral development. Through van Onselen's example, this biography hopes to reconstruct the life of a man who deserves to be remembered for more than the APO and his failed attempts against rising Cape segregation. However, as Rassool cautioned, this thesis does not fashion the Abdurahman family to stand, as Maine was, 'for the collective social and economic experience of [coloured, urban, or Capetonian] society in twentieth century South Africa' nor to impose clichés of "resistance" or "assimilation" upon the Abdurahman family's 'hidden past.'⁴⁷ Despite its due criticisms from Rassool, Gary Minkley, Brian Worsfold and many others for silencing Kas Maine's voice and reinforcing eurocentrism and the white gaze, it remains seminal as a literary biography that attenuates itself to the *who*, the emotion and mood of the biographical subject where many other biographies focus first on the *what*; what has the figure achieved, how these achievements made him extraordinary and hence, significant.⁴⁸ Instead, it is Kas Maine's ordinariness that serves as a lens not just to the times he and his

⁴⁶ S. Küchler, 'Relational Maps in the Cook Islands Transnational Communities' in *Transnational Memory: Circulation, Articulation, Scales*, ed. C. De Cesari and A Rigney, 100-122 (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter 2014).

⁴⁷ C. Rassool, 'Power, knowledge and the politics of public pasts' (*African Studies* 69, no. 1 2010): 4-5.

⁴⁸ L. Witz, G. Minkley and C. Rassool, 'Who Speaks for South African Pasts?' (Paper presented at the Biennial Conference of the South African Historical Society: "Not Telling: Secrecy, Lies and History", UWC, 11-14 July 1999); and B Worsfold, 'Eurocentrism in Hybridity: A Critique of Charles van Onselen's "The Seed is Mind: The Life of Kas Maine, A South African Sharecropper 1894-1985"' (*Journal of English Studies* II 2000), 171-181.

family lived in, but to derive a sense of black sharecropper lives. Identity, like Kas' masculinity, is explored more in terms of *being* versus a political and social orientation. This thesis aims similarly to treat Abdullah's identity in ways that are more emotional and psychological than the socio-political approaches of instrumentalism that has dominated much of recent scholarship.

In the case of Abdullah, this thesis highlights a particularly neglected area of historiography. Other than the schools and faculties of Education and Psychology, childhood studies is an area of scholarship that only began to develop after the early 1990's. In 1982, Richard Vann of Wesleyan University called the history of childhood 'an almost virgin field'.⁴⁹ In 1993, Penelope Hetherington wrote that only one book on childhood in South Africa existed.⁵⁰ Although some disciplines, like anthropology, has long studied children as a portion of their ethnographic fieldwork, childhood, as a unique and socially constructed phase of life, has rarely been interrogated. Through the reconsideration of childhood, scholars have had to re-conceptualise children as active social actors who impact, influence, and construct their own life experiences. Childhood studies have been enriched through a growing interest in women's studies in South Africa, but *histories* of South African childhood remained rare. Much of this is tied to the emphasis in African historiography on political and economic history, areas where children have generally been absent. Part of the challenge lies in the archives and available source material. Children, not unlike other marginalised people in society, leave few records. Nevertheless, studies are beginning to materialise. In 2000, Clive Glaser published *Bo-Tsotsi: The Youth Gangs of Soweto, 1935-1976* and in 2015, Palgrave boasted of their new publication, *Changing Childhoods in the Cape Colony*, as 'the first book to trace the history of childhood and youth in nineteenth-century South Africa'.⁵¹ Other emerging research can be found in *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, which began publication in 2008. As of Spring 2016, the journal has published four articles on childhood in South Africa.⁵²

Scholars wrote Abdullah's life similarly to the biographies of other political figures. Abdullah is treated as if he emerged Aphrodite, fully grown, just to step into public life. The profound importance of childhood: the effects of early political socialisation through family and affinity group connections, psychological and moral development, and early experiences with the external world are rarely incorporated in examinations of political figures and their ideologies. Second, especially in political histories of men, the influences of family life – wives and children, are infrequently considered. Looking more closely at the political partnership and complementary tactics between Abdullah and his first wife allows this thesis to unravel some of these assumptions. Third, most writings on Abdullah reflected a positivist, empirical narrative. The emotional resonances that drive politics are often reduced to instrumentation or strategy; the narrative

⁴⁹ R. T. Vann, 'The Youth of *Centuries of Childhood*', *History and Theory* 21, no. 2 (1982): 287.

⁵⁰ P. Hetherington, 'Women in South Africa: the historiography in English'. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 26, no. 2 (1993): 266. Hetherington was referring to Sandra Burman and Pamela Reynolds' edited volume, *Growing Up in a Divided Society*, published in 1986.

⁵¹ S. E. Duff, *Changing Childhoods in the Cape Colony Dutch Reformed Church Evangelicalism and Colonial Childhood, 1860 – 1895* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), back cover.

⁵² P. Reynolds, 'On Leaving the Young Out of History', *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1 No. 1 (2008): 150-156; J. Muirhead and S. Swart, 'The Whites of the Child?: Race and Class in the Politics of Child Welfare in Cape Town, c. 1900-1924', *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 8 No. 2 (2015): 229-253; S. E. Duff, "'Capture the Children': Writing Children into the South African War, 1899-1902", *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 7 No. 3 (2014): 355-376; A. Good, 'Childbirth and Infancy in the Formation of a New Society at the Cape of Good Hope in the Early Eighteenth Century: The Evidence from Peter Kolb', *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 6 No. 1 (2013): 15-49.

shrunk to an annotated bullet-point list of occurrences. Often these examinations occur on a thematic level that aligns with social identities or meta-political motifs and overlooks contradictions, such as Abdullah's multiple loyalties: to his family, his faith, his race, his class, Cape Town, South Africa, but also to Great Britain. This thesis is curious to explore those contradictions, and Abdullah's deeper philosophies on nationalism, politics, and questions about what it means to be a citizen.

Thesis Format

This thesis is divided into three main parts. The first two parts contain two chapters, and the last part contains one chapter. The first two chapters discuss "becoming" Abdullah. It probes Abdullah's education, family, and life before a life in the public eye. The historical events and circumstances that swirl around young Abdullah are examined through his moral development and political socialisation. It probes the ways Abdullah might have come to be the Abdullah known in the news clippings and his fiery speeches and public appearances. Part two explores his relationship with his first wife Helen "Nellie" Potter (née James) and the political activity at Albert Lodge to introduce a new way of seeing how the lines were blurred between private and public, men and women's political movements. Pulling Abdullah's childhood forward, it examines "character" as the ideological chassis through which Abdullah understood the constitution of personhood and its relationship to gender, children, and family, and by extension, the community and society. This turns the idea of "becoming" on its head and shows how Abdullah influenced the political and moral development, the 'becoming' of his children's politics, and more broadly as a public figure, the next generation of political activists. In the last part, Abdullah's political ideologies and philosophies are explored through the duelling debates around identity that arose when he headed the Indian deputation in the mid-1920's. This and the granting of suffrage in 1930 for white women set the backdrop on how these developments influenced Abdullah's emerging thoughts at the end of his life on what it means to be a South African national *contra* a South African citizen. Over the thesis, there is a focus on ways of being and becoming, conceptualisations of personhood, and how these paradigms complicate and scaffold ideas of nationalism, democracy and citizenship.

The first chapter discusses Abdullah's early childhood, education, and his parents' marriage and their background to show the context within which he was born and his earliest experiences with the world outside his family. The second chapter looks to his college years and beyond, before his return to Cape Town, first in 1894/5 and again in 1902. There is some discussion of his medical career and his election to the City Council and taking on the Presidency of the APO. The third chapter focuses on Nellie and her relationship with Abdullah as an influential and powerful couple of the time, with some rumination on the position of gender in the APO's race-centric political platforms, and the interplay between coloured franchise and women's suffrage. This opens the door for an exploration on how clichéd frameworks of British liberal "respectability" may have greater nuances through Abdullah's notion of "moral character". The fourth chapter discusses Abdullah and Nellie's daughters, Zainunnissa "Cissie" and Waradea "Rosie", then briefly discusses his second marriage and the children issuing from that union. It addresses the sea change in South African politics through his relationship with Cissie. The last chapter begins exploring Abdullah's public identity through the controversy surrounding his leadership of a deputation to India to seek assistance against South Africa's anti-Asiatic legislation. As some scholars have suggested his interest

in Indian affairs arose out of his second marriage to a woman who was presumed to a Muslim Indian woman,⁵³ this thesis then addresses the contradictions in the source material regarding his second wife's identity. These disparate strands are then pulled together to discuss how the enfranchisement of white women was perceived by Abdullah to share dangerous parallels with "Hitlerism" in Europe – both were formed around increasing political ideologies towards nationalism. It then turns to his last, and tragically, unfinished project: a residential and educational campus of some kind at the edges of the Bo-Kaap. These developments at home and abroad informed perhaps the most philosophical writing on the nature of democracy that Abdullah left behind at the twilight of his life. A coda ruminates on the themes of this thesis and looks forward, towards the ways Abdullah's political philosophies are still highly relevant to issues today surrounding the nature and limits of citizenship, nationalism, and democracy.

Sources Used

This thesis took as its entry point the four named manuscript collections existing at Northwestern University, the University of Cape Town, and a slight two-item collection at the University of London. Across all collections, when considering item type, news clippings dominate at more than half of all materials. At the University of Cape Town, the Abdurahman Papers are bifurcated into two original holdings.⁵⁴ One, the E. L. Maurice Collection is three reels of 16 mm microfilm, comprised almost entirely of news clippings with a few other items covering the years 1904-1936. It is devoted to the APO (with a small cluster around Indian politics) and has been extensively covered in thematic volumes written on coloured politics and history.⁵⁵ The other is the Waradea Abdurahman Collection,⁵⁶ also dominated by roughly two-thirds of news clippings of Abdullah's political and public life. Of the remainder of original documents and items, nearly all are materials associated with her sister, Cissie. There are 16 letters to Nellie, along with a handful of items related to her, but there are no items belonging to Abdullah. The last set of materials at the University of Cape Town is a series of five 35 mm microfilm reels. These reels contain a facsimile of manuscript holdings at Northwestern University. There, the Abdurahman Family Papers consist of seven boxes. Only a little over two boxes relate to Abdullah and Nellie.⁵⁷ Of the holdings at the University of London, there are two items. One is a 1937 article of unknown origin with notes; the other is a page and a half of notes on the family by Abdullah's grandson. Across all the collections, most of the materials for Abdullah and Nellie are news clippings. The remaining items are primarily copies of contemporary published items and drafts of public documents. It soon became evident that while one could undertake an analysis of the media portrayal and public perception of Abdullah's image, there is not much

⁵³ Most notably, R. E. van der Ross, in 'Political and Social History of the Cape Coloured People, 1880 to 1970'. Unpublished manuscript, Cape Town: University of Cape Town 1974.

⁵⁴ The third collection held by the University of Cape Town is a facsimile on microfilm of the Northwestern University's collection.

⁵⁵ For example, G. Lewis' *Between the Wire and Wall* is one example. Another is more or less the scholarly oeuvre of R. E. van der Ross. The materials on Indian politics in the 1920's are almost entirely news clippings. As such, these materials have generally been accessed through different means for scholars writing on Indian affairs of this time.

⁵⁶ UCT MA: BC 506 Abdurahman Papers: Folio A1 contains two dozen items related to Nellie. Ffolios A2-6 relate to Nellie, B1-4 are loose news clippings and copies of published or public materials, B5 is composed of four volumes of news clippings covering 1882, 1907, 1909, and 1911. Items C1-2 are two photograph albums.

⁵⁷ Northwestern University, Melville J. Herskovits Library of Africana Studies, 001 Abdurahman Family Papers (hereafter NWU/AFP) and UCT MA: BCZA 83/30-34. Two boxes are news clippings and the remainder is devoted to Cissie. Most of the items relating to Abdullah are official materials. Two items take up nearly half of one box: a copy of court proceedings – Abdullah had served as a witness and draft copies of a commissioned report, of which Abdullah was a member, on the status of the coloured people. Only about 5 folders of 26 are remotely private, unpublished, or items of a personal nature.

in these collections of Abdullah as a private individual or of his relationships with his family. Other than a few incidents of local controversy that created mildly more press coverage, the details of Abdullah's local politics also often escaped "clipping" in favour of bigger, national stories. His religious identity was rarely mentioned regarding his politics. In all his public addresses, religion only appears through Christian allegories and imagery. The Cape Malay⁵⁸ Association loudly disowned him from any association with themselves in 1925 when he took up the Indian cause. Yet through an enticing smattering of references, there was a consensus that central to Abdullah were the two pillars of family and Islam.⁵⁹

For the first part of this thesis, piecing together Abdullah's childhood had to look further afield than these above-named collections. Unusual repositories came to the fore, none more unexpected than the Mount Holyoke College Archives in Massachusetts and the University of California at Los Angeles' Charles E. Young Research Library Archives. Contemporary accounts through letters, journals, and memoirs of tourists also provided colour and details. Due to the limitations of material in the archive on his childhood, some informed speculation was necessary as to his early education and childhood. The Cape Archives Depot in Cape Town offered helpful clues as did a few items in the Ottoman State Archives. In the second chapter, archives in the United Kingdom come centre stage – censuses, passenger lists, newspapers, and records with the University of Glasgow's Archival Service. Due to the transnational and multilingual nature of the archives consulted, many variations in spelling across global "Englishes" arise. In faithfulness to the source materials, the original spellings are retained in citations but notations of [sic] are generally elided in service of readability. A similar treatment, as noted in footnote 4, is applied to spelling variations in names occur in the original. Where necessary, footnotes will provide greater detail. In the second part of this thesis, the *APO* serves as the primary source for probing family life at Albert Lodge. The *APO* was the official publication of the African Political Organisation. As the editor of the newspaper and the President of the APO, Abdullah dominated both completely, 'so much so that people often joked that APO stood for Abdurahman's Political Organisation, and that the name of its newspaper ... stood for Abdurahman's Political Opinion'.⁶⁰ Through the *APO*, Abdullah showcased his wife and daughters as the model for the ideal family. Therefore, this thesis brings attention to coverage in the *APO* generally on the themes of childhood, parents and family, and particular attention to details the Abdurahmans' family life and their relationships to one another. Along with the *APO*, a few extant personal letters and documents round out this portrait. The Abdurahman family at this point also begins to enter the scholarship and form

⁵⁸ The "Malay" or "Cape Malay" as noted in n. 20 is now considered a substrate of the larger "coloured" category but in the past, had alternately been considered its own distinct category and organised under the 'Asian/Asiatic' category. Historically, it is composed of the people who trace some aspect of their lineage to slaves (predominantly) brought over from the Indonesian archipelago. Because of the conflation and frequent use of "Cape Malay" as interchangeable with Muslim, when a later stream of Muslim Indian immigrants came to the Cape, they were often mis-categorised as "Malay". For further reading, see Y. Da Costa, 'Muslims in Greater Cape Town: A problem of identity', *British journal of sociology* (1994): 235-246. In this thesis, when I use the term "Malay" or "Cape Malay", (again, other than in citations), I use the term ethnically to refer to the slave-descended, Muslim peoples of the Cape. When I use "Muslim", I am using the term inclusively to indicate the whole Muslim community at the Cape, composed of both Indian and Malay. It is important to note, as we see later in this thesis, that there has at various points in time, tension with the Cape Muslim community between the Indian and Malay populations.

⁵⁹ It is often spoken that Abdullah's motivations were embedded in his concerns for his children and his family, but significantly less about his faith. Contemporary accounts, however, from those such as Dorothea Fairbridge and Mohandas Gandhi discuss Abdullah's faith. Posthumously, Abdullah's acquaintance, erstwhile clerk, sometime-ally and sometime-opponent John H. Raynard also emphasise that Abdullah's political philosophies largely originate from his faith. Later recollections from residents of District Six as a part of the University of Cape Town's Western Cape Oral History Project and a series of interviews undertaken by Gainroonisa Paleker for her thesis held at the University of Cape Town's Centre for Popular Memory also confirm Abdullah's ongoing devotion to Islam.

⁶⁰ M. Adhikari's introduction in Raynard, *Dr. Abdurahman*, 10.

relationship with other prominent figures in Cape Town history. I dip into the collections of other people known to have been in Abdullah's social and political constellations. Papers and manuscripts of South African figures such as Mohandas Gandhi, John Xavier Merriman, Betty Molteno, Olive Schreiner, William Philip Schreiner, and others contained traces of Abdullah's friendship.



In the early hours on the morning of 20 February 1940, Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman, the long-time City Councillor of Cape Town representing Ward (District) Six, passed away. He was 67-years-old. As a Muslim, Abdullah needed to be buried before sundown. Hours before the funeral procession began, mourners already lined the streets outside Oak Lodge, his Kloof Street home. By the time his bier was led out, thousands had gathered in the streets along the route between his home and the cemetery in Mowbray where he was to be buried. First emerged a relay of red-fezzed pallbearers, many from the Muslim Lads' Brigade. Abdullah's male relatives and close friends followed, then a motorcade of female friends and family. The procession stopped to hold service at Abdurahman's mosque in Long Street. By this time, foot traffic had slowed to a crawl. When the cortège finally reached Darling Street, it paused so that the full City Council and a 20-firemen escort could join the retinue as honour guard. The crowd was so dense, 'the Mayor and councillors had great difficulty in joining the procession after waiting in their cars for nearly half an hour'.⁶¹ The 100-car motorcade and the funerary procession was so long that, two hours later, when the head of it reached the cemetery, the tail-end was still slouching through Woodstock. Traffic in greater Cape Town was to come to a standstill for several hours that day – the main road to the northern suburbs was completely blocked. 'No fewer than 17 empty trackless trams were seen standing in line near Toll Gate, all having abandoned the attempts to reach their [southbound] destination in Wynberg'.⁶² Many at the time believed Abdullah's funeral to be a testament to the cosmopolitanism and diversity of Cape Town, as more than 30,000 Capetonians of every colour, class and religion all turned out to pay their respects. Given the scale of Abdullah's funerary parade, it is unquestionable that he was a respected and significant figure in Cape Town, well-loved by the people. Abdullah was certainly Old Abdol's grandson. Just as Abdol always welcomed his friend Lucie with succour and a cup of tea, Abdullah seems to have done the same. After Abdurahman's passing, an acquaintance of the family recalled, 'Dr. Abdurahman in his greatness was so simple. He loved his home dearly. His friends were always welcomed with open arms and were never allowed to leave without a long talk and tea and departed with sound words of advice'.⁶³

⁶¹ *Cape Times* 21 February 1940.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Cape Standard* 27 February 1940.

PART I
Chapter One
A MUSLIM BOY IN SUNDAY SCHOOL
The Early Education & Childhood of Abdullah

Abdullah Abdurahman⁶⁴ was born on 18 December 1872⁶⁵ in the *Verlatekloof* area of Wellington in the Cape wine-lands.⁶⁶ Nestled at the foot of the Groenberg Mountains north of Paarl and west of Bain's Kloof Pass, the first Europeans to settle there were the French Huguenots, who named the area Val Du Charron or Wagenmakersvallei (Wagonmakers' Valley). The name was changed in 1840 to Wellington in commemoration of Napoleon's defeat by the Duke of Wellington at Waterloo.⁶⁷ A railway line between Cape Town and Wellington opened in 1863, bringing an influx of coloured residents to the area, many of them middle-class and franchise-qualified.⁶⁸ Abdullah's parents, Abdul and Khadijah (née Dollie), were among them. The writing of Abdullah's story typically begins in 1904, the year of his first public speech in the aftermath of the Treaty of Vereeniging, his election to City Council, and his subsequent ascendancy to the African Political Organisation (APO)'s presidency as the starting point.⁶⁹ In 1904, Abdullah was already 32-years-old, yet the whole of his life before this moment, and of his family history, if mentioned, is shrunk to a few token lines or a page or two. No child becomes an adult in a vacuum, and no man is an island. This chapter focuses on Abdullah's childhood, especially his early education. As with the rest of this thesis, this section aims to re-ground Abdullah's story, not just into the historiographical critiques and thematic narratives of South Africa, but into the story of an individual life and family as the origins of Abdullah becoming "The Doctor of District Six".

The Fishmonger and the Seamstress

Abdul and Khadijah married after he returned in 1866 after a decade studying abroad at Mecca and Al-Azhar University in Cairo.⁷⁰ Born around 1835,⁷¹ Abdul had left the Cape when he was about twenty-

⁶⁴ There is some variation to Abdullah's name in records and the literature. In the writings of Mohandas Gandhi in *Indian Opinion* (1903-1926), for example, his name was usually given as Abdul Rahman.

⁶⁵ There has been disagreement about Abdurahman's year of birth. Some authors give the year as 1872 (B. Nasson, 'Abdurahman, Abdullah (1872 – 1940)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. First published 2004; online edn, May 2006. dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/73214); H. J. and R. Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950* (Aylesbury, UK: Penguin, 1969), 117. Others give 1870. See R. E. van der Ross, *Say it out Loud: The APO Presidential Addresses and other major political speeches 1906-1940 of Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman* (Cape Town: Western Cape Institute for Historical Research, 1990), Foreword, 3; Northwestern University, Melville J. Herskovits Library of Africana Studies, 001 Abdurahman Family Papers (hereafter NWU/AFP): News Clippings, 1909-1943 (Box 1, Folder 2). However, Abdullah reported to the University of Glasgow when he registered that his birth date was 18 December 1872. See University of Glasgow, University Archive Services (hereafter UG/UAS), Records of the Registry (hereafter RR): *Registrar's Roll of Graduates and Dates of Birth*, vol. 2, R3/1/1: 1893. This is taken as the authoritative date in this thesis.

⁶⁶ University of London, Senate House Libraries, Institute of Commonwealth Studies: ICS2 Abdullah Abdurahman Papers (hereafter UOL/ICS2): Dr. Hendrickse's Notes, n.d., 2. Also see van der Ross, *Say it Loud*, 3: "probably" *Verlatekloof*; APO 1 Jan 1910.

⁶⁷ 'Wellington Guide', *Wellington Tourism*. Accessed 18 June 2015. wellington.co.za/info/wellington-guide.

⁶⁸ F. J. Cleophas, 'Writing and contextualising local history. A historical narrative of the Wellington Horticultural Society (Coloured)', *Yesterday and Today* 11 (2014): 25-26.

⁶⁹ See, for example, van der Ross, *Say it Loud*, 5; G. Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall: A history of South African 'Coloured' politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 29-30.

⁷⁰ On Khadijah's surname, see Abdullah Abdurahman, as cited in Duff-Gordon, *Letters from the Cape*, 54. For Abdul's studies abroad, also see Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa*, 117; Ross, *Say it Loud*, 3.

⁷¹ Based on information from Abdul's parents. Lucie wrote in 1862 that Abdul was twenty-six, making him born around 1835 (Duff-Gordon, *Letters from the Cape*, 155). However, it is reported in at least one obituary (see *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 07 April 1898) that Abdul was 68, making his year of birth c. 1830.

years-old. The Dollies seem to have been friends with Abdul's family. Khadijah's death record states her birth year as 1847.⁷² With their age gap, Abdul must have met Khadijah during a visit home from his studies, because they corresponded while he was abroad.⁷³ There, at Egypt's oldest degree-granting university, students analysed the Qur'an, along with Islamic law and jurisprudence. Students of the University from this time also studied Arabic grammar, Islamic astronomy, and classical logic and rhetoric.⁷⁴ After his return, Abdul adopted the honorific "Hadji" Abdurahman as a reflection of his elevated status as a Muslim who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca. He was known as "Hadji" for the rest of his life.⁷⁵ Abdul's granddaughters recollects that he owned and operated a fishmonger business in Wellington while Khadijah is said to have been a seamstress.⁷⁶

Abdul and Khadijah are widely reported to have had five children, but Abdullah was said to have been one of nine. Van der Ross claimed Abdul had other sons with other women (possibly other wives), of which only one, Karim, was identified. Abdullah's daughter later identified Karim and a further two paternal half-sisters.⁷⁷ A ninth child not has been identified. Of Khadijah and Abdul's children, the eldest was Hammid (b. circa 1870), who qualified as a pharmacy assistant.⁷⁸ Abdullah was the second eldest son (b. 1872), followed by third son Ismail (b. 1888), who became a doctor in Salt River, but eventually emigrated to the United Kingdom with his family in 1946.⁷⁹ The youngest, Ebrahim (b. circa 1890's), became a chemist assistant.⁸⁰ Gacilla Mohsena was the only full-sister, and may have been the eldest child.⁸¹ She later married Abu Bakr Effendi's eldest son, Ahmet Ataullah Bey. There were at least three half-siblings: Fatima (b. unknown) who married Ismail Amod Patel of the Transvaal;⁸² Rukea (b. unknown) who married

⁷² General Register Office, Southport, England: Pancras, Death Registration Index, Vol. 1B, Page 8, Line 81: Jul-Aug-Sep 1902: Khudeja Abdurahman.

⁷³ See Lucie's letters as well as Abdullah's remarks as reported by Dorothea Fairbridge in Duff-Gordon, *Letters from the Cape*, 54-55, 155.

⁷⁴ For example, S. F. Alatas, 'From Ja'mi'ah to University: Multiculturalism and Christian – Muslim Dialogue', *Current Sociology* 54, no. 1 (2006): 112 – 32.

⁷⁵ For example, Western Cape Archives and Records, Cape Archives, State Archives Depot, Cape Town (hereafter KAB)/Master's Office, Supreme Court Cape Town (hereafter MOOC) 91: Ragman, Abdol, alias Hadje Abrachman, Liquidation & Distribution Account. Hadji's funeral notice in an assortment of British newspapers also named him as Hadji Abdurahman (*Huddersfield Chronicle* 09 April 1898, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 07 April 1898, *The Daily Express* 09 April 1898). Also noted in Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa*, 117.

⁷⁶ van der Ross, *Say it Loud*, 3.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 4; The Simonses neglected to mention daughters entirely and only name Abdullah as eldest, followed by a 'second son qualified as a chemist, and the youngest as a doctor' (Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*, 117); Van der Ross concurs with five children born to Abdul and Khadijah and notes that Abdullah 'had some half-brothers, but it has only been possible to identify one, who was called Karim', (van der Ross, *Say it Loud*, 3). Historian Bill Nasson wrote that Abdullah was the 'eldest son of the nine children' (Nasson, 'Abdullah Abdurahman', dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/73214). Begum, Abdullah eldest daughter with his second wife, lists eight children in total. I found no further information on who the ninth mentioned by Nasson might be.

⁷⁸ UOL/ICS2: Dr. Hendrickse's Notes, 2.

⁷⁹ The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, Surrey, England: Board of Trade: Commercial and Statistical Department and successors (hereafter TNA/BOT/CSD): Inwards Passenger Lists, Series BT26; Piece: 1221; Item: 84

⁸⁰ UOL/ICS2: Dr. Hendrickse's Notes, 2.

⁸¹ Almost certainly, this is a poor transliteration, but it is the one in estate papers, filed after her passing, reportedly occurring in London, (KAB/MOOC 6/9/10239: Bey, Gacilla Mohsena Attaoullah. Née Abdurahman, Estate Papers, 1943). 'Gacilla' seems to be a family name for the Dollies. In KAB/The Registrar, Cape Supreme Court (hereafter CSC): 2/6/1/111/112, 2/1/1/243, Khadijah' brother and Gacilla's uncle, Mohamed Dollie, was named executor of Gazila's estate but it was petitioned that he be released from his duties and was sued for recovery of money. This may be tied to the *Hanafi* mosque. 'Gazila' was surely Mohamed and Khadijah's mother.

⁸² UOL/ICS2: Dr. Hendrickse's Notes, 2; Pretoria National Archives Repository, Pretoria: Records of the former Transvaal Province and its predecessors as well as of magistrates and local authorities (hereafter TAB): Master of the Supreme Court, Pretoria. Estates (1873-1976) (hereafter MHG): Patel, Ismail Amod, 1937 (96015). Predeceased spouse is listed as Fatima, née 'Abduruman'.

Shaykh Muhammad Salieh Hendricks;⁸³ and Karim. Rukea, sadly, passed away soon after the birth and death of their son Abdullah. The family gossip told of a 'white woman in London whom [Karim] deserted – a daughter of that union came to S. A. and married Abdul Patel, who is the son of Fatima'.⁸⁴ She was Gertrude Gadeja Rutherford Abdurahman. Born around 1900 in England, she immigrated to South Africa and married Abdullah Ismail Patel of Salt River on 31 March 1936.⁸⁵

Abdul was said by his granddaughter to have been 'the first person to teach Islamic theology'.⁸⁶ Some secondary sources buttress this claim. In a volume of socialist history written by friends of Abdullah's daughter, they wrote that Abdul 'pioneered modern education for the Muslims'.⁸⁷ The South African College's 175th commemorative publication notes Abdul 'trained for the ministry'.⁸⁸ Some sources claim Abdul ran a Muslim school.⁸⁹ Regardless, Abdul was important to religious education at the Cape. During Abdul's childhood, there were few formal educational options for *vryezwarten* or 'free Blacks'. Instruction, if any, were typically provided by imams in private homes.⁹⁰ Before 1850, there were only three mosques in the central city. Two of these also operated as *madrasahs* or informal schools. The first and largest *madrasah* was founded by Imam Abdullah Kadi Abdus Salaam, or as he is often better known, Tuan Guru⁹¹ at Dorp Street near Chiappini Street in the Bo-Kaap.⁹² In Lucie's letters, Abdul took her here to 'see a school kept by a Malay priest'.⁹³ Originally, the language of instruction was Malayu, but after 1815, after the inclusion of non-Malayu-speaking students, the language of instruction shifted to Cape Dutch or proto-

⁸³ UOL/ICS2: Dr. Hendrickse's Notes, 2. and S. Hendricks, 'Tasawwuf (Sufism): Its Role and Impact on the Culture of Cape Islam' (MA Thesis, University of South Africa, South Africa, 2005), 384. Hendricks' source is uncited. The information must be from the family - Shaykh Muhammad Salieh Hendricks was the Dr. Hendrickse's grandfather. For more information about Shaykh Muhammad Salieh Hendricks, see Y. Da Costa, 'From social cohesion to religious discord: The life and times of Shaykh Muhammad Salih Hendricks (1871-1945)' in *Pages From Cape Muslim History*, eds. Y. Da Costa and Achmat Davids (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1994).

⁸⁴ UOL/ICS2: Dr. Hendrickse's Notes, 3.

⁸⁵ Their marriage was witnessed by 'I. Abdurahman', probably her uncle Ismail. KAB/Home Affairs Western Cape Index (hereafter HAWC): Marriage records: Gertrude Gadeja Rutherford/Abdullah Ismail Patel, 1936 (1/3/9/1/85-1/3/9/1/89).

⁸⁶ UOL/ICS2: Dr. Hendrickse's Notes, 3.

⁸⁷ Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*, 117.

⁸⁸ N. Veitch, *SACS 175: a celebration* (Cape Town: SACS 175 Book Committee 2003), 158.

⁸⁹ See J. H. Raynard, *Dr. Abdurahman: A biographical memoir*, ed. M. Adhikari (Cape Town: Friends of the National Library of South Africa in Association with the District Six Museum, 2002), 9.

⁹⁰ By 1832, the Cape Almanac lists 12 such 'schools' in operation. Saarah Jappie calls them 'essentially a subaltern system of education'. (S. Jappie, 'From Madrasah to Museum: A Biography of the Islamic manuscripts of Cape Town', (MA dissertation, University of Cape Town, 2011), 60.

⁹¹ Brought to the Cape on 6 April 1780, Tuan Guru, a banished prince of Tidore, was incarcerated on Robben Island for 13 years. During his time on the island, Tuan Guru wrote a manuscript, *Ma'rifatul Islam wal Iman* (The Knowledge of Islam and Faith), on Islamic jurisprudence that became the principal reference for the nineteenth century Cape Muslim community. After his release, he founded both the Auwal Mosque and its associated madrasah (G. Lubbe, "Robben Island: The Early Years of Muslim Resistance," *Kronos* 12 (1987): 49-56; This manuscript was written using Ajami script.

⁹² The mosque and madrasah is typically attributed to Coridon of Ceylon, but their endurance is the result of his wife and daughter. When their daughter Saartjie van de Kaap took over ownership, she made it a condition that the property must always be used for the Muslim community towards some sort of religious use (Also see chapter 2: n. 93 and chapter 3: n.9). The Dorp Street madrasah, beginning with few students in a warehouse, boomed almost immediately. By 1795, a mosque had to be built to accommodate the demand (South African Commercial Advertiser 27 Feb 1836). According to the 1825 Imperial Blue Book, there were 492 'free black' and slave students. Demand for education was high and supply low. In this thesis, this pattern recurs again and again.

⁹³ Duff-Gordon, *Letters from the Cape*, 135, 137-8.

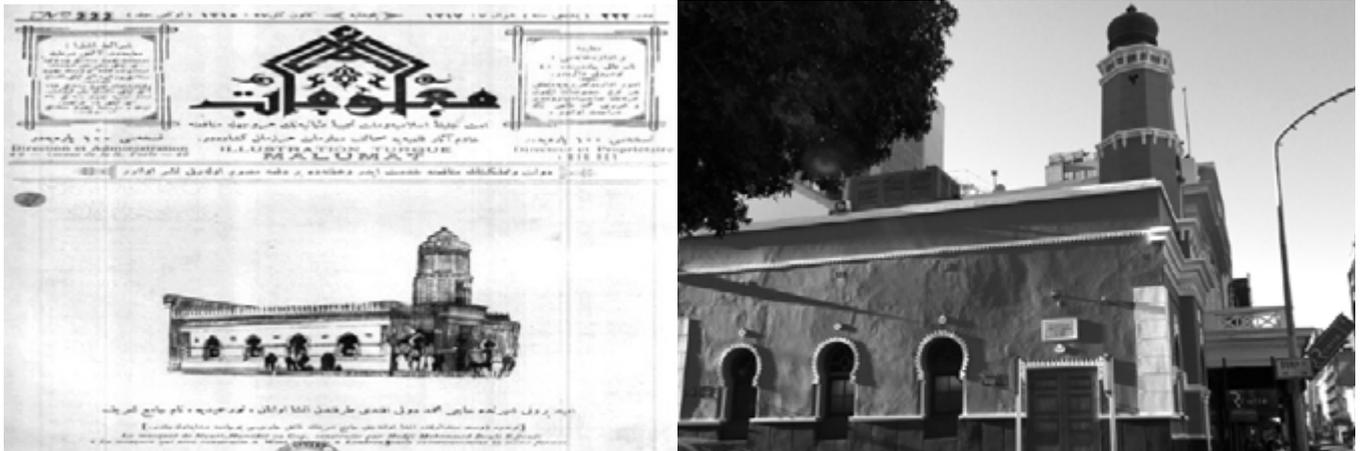


Fig. 1, Manuscript & Photograph.

HANAFI MOSQUE IN LONG STREET, EST. 1881; RECORD IN OTTOMAN ARCHIVES & TODAY

Afrikaans.⁹⁴ Typical subjects for a Muslim school were well-covered. Students were taught Arabic literacy and instructed on how to adhere to rites and rituals. Surviving notebooks show a unique Cape interpretation of doctrine was being taught, influencing the way students, like Abdul, understood their faith and its moral obligations. This exegesis seems to have dominated the curriculum; each person begins equal to all others, and it is an individual's sole responsibility to acquire goodness and piety throughout his or her life, particularly through service and care for their fellow man.⁹⁵ The difference between men was not measured by social station or wealth, but by degrees of piety.⁹⁶ This more egalitarian understanding of social stratification is significant, as is its emphasis on personhood through degrees of piety. Cape Muslims at this time were a diverse and heterogeneous group with vast internal differences and stratifications between status, privilege, education, and class. These differences could have easily fractured the group. Tuan Guru's particular philosophy of Islam allowed for slave and 'free blacks' to conjoin as a religious-cum-cultural entity without threatening the respective statuses of either group.

This understanding of Islam as it applies to the social domain no doubt infused Abdul's socialisation. In addition to his Islamic education, Family history claims Abdul was one of the founders of the 1881 *Hanafi*⁹⁷ mosque at Long and Loop Streets. Khadijah's brother and a close friend of Abdul's, 'Hadji' Mohamed Dollie was the *de facto* leader of the followers of Abu Bakr Effendi, a Turkish emissary and Islamic educator, after his death in 1880. Together, his congregation purchased the land in 1881 and

⁹⁴ A. Davids, 'Muslim-Christian relations in nineteenth century Cape Town', *Kronos: Journal of Cape History* 19 (1992): 88-89. Regarding language, see A. Davids, 'Words the Cape slaves made: A socio-historical-linguistic study'. *South African Journal of Linguistics* 8, no. 1 (1990): 1-24 and A. Davids, *The Afrikaans of the Cape Muslims from 1815 to 1915*, ed. Hein Willemsse and Suleman Essop Dangor (Cape Town: Protea Book House, 2011) and A. Davids, 'Laying the Lie of the 'Boer' Language: An Alternative View of the Genesis of Afrikaans'. *Matatu* 15, no. 1 (1996): 13-58; A. Davids, 'Abubakr Effendi: His creation of the Afrikaans letter e in Arabic script', *South African Journal of Linguistics* 1 (1991): 5.

⁹⁵ Davids, 'Muslim-Christian relations', 88-89.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁹⁷ A conversation about the role of Abu Bakr Effendi and the *Shafi/Hanafi* tensions in the Cape is out of the scope of this thesis, but for further reading, see S. Dangor, 'The Expression of Islam in South Africa', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 17, no. 1 (1997): 141-151 and S. E. Dangor, 'The establishment and consolidation of Islam in South Africa: from the Dutch colonisation of the Cape to the present', *Historia* 48, no. 1 (2003): 203-220.

erected a mosque in his honour in 1889.⁹⁸ These particular interpretations and philosophies on faith and Islam, social egalitarianism and responsibility, made an impression on young Abdullah. Growing up with erudite parents of some status within the Cape Muslim community who were deeply devoted to Islam and to Islamic education, it is a curious development that most of Abdullah's formal education was primarily at Christian, evangelising institutions: the American Congregationalist *cum* Dutch Reformed Huguenot Mission Sunday School, the French Catholic Marist Brothers' School, the South African College School,⁹⁹ and the Catholic University of Glasgow in Scotland.¹⁰⁰ The sole exception to Abdullah's Christian education was the Islamic education he received at home from his parents. Regardless, sometime after Abdul's return to the Cape and before the birth of Abdullah, Abdul and Khadijah moved to Wellington.

The Huguenot Seminary's Missionary Sunday School (c. 1877 to c. 1880)¹⁰¹

Wellington, due in part to the efforts of Reverend Andrew Murray, a South African of Scottish descent, was developing a reputation as a centre of education. As head of the town's Dutch Reformed Church, Murray was inspired after reading Edward Hitchcock's *Memoir of Mary Lyon*¹⁰² while on holiday at his 'Patmos' cottage in Kalk Bay.¹⁰³ Mary Lyon laboured reforming Christian education for American girls, founding the Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts. Turning to his wife, Murray said, 'Such a school is just what we need for our own daughters and for the daughters of our people'.¹⁰⁴ Murray wrote to the Mount Holyoke College, requesting if one teacher could be sent to South Africa to start a similar school in Wellington. Mount Holyoke replied they were sending two of their graduates.¹⁰⁵ Abbie Park Ferguson and Anna Elvira Bliss, both New Englanders and daughters of Congregationalist ministers, arrived on Saturday 15 November 1873.¹⁰⁶ With financial backing from the Dutch Reformed Church and the support and

⁹⁸ A. Davids, *The Mosques of Bo-Kaap: A Social History of Islam at the Cape* (Athlone: South African Institute of Arabic and Islamic Research, 1980), 172-3, H. Gençoğlu, 'Abu Bakr Effendi: A report on the activities and challenges of an Ottoman Muslim theologian in the Cape of Good Hope' (MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1986), 117. It seems this mosque was the first in Cape Town where a dome on the minaret was used. The well-known Turkish "pencil point" appears to have been the first choice and was used on the Shafi and Boorhanol Islam mosques. See S. Le Roux, 'The first mosque: Caledon Street, Uitenhage.' *South African Journal of Cultural History* 21, no. 1 (2009): 34-56.

⁹⁹ The South African College School was never formally a religious institution. See W. Ritchie, *The history of the South African College, 1829-1918* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1918) for details of the South African College School's founding. However, there is no doubt that the South African College School was a *de facto* Christian institution.

¹⁰⁰ The University of Glasgow was founded in 1451 by papal bull from Pope Nicholas V. See M. Moss, M. Rankin and L. Richmond, *Who, Where and When: The History & Constitution of the University of Glasgow* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 2001), 19-22.

¹⁰¹ This and other attendance date estimates come from Nasson, but it is unclear where he got them from. The only set of attendance dates that are firm are the ones for the University of Glasgow, through their Registry records.

¹⁰² *The Memoir of Mary Lyon* was compiled by Edward Hitchcock, previous president of Amherst College (1845-1854), where Mary Lyon was a student. It is the sole source of many of Lyon's letters – the originals were destroyed in a fire. See D. L. Robert, 'Ferguson, Abbie Park and Bliss, Anna Elvira' in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 1998), 209-10.

¹⁰³ Wall text, *Letter to Mount Holyoke Seminary*, Permanent exhibition at Wellington Museum, Wellington, Western Cape. Visited 13 July 2015; and S. D. L. Stow, *History of Mount Holyoke Seminary, South Hadley, Mass. During its First Half Century, 1837-1887*, (Boston, MA: Mount Holyoke Seminary, 1887), 340.

¹⁰⁴ Mount Holyoke College, Archives and Special Collections (hereafter MHC/ASC): RG 22 Mount Holyoke Journal Letters and Journal Memoranda (Letter 23); Also see Stow, *History of Mount Holyoke Seminary*, 340.

¹⁰⁵ MHC/ASC: RG 22, Mount Holyoke Journal Letters and Journal Memoranda (Notebook XII); Rev. A. Murray, *Letter to Mount Holyoke Seminary*, ink on paper, 1872. Permanent exhibition at the Wellington Museum, Wellington, Western Cape. Visited 13 July 2015.

¹⁰⁶ Robert, 'Ferguson, Abbie Park and Bliss, Anna Elvira', 209-10.; G. P. Ferguson, *The Builders of Huguenot, Being the History of the Huguenot Institution at Wellington, from the Intimate Papers of the Builders*. (Cape Town: Maskew Miller 1927), 14. George was Abbie's brother who joined her in South Africa in 1877.

assistance of Murray, Ferguson and Bliss¹⁰⁷ founded the Huguenot Seminary (Seminary) on 19 January 1874. Its mission was 'to give to its pupils a sound education, and at the same time so to mould and form the character that the young ladies may go out with an earnest purpose in life, and thus be the better fitted for any sphere to which God in his providence may call them ... another design is to train teachers who may go out, in some measure, to meet the pressing wants of the country'.¹⁰⁸ Modelled after the Mount Holyoke College, the Huguenot Seminary opened the Missionary Sunday School for coloured children that Abdullah attended in 1874.¹⁰⁹

In the nineteenth century, education was experiencing sweeping changes ushered in by extensive social, political, and economic changes sweeping through Europe and the United States. Religious morality, education and body became indivisible under the new nation-states emerging through the forces of urbanisation and industrialisation in Europe and the United States. These vast sea changes wrought new polemics against uneducated children, new notions of political rights were surfacing, and extensive circuits of migration in the 1800's brought education into the centre of the national and nationalising policies.¹¹⁰ Secular education became a flash point across the Empire and her colonies for many social, moral, and political reforms. Post-colonial scholars point out that across the British empire, the religious concerns that are said to drive changes in education are cellophane covers for deeper discriminations and concerns about preserving whiteness. Religion, and religious instruction, in some ways, became subsumed as aspects of ethnic identity so that political and social assimilation into the dominating empire could be accelerated.¹¹¹ After his 1876 visit to the Seminary, Edinburgensian Robert Michael Ballantyne reflected that schools like the seminary might well be the solution to the seemingly 'incomprehensible differences and divergences of

¹⁰⁷ Abbie Park Ferguson was born in 1837 in Whately, Massachusetts. She graduated from Mount Holyoke College in 1856 and went on to teach in Michigan and Connecticut before arriving in South Africa to found the Huguenot Seminary and act as principal (1873-1898). She would eventually be granted an MA (1906) and LittD (1912) from Mount Holyoke College. She passed away in 1919 in Wellington. See entry for Abbie Park Ferguson in 'One Hundred Year Biographical Directory of Mount Holyoke College 1837-1937' Alumnae Association of Mount Holyoke College Bulletin Series 30 no. 5 (1937). Anna "Annie" Elvira Bliss was born in 1843 in Jericho, Vermont. She graduated from Mount Holyoke College in 1862 and went on to teach at Amherst, where Mary Lyon herself attended school under Edward Hitchcock. She would also eventually be granted a LittD (1910) from Mount Holyoke College and another LittD (1922) from the University of South Africa. She acted as principal of the Huguenot Seminary from 1910-1920 and then as president of Huguenot College. Bliss passed away in 1925. See: entry for Anna E. Bliss in 'One Hundred Year Biographical Directory.'

¹⁰⁸ According to the 1875 Seminary prospectus. (R. M. Ballantyne, *Six Months at the Cape or Letters to Periwinkle from South Africa*, London: James Lisbet & Co, 1879, 234).

¹⁰⁹ The Seminary was not a Huguenot institution but was named thus because its first building was a memorial to the Huguenot settlers of South Africa; Dutch Reformed Church Archives, Huguenot Seminary Papers (hereafter NGKA/HSP): K-Div 615: Letter from Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen 17 June 1874; Ferguson, *The Builders of Huguenot*, 26.

¹¹⁰ For example, J. Lawson and H. Silver, *A social history of education in England* (New York: Routledge, 2013); D. Raftery, 'The Opening of Higher Education to Women in Nineteenth Century England: "Unexpected Revolution" or Inevitable Change"', *Higher Education Quarterly* 56 no. 4 (2002): 331-346; D. Raftery, J. McDermid, and G. Elwyn Jones, 'Social Change and Education in Ireland, Scotland and Wales: Historiography on Nineteenth-century Schooling', *History of Education* 36 no. 4-5 (2007): 447-463; D. H. Akenson, *The Irish education experiment: The national system of education in the nineteenth century*, Vol. 1. (New York: Routledge, 2011).

¹¹¹ One example that stands out with relation to the British Empire, nationalism, assimilation, and the role of religious education are the observations made by Patrick O'Farrell and Michael Davitt in Australia (See: P. O' Farrell, *The Irish in Australia: 1788 to present* (Washington, DC: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 162-164; M. Davitt, *Life and Progress in Australasia* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1898), 126. According to O' Farrell, Catholic education in Australia emphasised Catholicism not as a religion, but as an ethnicity marker in a matrix consisting of Irishness: heritage, history, notions of a shared genealogy, language, and literature. Thus Catholic education worked to *assimilate* its students as Australian nationals and subjects as a primary identity and Irishness as a sub-variation thereof. Davitt notes that this, in turn created a new identity, an Irish-Australian concept. Hence education served simultaneously to assimilate (and eliminate) deviance and difference into the national umbrella. And if it cannot, it seeks to subsume.

opinion and sentiment¹¹² of politics at the Cape. 'Here, methinks, in this seminary, you have the seed being planted and watered, which shall one day cover this land with ripe and rich fruit, and which will tend powerfully to bring about ... a great and grand future in store for South Africa'.¹¹³ These attitudes were not limited to the British empire. In the western United States, for example, missionary efforts were grounded in the ideology that the Christianising and education of the 'savage' transformed him/her into a *person*. A 'civilised' person who then can be rightfully considered members of their societies. This trope about education and the production of personhood has become so imprinted in popular consciousness, it is recognisable in everything from Pocahontas and Tarzan to even non-human "persons" like Paddington Bear. The framework of British liberalism's answers to social inequity and injustice through the cornerstones of non-racialism and the promulgation of civilising and acculturating the poor and the 'uncivilised' into gentlemen and ladies had its limits. In our case, Abdullah's story has often been used to highlight the failures of this model in ensuring social stability and equality. And yet, perhaps there is still more to Abdullah's story than the overworked ground of his unsuccessful crusade, as if Sisyphus, to staunch the tide of ever-rising segregation.

Abdullah's early childhood education, if mentioned at all, has consistently been oversimplified as a 'Dutch Reformed Church mission school' without further detail.¹¹⁴ But it was more complicated than this. Abdullah himself never gave particulars. For example, in an early speech addressing coloured electors at Stellenbosch, Abdullah lambasted government for the deplorable state of coloured education, 'as against that how much they are indebted to their missionaries, as he himself was indebted to a missionary at Wellington, where he was born, for his primary education'.¹¹⁵ Although the Dutch Reformed Church was associated with *one* mission school in Wellington at this time, Murray did not seem to have any desire to include non-whites.¹¹⁶ He testified to the Education Commission in 1891 that if 'the question comes as to whether it is a desirable thing to mix the white and coloured children. I do not think it is ... In Wellington, we have in the district eight or ten schools, but the Kerkeraad or Vestry does not aid one of them, with the exception of what is distinctly a white mission school in a poor neighbourhood'.¹¹⁷ Abdullah's 'mission

¹¹² Ballantyne describes the divisions observed in South Africa over the Responsible Government debates between the Molteno government and the Paterson opposition and wonders how South Africa can truly be a unified country (Ballantyne, *Six Months at the Cape*, 237).

¹¹³ Ballantyne, *Six Months at the Cape*, 237-8.

¹¹⁴ *Say it Loud*, 3; *In Our Own Skins: A Political History of the Coloured People* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2015), 38.

¹¹⁵ *South African News* 22 Nov 1903.

¹¹⁶ In the current political zeitgeist, 'non-white' is considered an inappropriate term due to its previous use by the apartheid government in their classification system. In the theoretical literature, it is also sometimes criticised as being othering and reinforcing Orientalism. The preferred term for many scholars has defaulted to an inclusive and politically defined 'Black' that includes, for all intents and purposes, anyone who was *not* identified 'white' under European colonialism. This 'Black' identification presupposes a number of shared political and cultural histories and shared experiences of victimisation resulting from European colonialism. This thesis, other than in cited passages or referring to other authors' usage, rejects the use of this term as it cannot know if the referenced individuals, groups, communities, or populations would themselves identify as 'Black/black'. In rejecting the hegemonic phenomena of ascribing race, so too it must reject the ascription of 'Black' in this manner. Unfortunately, that leaves only the negative-space of 'non-white' as a purely adjectival description in some instances to differentiate between those who did and those who did not benefit from a 'white' classification. Unless cited otherwise in the source, this usage is capitalised in this thesis to indicate that it is an (invented) ethnonym. When it is used to reference to an individual, it may be because it is known the individual identifies thus. Notes will clarify when necessary.

¹¹⁷ *First Report and Proceedings, with Appendices, of a Commission appointed to enquire into and report upon certain matters connected with the Educational System of the colony*, G9-91. (Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, Government Printers, Castle Street, 1891), 158-159

school' could not have been this school without extraordinary intervention.¹¹⁸ Only one remaining school both accepted coloured children and was linked to the Dutch Reformed Church – the coloured Missionary Sunday School run by the women of the Huguenot Seminary. While Murray had a vital and pivotal role in founding the Huguenot Seminary, and it was the Seminary that establishes the Missionary Sunday School, neither the Huguenot Seminary nor their Sunday school was ever under Murray's or the Dutch Reformed Church's direction while Abdullah was in attendance.¹¹⁹ The confusion and conflation of the Dutch Reformed Church mission school and the Missionary Sunday School is no doubt due to the erroneous attribution of the Sunday school to Andrew Murray.¹²⁰ Two decades after it opened its doors in Mission Hall, the Missionary Sunday School was absorbed by the whites-only Dutch Reformed Church mission school in 1894, and weekday sessions open to coloured students only commenced (and only in the evenings) in 1919. In 1919, one month after coloured sessions were opened at Murray's mission school, Johannes du Plessis wrote that the sessions were inspired by the success of the coloured Sunday school.¹²¹

The Missionary Sunday School was 100% voluntary and 100% free. Children paid no fees and had no obligation to attend. Teaching was equally voluntary. Success, however, was evident, and attendance was 'fairly regular'.¹²² Hundreds of coloured children regularly attended these classes.¹²³ Ferguson remarked to the Education Commission in 1891 that, in her experience, the best way to ensure academic success was for schools and teachers to reach beyond the classroom and engage with and include parents on one hand, and on the other, to inspire the students. Punishment and discipline were not the answer. Irregular attendance, Ferguson suggested, could be remedied with 'the awarding of prizes. Insisting on notes from parents to account for absence. Endeavour to get co-operation of parents ... Parents should be impressed with the importance of education of their children'.¹²⁴ Despite being young, the Seminary pedagogy must have made an impression upon Abdullah. Therefore, it is important to turn a little attention to the ideologies and philosophies that permeated the Mount Holyoke College. These ideas wove their threads from Ferguson and Bliss to their students, and so on through to shape Abdullah Abdurahman in some of his earliest experiences beyond the family and in the greater Cape society and, given the Seminary's international origins and staff,¹²⁵ the world beyond.

¹¹⁸ As there are no records for either the Dutch Reformed Church or Huguenot Missionary Sunday school, it cannot be said definitively that Abdullah attended either of these institutions. It is not outside the realm of possibility that some exception, possibly resulting from the mission's school's need of funds. Murray further testified that 'We could only get £15 from Sir Langham Dale, and the Vestry gives £10. If we could have a fourth class public undenominational school, we might have this school brought under that, and the Vestry would prefer not giving the money'. (Ibid, 159). However, given that Wellington at this time had many economically comfortable coloured families, it does not seem that Murray could continue to refer to the mission school as 'distinctly white' if it was possible to bribe one's way in.

¹¹⁹ In Ferguson's report to the Education Commission in 1891, she described the Seminary as run by a board of trustees, and explicitly described it as undenominational (*First Report and Proceedings*), 209.

¹²⁰ For example, 'As a result of the zealous labours of our minister, the number of coloured people who attend the Sunday-school in the Mission Hall on Sundays has now reached 120, with 12 teachers in rotation'. From J. C. du Plessis, *The life of Andrew Murray of South Africa* (London, Edinburgh, New York: Marshall Brothers, Limited, 1919), 265-266.

¹²¹ J. C. du Plessis, *The life of Andrew Murray*, 265-266. Also see Robert, Dana L. 'Mount Holyoke women and the Dutch Reformed missionary movement, 1874-1904', *Missionalia* 21 no. 2 (1993), 104.

¹²² Education Commission, *First Report and Proceedings*, 158.

¹²³ NGKA/HSP: K-Div 615, Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen (7 September 1874).

¹²⁴ Education Commission, *First Report and Proceedings*, 196.

¹²⁵ For example, a Miss Spijker from Holland was brought over to teach "proper" Dutch and French to the Huguenot- and Dutch-descended girls of the Seminary. For more, see A. T. Pierson, *Miracles of Missions; or, The Modern Marvels in the History of Missions*, Volume 1 (Lulu Press 2015 [Reprint]).

Mount Holyoke College reverberated with New England Transcendentalist ideology. In July 1896, an article appeared in *Demorest's Family Magazine* that describes the Mount Holyoke curriculum: 'The secrets of the transcendentalist are sought for; the philosophy of Coleridge, Arnold, and the pre-Raphaelites, and a study of the stern influences of Calvin's creed, call for thoughtful, close application'.¹²⁶ Although strongly influenced by German and English Romanticism, American Transcendentalism is distinct. Taken altogether, in somewhat *contra* fashion against British liberalism, some of Abdullah's later political ideologies and ideas refract new light. Beginning as a religious reformation among New England Congregationalists,¹²⁷ American Transcendentalism appears on the surface to have little difference from Romanticism. But in their views of the relationship between an individual, society, and the divine, transcendentalism and conventional Romanticism diverge. For romantics, God is an external force that moves to touch the divine spark within and saves an individual from perversion. For Transcendentalists, the soul is proof that the divine spark is the *essence* of a person. This view of personhood understands 'evil' and 'perversion' as rooted in one's alienation from the self, self-knowledge and self-realisation. As an early exposure to Christians and Christianity, Abdullah must have been struck by the similarities between this and Islam's *tawhīd*. This minute variation is enough to make the two movements anathema to one another. The moral optimism of American Transcendentalism underlines the unalienable goodness of man and his indivisibility from the divine. Education is vital, but only insofar as they evoke 'authentic' ethos and character. These ideas, sown in his youth, later emerged time and time again in Abdullah's words about education, society, and "moral character". There were other connections that might have been familiar to Abdullah as well – Transcendentalism incorporated not just European and classical philosophers, but also infused itself with elements of Indian religion and philosophies.¹²⁸

Ferguson and Bliss, although they never adopted the label of Transcendentalist, ran the Seminary as a holistic experience for their students with distinct departures from orthodox Calvinism that reflected a Transcendentalist sensibility. There, students were encouraged to play, read, walk, learn or listen to music, and socialise with friends as integral aspects of a broader education designed to breed moral character and intuition as much as develop the intellect. Girls were encouraged to refine their intuition for 'right' and 'wrong', and even allowed to socialise with boys, as long as they had procured approval of the visit, and a chaperone was present.¹²⁹ 'Let it not be supposed', said visiting Ballantyne, 'that the system involved rigidity. The girls were as graceful, natural, and unconstrained as one could wish them to be'.¹³⁰ When

¹²⁶ H. M. North, 'Our Girls at Mount Holyoke College', *Demorest's Family Magazine*, July 1896, 518

¹²⁷ See M. R. Barna, 'Transcendentalism Was A Religious and Intellectual Movement, in *American Romanticism*, ed. Jennifer A. Hurley (San Diego: Greenhaven Press, Inc., 2000), 60; W. R. Hutchison, *The Transcendentalist Ministers: Church Reform in the New England Renaissance*. (Hartford, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); R. Grusin, *Transcendentalist Hermeneutics: Institutional Authority and the Higher Criticism of the Bible* (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1991) and others.

¹²⁸ See A. Versluis, *American Transcendentalism and Asian Religions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); R. B. Goodman, 'East-West Philosophy in Nineteenth Century America: Emerson and Hinduism', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 51 (4) 1990: 625 – 45. Moreover, after Ralph Waldo Emerson took over the *Dial* as editor in 1842, he began to publish a series he called 'Ethical Scriptures', which included translations of Chinese and Indian philosophical and religious works. See: J. Myerson, *The New England Transcendentalists and the 'Dial': A History of the Magazine and its Contributors* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1980).

¹²⁹ NGKA/HSP: K-Div 615, Letter from Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen (11 November 1884). Teachers themselves invited certain boys who passed the 'character' rigour to the seminary for tea with the older students. Although a pupil was expelled in 1884 for 'persistently' meeting boys, the disapproval was not over the meetings, but over their unsupervised and unapproved nature.

¹³⁰ Ballantyne, *Six Months at the Cape*, 235.

Ferguson wrote home to her sister in 1874, she lamented the 'terrible condition' of the town coloured population. Ferguson concluded that a Sunday School must be organised for the coloured children. Besides, Ferguson added, it could serve the dual purpose of providing missionary opportunities for Seminary girls who were unable or unwilling to train for stations further into the interior of South Africa.¹³¹ After all, 'it seems a pity', said Ferguson, 'that when our young ladies are so much needing work and are anxious to do it, and the want is so great among these poor children that the supply should not meet the demand'.¹³² Two birds, one stone. The ladies wasted no time. With 30 children under 12, the Missionary Sunday School for coloured children was opened in April 1874. As one of the few white mission schools to offer education to coloured children, the school was in incredible demand. After six months, the head count increased to an estimated 500 pupils, 'squeezed close together on the benches, so close that you couldn't put a knife between them'.¹³³

Young Abdullah's first non-familial authority figures and caretakers were these idealistic and morally optimistic young white women. For the twenty years under independent Seminary control, the principal of the Missionary Sunday School was always a teacher from the Seminary. During Abdullah's time, Mount Holyoke College alumna and New Englander Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Cummings¹³⁴ was the principal of the Missionary Sunday School.¹³⁵ And so Abdullah, the son of Islamic teachers, found his earliest experiences with the greater world outside the family to be in an international Christian Sunday school, governed by Americans and young white girls teaching a Transcendentalist-influenced curriculum. Coloured students, hundreds of them, including Abdullah, arrived each Sunday to receive instruction in an amended Mount Holyoke College curriculum focusing on the "three R's": reading, writing, and arithmetic. They undertook scripture classes and basic introductory lessons to history and geography. The records and correspondences of the principals indicate students were enthusiastic and reasonably well-behaved during lessons. Book learning and religious content occupied most Sundays, yet attendance held steady. Teachers assigned homework, which most of the students completed.¹³⁶ Sometimes the school provided small treats. Magic lantern shows were especially popular and the school gave an annual feast.¹³⁷ For many coloured children, a Sunday-only school was preferable since they often worked to supplement the family income. Other aims of the Missionary Sunday School also flourished. Lizzie boasted that most of the children converted to Christianity.¹³⁸ Abdullah did not convert, but probably learned to subsume or present a more religiously

¹³¹ Ferguson founded the Huguenot Mission Society in 1878. (MHC/ASC: Records of the HMS, Book I, Constitution). The Society was successful, supporting 10 female missionaries over the next two decades, and produced the first female South African missionary of the nineteenth century: Johanne Meeuwse. Almost the entirety of the first generation of female DRC missionaries, whether single or married, were alumnae of the Seminary. (Robert, 'Mount Holyoke Women', 116, 119; NGK/HSP: K-Div 638, Book I, Monthly Meetings, 1878-1883).

¹³² NGKA/HSP: K-Div 615, Letter from Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen (12 April 1874).

¹³³ NGKA/HSP: K-Div 615, Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen (7 September 1874).

¹³⁴ Born Mary Elizabeth Cummings (and later Mrs. Thomas Gamble), "Lizzie" graduated from Mount Holyoke in 1876. A native of Strafford, Vermont, she arrived in South Africa the following year. She would eventually move to Uitenhage and marry (1887) a minister. See entry for Mary Elizabeth Cummings in 'One Hundred Year Biographical Directory.' Also see Ferguson, *The Builders of Huguenot*, 159.

¹³⁵ NGKA/HSP: K-Div 605, Lizzie Cummings to family (24 March 1884).

¹³⁶ NGKA/HSP: K-Div 605 and 615 (collections of letters for Ferguson and principal Cummings); MHC/ASC: MS 0687 Ferguson Papers, 1861-1919: Correspondence and Other Writings (Box 1, Folder 1); MHC/ASC: MS 0550 Huguenot Seminary papers, 1874-1978.

¹³⁷ NGKA/HSP: K-Div 605, Lizzie Cummings to her family (23 September 1885).

¹³⁸ NGKA/HSP: K-Div 605, Lizzie Cummings to her family (24 March 1884)

neutral persona in this environment. This early training in scripture proved useful in his adult oratorical career where he often referenced Biblical themes and motifs. For the rest of the week, Abdullah was almost certainly home-schooled by his mother.

Education was as important to Abdullah's mother as it was for his father, the "first person to teach Islamic theology". Khadijah has been invisible in the literature. Often unnamed, if she were mentioned at all, it was tied to the remark that she was 'the prettiest Malay girl in Cape Town'.¹³⁹ But Khadijah was more than just a pretty face. In an 1894 letter to the Ottoman Sultan asking for assistance in keeping an all-girls' Islamic school open,¹⁴⁰ the letter reports,

We are Muslims living in Cape Town, in Southern Africa who desire to educate our girl children at a school, but as yet do not have a school for girls. For 14 years, the girls were educated at a Muslim school for girls, which were established by late Abu Bakr Effendi. After his death, the school remained and conducted by his students Hesna, Kadija Abdurrahman and Valiyt Muhammad Mufti ... At the school, the curriculum comprises of teachings of the Quran, writing and reading and mathematics, there are Tafsir, English and German languages classes.¹⁴¹

As noted earlier in this chapter, Khadijah's brother Mohamed was taught by Abu Bakr Effendi,¹⁴² a Turkish emissary and educator, and seceded Effendi in leading his congregation. Unsurprisingly, Khadijah was also Effendi's pupil. It was a unique upbringing to grow up simultaneously immersed in both Islamic and Christian worlds and religious instruction. Being taught by Khadijah seems to have left other intriguing residues in Abdullah. For example, the origin story of the Palm Tree Mosque on Long Street described how Jan van Boughies and Frans van Bengalen founded a new congregation after a dispute about the succession of the imamate at the *Auwal* mosque after Tuan Guru's death. The cause of the dispute is unknown.¹⁴³ The only details in evidence discussed by historians have been these: On the 13 February 1836, Achmat van Bengalen, who succeeded Tuan Guru, printed a letter in the *South African Commercial Advertiser* that, on his death bed, Tuan Guru beseeched him and said 'Remember van Boegies can never as long as he lives take my place and whoever gives him my place must answer on the day of judgement, and not to me'. On 27 February, van Boughies fought back, declaring 'Having seen and read a printed document in which ACHMAT himself declares that he was appointed by Imam Prince Abdullah [Tuan Guru]. This is untrue. I as the oldest Priest who have been in the religious service of the Mohammedan religion for the last 38 years know nothing about this. Thus my congregation and myself do not recognize him as a Priest'. The conclusion among scholars place this contest as one of many 'struggles for power result[ing] from conflict among the dominant personalities'.¹⁴⁴ Abdullah relayed a different version to

¹³⁹ As relayed in Lady Lucie Duff-Gordon's *Letters from the Cape*, and confirmed by Abdullah in the Dorothea Fairbridge edition to refer to his mother, Khadijah (Duff-Gordon, *Letters from the Cape*, 54 and facing plate).

¹⁴⁰ This was the girls' branch of Effendi's Ottoman Theological School on Bree and Wale Streets (See fig. 6, pg. 47, fn. 253).

¹⁴¹ The Ottoman State Archives of the Prime Minister's Office (hereafter OSA), Yabancı Arşivler (hereafter YA): 310 Private: Letter to Sultan, 6 September 1894.

¹⁴² According to a neighbor of Ahmet Ataullah Bey while the Beys lived in London; see A Khan, *My life and experiences* (London: Khrishnavas international printers, 1951), 47; also see KAB/CSC 64: Record of Proceedings of Provisional Case, Mochamat Dollie versus Abou Beker Effendi.

¹⁴³ S. Koolhof and R. Ross, Upas, 'September and the Bugis at the Cape of Good Hope. The Context of a Slave's Letter', *Archipel Année* 70 No. 1 (2005), 286; A. Davids, *The history of the Tana Baru* (Cape Town: Cape Town Committee for the Preservation of the Tana Baru 1985), 68-69; and S. Jeppie, 'Leadership and Loyalties: The Imams of Nineteenth Century Colonial Cape Town, South Africa', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 26 Fasc. 2 (1991) 139-162.

¹⁴⁴ A. Davids, 'Imams and conflict resolution practises among Cape Muslims in the nineteenth century', *Kronos* (1995): 55.

Dorothea Fairbridge, one that does not seem to have featured anywhere else. There once was an imam ‘who had a wife whom he adored [but] he also had a hasty temper. One day, being annoyed over some trifling domestic mishap, he turned on her and pronounced the triple sentence of divorce. Then they looked at one another in dismay, for there had always been love between them. What was to be done?’ Husband and wife concocted a scheme to resolve this “disaster” by enlisting the help of the ‘old imaum of the Dorp Street mosque’ to agree to marry and divorce the wife so they could remarry. The wife and “old imaum” married. When the younger imam returned after a respectable amount of time to the older imam to request a divorce, he responded ‘*Your* wife? ... I will speak to *my* wife and see what she says’. The “old imaum” thought about how happy life was now that he had her for a wife and returned to the younger imam, refusing to divorce her. ‘Then the other husband went away in his wrath, and founded an opposition mosque in the old house in Long Street, before which two tall palms stand to this day’.¹⁴⁵ The contrast between these two versions is striking. In Abdullah's version, the story is re-centred around the importance of women and the power of good moral character. One “good” wife had the power to upend the political and religious matters of men. A man's happiness is dependent on his treatment of his wife. A man's moral character is paramount – if the young imam had learned not to succumb to hasty temper and unconsidered action, he could have avoided misery. Recent research in other fields show this and other lessons from his mother undeniably had a profound impact on Abdullah's subjectivity.

In child development studies, research shows a child begins to build social knowledge of morality from three to seven years of age.¹⁴⁶ During this stage, the child internalises the values of his or her family. What is important to the parents becomes important to the child. For psychologists and child-development researchers, it is typically around six years of age that children are observed to say to outsiders, 'In our family, we do [...]'. In other words, norms and normative rules – including those for gender, race, and religion; as well as those for notions of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ – are being incorporated into the child's ontology and beginning to guide behaviour. The child begins to construct his or her moral world. For Abdullah, his two pillars were clearly the importance of faith and service from his father and the primacy of family and the importance of education from his mother. With Abdul's credentials, he is often the one credited with impressing into Abdullah a love of learning and the importance of education. But given the absence of his father, it is more probable that the critical figure was Khadijah, and reinforced by the bright-eyed schoolteachers at the Missionary Sunday School.

But parents were not the only models, any consistent caretaker had a significant impact. Because children are soaking up social knowledge during this stage like thirsty sponges, they frequently look to trusted

¹⁴⁵ Duff-Gordon, *Letters from the Cape*, 55-57.

¹⁴⁶ See the works of Lawrence Kohlberg, an American psychologist known for his theory on the stages of moral development. Kohlberg builds on Jean Piaget's earlier work in the 1930's on children's cognitive development, and extended it into morality and moral decision-making. Following Kohlberg is Turiel, who extended it further into the social knowledges of culture norms and conventions. J. Piaget, Jean, *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co, 1932); L. Kohlberg, 'The Development of Modes of Thinking and Choices in Years 10 to 16', (PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1958); L. Kohlberg, 'Stage and Sequence: the Cognitive Developmental Approach to Socialization', in *Handbook of Socialization: Theory and Research* ed. D. A. Goslin (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1969); L. Kohlberg, 'Moral stages and moralization: The cognitive-developmental approach', in *Moral development and behavior: Theory, research, and social issues* ed. T. Lickona (New York: HOH Reehart & Winston, 1976): 31-53; L. P. Nucci, and E. Turiel. 'Social interactions and the development of social concepts in preschool children' *Child development* (1978): 400-407; E. Turiel, *The development of social knowledge: Morality and convention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); E. Turiel, *The culture of morality: Social development, context, and conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

adults to fill the gaps in their social knowledge, making children at this stage extremely malleable.¹⁴⁷ For the first year or two of Abdullah's time at the Missionary Sunday School, however, his father was absent. Abdul's obituaries¹⁴⁸ report he served in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877 to 1878 between the Ottoman Empire and a Russian-led coalition of Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania, and Montenegro. The Cape Malays overwhelmingly sided with their fellow Muslims and closely followed the news of the war in the old *Graphic*. Framed both then and since as primarily an Eastern Orthodox Christian versus Muslim conflict, the estimated number of Muslim civilian casualties are elusive and under continuous debate.¹⁴⁹ Abdullah's father was so moved by the plight of the Turkic Muslims that he enlisted. Therefore, for at least the first year or so of young Abdullah's learner years, he was taught almost entirely by women. This indubitably impressed upon Abdullah that education was essential but must be as accessible for girls as for boys. The struggle for access to education spanned across the generations of Abdurahman men and women. For Abdullah at this time to have lived between the private of family and the public of the Missionary Sunday School, a multiplicity of worlds were integral to his moral and cognitive development. These were the overlapping yet discrete spheres of Islam and Christianity, white and coloured, coloured and Malay, Malay and Muslim, American and South African, South African Huguenot and South African Dutch; not to mention the particular prominence of women in his life at this time. The psychological impacts this unique socialisation must have had for a young child cannot be overstated. Abdullah's earliest experiences meant that he must thatch – layer, fold, interweave – some psychological coherence from these complex matrices of religious and social dissonances. Abdullah must have attached to the commonalities and the seeming universals shared between all the different groups through notions of similar moral ethos shared by both religions.¹⁵⁰ Abdullah's later moral adherence to non-racialism and continuous efforts to unite all non-

¹⁴⁷ Extending (fn. 146, above) theories of moral development and its acquisition through social interactions, see, for example: J. E. Grusec and J. J. Goodnow, 'Impact of parental discipline methods on the child's internalization of values: A reconceptualization of current points of view', *Developmental Psychology* 30, (1994): 4-19; G. Kochanska, N. Aksan, and A. L. Koenig, 'A longitudinal study of the roots of preschoolers' conscience: Committed compliance and emerging internalization' *Child Development* 66 no. 6 (1995): 1752-1769; On the importance of the mother during this time: G. Kochanska and N. Aksan, 'Mother-child mutually positive affect, the quality of child compliance to requests and prohibitions, and maternal control as correlates of early internalization' *Child Development*, 66 no. 1 (1995): 236-254).

¹⁴⁸ See Obituaries: *Huddersfield Chronicle* 09 April 1898, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 07 April 1898, *The Daily Express* 09 April 1898. There is a possibility that the 'Hadji(e)' of these obituaries is a different man. In 1920, Abdullah filed a death notice for a 'Hadjie Abdurahman', born in 1832 and gave Mount Street as the address. Ismail, his brother, was the informant. These details initially seem to suggest his father may not have died in London in 1898. However, there is not a single contemporary testimony to Abdul living at Albert Lodge. Friends of Abdullah's daughter report that 'Hadjie went to England and stayed there'. Given all of the gatherings and social events held at Albert Lodge, there is zero indication that Abdullah's father lived there. Abdullah presumably gave his address because the deceased's residence could not be ascertained. And, 'Hadjie' is not a name but an honorific title. There were also multiple 'Hadjie Abdurahman's in Cape Town. A 'H. Abdurahman' (born c. 1834) and a 'H. Abdurrahman' (born c. 1837) sailed for the Cape from the UK on 30 Jul 1904 and 20 Dec 1906, respectively. Either of these may be the individual in Abdullah's 1920 death report. Two further 'Hadje Abdurahmans' have immigration records to South Africa in 1908 and 1911. Thus this thesis takes the complete absence of any mention of Abdullah's parents, in tangent with the testimony of the Simonses, who knew the family, the known close mosque and religious association with Mohamed Dollie as evidence that the individual in the obituaries was Abdullah's father.

¹⁴⁹ See, for example: M. Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State: The rise of the West and the coming of genocide* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2005), 225

¹⁵⁰ For further reading and explanations of moral reasoning complications and complexities, the role of culture, and the role of religion; and the seeming universals of human morality stubborn against cultural variation, see: J. G. Smetana, 'Social-cognitive domain theory: Consistencies and variations in children's moral and social judgments', in *Handbook of Moral Development* ed. M. Killen, & J. G. Smetana (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum 2005): 19-154; E. Turiel and S. A. Perkins, 'Flexibilities of mind: Conflict and culture' (*Human Development* 47 no. 3 (2004): 158-178; C. Wainryb, 'Moral development in culture: Diversity, tolerance, and justice', in M. Killen & J.G. Smetana (eds.), *Handbook of Moral Development* (New York: Wiley, 2005: 211-242); L. P. Nucci and E. Turiel, 'God's word, religious rules and their relation to Christian and Jewish children's concepts of morality', *Child Development*, 64 no. 5 (1993): 1485-1491. For a feminist critique, most notably by Carol Gilligan, see C. Gilligan, *In a different voice: psychological theory and women's development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982); also see R. E. Muuss, 'Carol Gilligan's theory of sex differences in the development of moral reasoning during adolescence' *Adolescence* 23 no. 89 (1998): 229 – 43; R. Kyte, 'Moral reasoning as perception: A reading of Carol Gilligan' *Hypatia* 11 no. 3 (1996): 97 – 113; Also see M. Killen & J.G. Smetana eds, *Handbook of Moral Development*, second edition (New York: Psychology Press, 2013).

whites, even when faced with the mutiny of his own organisation, must have had its seeds in these early experiences. Abdullah's early childhood challenged conventional and unilateral models of subjectivity and the boundaries between self and other, being and belonging, and the multiplicity of social worlds in Cape Town. Abdullah's exposure to Christian education continued with the Marist Brothers.

The Marist Brothers (c. 1881 to c. 1884)

Marist Brothers is a Catholic order founded by St. Marcellin Champagnat of France in 1817. Their primary aim is to educate young people, particularly those they deem to have been neglected or underprivileged by society, building schools under the motto of 'Good Christians and Good people'.¹⁵¹ In 1867, the French Catholic Marist Brothers order sent five 'brothers' to Cape Town. [He] said to them, 'The Cape will be from now on the first step to Oceania'.¹⁵² The first lessons were modest. Held initially at the Bishop Griffith's mission school on Hope Street, the school soon moved to the crossroads of St. John's, Vrede, and Hatfield Streets. One of the brothers, Faust Wincott, was the founding principal of the St. Aloysius Primary at this location. The primary school began with only nine students. By the second week of May 1867, the Brothers opened St. Joseph's Academy at Phoenix House. St. Joseph's Academy was a fee-paying school that prepared students beyond St. Aloysius for college or other professional training. Soon after, the schools merged and St. Joseph's moved into the floor above St. Aloysius in Grimley Hall. Together, they were known as Marist Brothers' and comprised both Junior and High Schools.

Despite many secondary sources pointing to Abdullah's attendance at Marist Brothers, there is no evidence that Abdullah or any other non-white child was formally registered as a student in St. Aloysius Primary.¹⁵³ Perhaps when Abdullah mentions he was educated at Marist Brothers, he simply "neglected" to clarify the particulars. Much has been made he was the first and last Muslim or coloured child to be admitted to Marist Brothers (and later, the South African College), and certainly this assisted his public mythology and image, but appears slightly inaccurate. At the time, Brother Willibrord van der Moortel of Belgium was in charge of the Marist Brothers' non-racial offerings in night school. If there was a non-racial option, it seems fair to reason that the day curriculum was colour-barred. After Abdul's return from the war, the family moved from Wellington to Cape Town¹⁵⁴ and Abdullah must have attended the open night school. Other Cape Muslims of this time also claimed a Marist Brothers' education without contradiction from past teachers and other students, adding to the likelihood that the night school was well attended and offered an excellent curriculum – possibly even the same curriculum as the day school. In 1891, Abdol Burns, a local leader in the Muslim community, testified to the Educational Commission that his son had attended the Marist Brothers school, which he referred to as a 'mission school'. Burns continued on that, '[he] can only

¹⁵¹ See M. Mengele, 'The Origin, Development, Achievements and Future of the Marist Brothers Schools in South Africa, 1867-1955' (B. Ed. thesis: University of Cape Town, 1955; Available at University of Cape Town, Special Collections, Manuscripts and Archives (hereafter UCT MA): BCS323: Marist Brothers Schools in South Africa 1867-1955).

¹⁵² A. Delorme, *Our first brothers: Marvellous companions of Marcellin* (Rome: Institute of the Marist Brothers, 2009), 187.

¹⁵³ I have conferred via email with Kervin Grove, the current Principal of Marist Brothers (today St. Joseph's), who has further conferred with the Chairperson of the Marist school's council. No enrolment or registration records have been found.

¹⁵⁴ According to the *Cape Standard*, 27 February 1940, Abdullah moved to town and 'attended a mission school. His parents moved early to Cape Town'. This note suggests that Abdul's parents may have moved to town ahead of him, but it is unlikely that *both* parents did so. It was more likely that Abdul returned to town and remained there, and Khadijah and Abdullah (and the rest of the family) only joined afterwards.

say that the Marist Brothers deserve my highest gratitude for the way they taught my child'.¹⁵⁵ Relations between previous night school students and teachers also seem to have continued to be friendly. For instance, in 1913, a Marist Brothers teacher, Mr. Vermeerset, wrote to Abdullah to query about some Muslim terms.¹⁵⁶

A couple of possibilities may have motivated the family's relocation. The first possibility is that the family moved to be closer to Abdul's ageing mother, Betsy, after Abdul's passing. Abdul and Betsy resided at 19 Cannon Street in 1868,¹⁵⁷ but in 1875, greengrocer 'Widow Abdol Ragman' was reportedly living at 86 Bree Street.¹⁵⁸ Not much is known about Old Abdol and Betsy. Her origins beyond Simonstown – her faith, her lineage, or how she came to be at the Cape, remains a mystery. As slaves often abandoned their ascribed name upon emancipation,¹⁵⁹ without some additional information, like the names of their previous owners or the rare record of name change or alias use, individuals like Abdul and Betsy become lost. The inability to uncover more information about Abdul and Betsy reduces their life stories to a few trifling details. The archives can only reflect the social and political inequalities of its time. Those considered important leave a paper trail from the cradle to the grave. The marginalised members of any society live on the fringe and leave fewer official records. The second possibility is the opening of the *Hanafī* mosque in Long Street – the founding of the mosque coincides with the purported date of Abdullah's time at Marist Brothers. We also know from his granddaughter that Abdul ran a fishmonger business in Wellington, but later transitioned from the more dominant *Shafī* practises of Abdul's *Auwal* congregation to the *Hanafī* traditions.¹⁶⁰ *Hanafī* thought is associated not just with Abu Bakr and Abdullah's brother-in-law Mohamed, but it is also the prominent school of thought in the Ottoman Empire. There is no doubt that Abdul was *Hanafī*, Abdul had just fought on the side of Ottoman Turks against the Russian coalition and indeed, he was a founding member of Abu Bakr's mosque. Unfortunately for Abdul, Abu Bakr's declared shellfish – particularly crayfish – as *haraam* or prohibited in his *Beyan al- Din*.¹⁶¹ Although highly unpopular and

¹⁵⁵ *First Report and Proceedings, with Appendices, of a Commission appointed to enquire into and report upon certain matters connected with the Educational System of the colony*, G9-91. (Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, Government Printers, Castle Street, 1891), 95.

¹⁵⁶ Moslem Education Committee Letter Book, unpublished, 1913 to 1915, p. 359, 29 October 1913, to Mr. A. Vermeerset, Marist Brothers, CT.

¹⁵⁷ In the 1868 directory, green grocer 'Abdol Jemalie' is listed as residing at 19 Cannon Street (*Cape of Good Hope commercial directory and general business guide for 1868*, Cape Town: Saul, Solomon & Co, 1868). Cannon Street and the portion of Mount Street that Albert Lodge occupied no longer exist.

¹⁵⁸ See listing under 'Inhabitants' in *The General Directory and Guide Book to the Cape of Good Hope and its Dependencies* (Cape Town: Saul, Solomon & Co, 1875). I take this to be Betsy. No other individuals named Abdol or Betsy, Betje, Betty of the time were greengrocers or fruiterers. The other Abdols between the 1860's and 1880's were all smiths, a boatman, a couple of imams/priests, and other professions. That Betsy was listed as 'Widow Abdol Ragman' is not especially remarkable, given the complexities of Islamic naming conventions, but this is beyond the scope of this thesis. For further reading, see A. F. L. Beeston, *Arabic Nomenclature: A Summary Guide for Beginners*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971.

¹⁵⁹ For example, Frans van de Kaap (b. circa 1768 - 1865) became Abdol Ragman (See Jackie Loos, 'How Abdol kept his furniture in the family', *Cape Argus*, 28 May 2009).

¹⁶⁰ *Shafī* and *Hanafī* are two of four different Sunni Islamic schools of jurisprudence (*fiqh*). (The other two are *Maliki* and *Hanbali*). Not different sects, they merely represent different interpretations of practise and tradition. The *Hanafī* school has the largest number of followers and is predominant in the countries that were once part of the Ottoman Empire, including Turkey. *Shafī* is dominant in African Islam (such as Eritrea, Ethiopia, and the Swahili coast) as well as Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and India. The different *fiqhs* have many small differences in rituals, traditions, and practises.

¹⁶¹ The predominantly *Shafī* Cape Muslim Community had accepted crayfish as indisputably permissible (A. Davids *The Mosques of Bo-Kaap: A Social History of Islam at the Cape* (Athlone: South African Institute of Arabic and Islamic Research, 1980, 50). Cape Muslims were not impressed: 'By 1869 the people's dissatisfaction with Abu Bakr Effendi reached fever pitch. A petition was taken around to have him removed from the Cape. His ruling that crayfish and snoek were Haraam caused a rift in the Muslim Community'. (A. Davids *The Mosques of Bo-Kaap: A Social History of Islam at the Cape* (Athlone: South African Institute of Arabic and Islamic Research, 1980), 54).

rarely practised today, this must have been deeply inconvenient for a fishmonger like Abdul. After Abdul's embrace of *Hanafi* practises, he may have left the fish business behind and began teaching full-time. Although Abdul helped found the *Hanafi* mosque in 1881, evidence shows Abdul sailed for London first. Despite reports from the family that Abdul and family only moved together to London after the colour bar,¹⁶² an article in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* indicated Abdul had lived in London since around 1882.¹⁶³ Abdullah probably left for London to seek new opportunities, prompting the remaining family to move to Cape Town, possibly to be closer to Betsy or Khadijah's family.

Cape Town was in a troubled time during Abdullah's years at Marist Brothers, whether formally at St. Aloysius or the Marist Brothers' night school. In 1882, the smallpox epidemic struck Cape Town. Roughly 5% of the population or 2,300 people were killed. Those who had contracted but survived smallpox did not escape unscathed. Almost all were disfigured or blinded by the disease.¹⁶⁴ The following year, in 1883, the Cape Parliament passed a Public Health Act that required vaccination, notification of infectious disease, and restricted burial rites. One of the conditions of the Public Health Act included the banning of carrying the dead to the cemetery. For the Cape Muslim community, this was considered an attack on their religious freedom, leading to the Tana Baru uprising in 1886.¹⁶⁵ Within this climate and context, serving and honouring Islam was indelibly connected with the alleviation of poverty, public health and sanitation, and the care of minds and bodies.

The South African College School (c. 1884 to c. 1887)

In 1874, the Higher Education Act split the South African College School into two parts. There was the South African College proper, which prepared students for university degrees and examinations,¹⁶⁶ and then there was the South African College School. The South African College School then split again into respective Junior and High schools. Shareholders disappeared in 1879, and the governance of all three South African College institutions came under the provenance of the College Council after The South African College Act. Bernard Lewis, a previous pupil, described the school in 1883,

There was still a deep shoot along Annandale and Orange Street and the large wheel of Hope Mill, though it had ceased revolving, was lapped by the strong stream which raced along under

¹⁶² Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*, 117.

¹⁶³ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 8 December 1896.

¹⁶⁴ Fatality figures: E. H. Burrows, *A History of Medicine in South Africa up to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Detroit, MI: University of Michigan 1958); P. W. Laidler and M. Gelfand, *South Africa: its medical history 1652-1898: a medical and social study* (Cape Town: C. Struik, 1971); Population figures: N. Worden, E. van Heyningen, V. Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town: The Making of a City* (Claremont, Cape Town, South Africa: David Philip Publishers 1998), 212.

¹⁶⁵ For more information about the Tana Baru uprising, see A. Davids, *The history of the Tana Baru*, (Cape Town: Cape Town Committee for the Preservation of the Tana Baru 1985) and F. Esack, 'Three Islamic strands in the South African struggle for justice', *Third World Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1988): 473-498. For more recent considerations, see J. Jonker and K. E. Till, 'Mapping and excavating spectral traces in post-apartheid Cape Town' *Memory Studies* 2, no. 3 (2009): 303-335. N. Murray, 'Cape Town's Tana Baru burial ground; wasteland or prime property?' *Journal for Islamic Studies* 24 and 25: Burial Grounds: Sacred Sites and Heritage in Post-Apartheid Cape Town (2004/5), 55- 77.

¹⁶⁶ The tertiary education offered by SACS only grew substantially after 1880 as a consequence of the gold and diamonds discoveries in the north. Demands for skilled engineering and other professions in service grew. Between 1880 to 1900, the College experienced a significant increase in assistance from private funding and the government. The first dedicated science laboratories were built, and along with them, the mineralogy and geology departments. These high demands and short supply spurred other social changes. The first women, four of them, were admitted to a chemistry course in 1886 on a trial basis at the urging of Paul Daniel Hahn, a professor of chemistry. The 'experiment' of admitting women was declared a success; in the next year, 1887, women were permanently admitted. For more information about the history of the SACS, as well as the history of women at SACS, see W. Ritchie, *The history of the South African College, 1829-1918* (Cape Town : Maskew Miller, 1918) and Veitch, *SACS 175*.

a wooden footbridge at the top of Government Avenue. There were only three buildings in the College grounds – the College itself, very dignified behind its 'Egyptian' pillars, the school-house, single-storeyed [sic] with two doubled storeyed-wings, [sic] and an old house behind a row of gum trees, in which lived the janitor, an old soldier who was never seen without his bunch of old keys.¹⁶⁷

The headmaster of the South African College School in the 1880's was Dr. John Shaw (b. 1837 - d. 1890). Shaw was a teacher and a mentor to Abdullah. Abdullah only became a student at the University of Glasgow due to Shaw's assistance and influence. Born on the Scottish Isle of Arran, Shaw began school late, when he was already 8-years-old, but he caught up in quick order. Shaw trained to be a teacher at the Free Church Training College in Glasgow, then teaching there until 1867. While teaching, Shaw served on the Council of the Natural History Society of Glasgow – he was an avid naturalist of mosses.¹⁶⁸ Insatiably curious, Shaw enrolled to study geology at the University of Glasgow with D. D. Fraser.¹⁶⁹ Through these credentials, Shaw immigrated to South Africa.¹⁷⁰ When the South African College split into School and College, he was offered and accepted the headmaster post for the South African College School until his death in 1890.¹⁷¹ His connections to the literati and academies of Glasgow proved essential to Abdullah. Shaw's style as headmaster was more than an administrator behind a desk. He conducted weekly drills of the South African College School's students and knew each student's intellectual capabilities as well their temperaments. Lewis later described the students' sessions with Shaw:

Friday was a terrifying day, for then came 'rep' before Dr. Shaw himself. We stood in a double row while he marched, with a twinkle in his eyes behind his spectacles, along our ranks, cane in hand, popping off questions at one or other of us. Hesitation at answering brought a sharp rap on the legs; and failure to reply the added disgrace of being sent to the bottom of the row. Dr. Shaw's grand finale, those Friday afternoons, was an exposition on the laws of the tides with boys acting the roles of the sun, earth and moon in the middle of the room; and woe betide him who confused spring with neap!¹⁷²

There, Abdullah excelled, 'where, by his diligence and ability, he outdistanced his comrades in almost every branch of school work'.¹⁷³ Part of this might be the sheer joy of learning. Part of this joy might be that, for the first time, Abdullah was given a formal and official platform from which he could shine. The South African College School was the first school in Abdullah's extra-familial education where we can say with certainty that he was formally admitted, as evidenced both by the South African College School's

¹⁶⁷ Bernard Lewis, in N. Veitch, *SACS 175: a celebration* (Cape Town: SACS 175 Book Committee 2003), 35.

¹⁶⁸ When he was nineteen, Shaw toured Scotland, collecting mosses with German moss expert, W. P. Schimper, then a professor of Geology and the Director of the Natural History Museum in Strasburg. Shaw published two papers on British mosses in the *Journal of Botany* (London) - one in 1865 and another in 1866. While servicing teaching appointments at Swansea College and a Dailly village school in Ayrshire, Shaw continued his doctoral studies in botany under W. P. Schimper.

¹⁶⁹ The Reverend David Duckworth Fraser and his son, D. D. Fraser Junior, were both Scottish geologists. Father and son emigrated to the Grahamstown area in June 1873. They founded the South African Geological Association with Shaw in 1888 and in 1891, Fraser the Elder was appointed deputy inspector of schools in the Department of Education of the Cape Colony at Port Elizabeth. He remained in this post until 1901. After the death of John Shaw, Rev. Fraser was elected President of the South African Teachers' Association (1890).

¹⁷⁰ Shaw's first post in South Africa was headmaster of Colesberg Collegiate College. There, he studied the heaths of Katberg and Zeederberg.

¹⁷¹ For more information about John Shaw, see entry for John Shaw in S. Mendelssohn and F. Rossouw, eds, *South African bibliography to the year 1925* (London: Mansell, 1997). For more on his work with mosses, see *Cape Monthly Magazine* (Series 2, 1870-1878, Vol. 1, 2 and 17): Papers by Shaw; E. M. Doidge, 'The South African fungi and lichens to the end of 1945' *Bothalia* 5 (1950): 1-1094: see p. 36; E. P. Phillips, 'A brief historical sketch of the development of botanical science in South Africa and the contribution of South Africa to botany', *South African Journal of Science* 27 (1930): 39-80.

¹⁷² Bernard Lewis, in N. Veitch, *SACS 175: a celebration* (Cape Town: SACS 175 Book Committee 2003), 35.

¹⁷³ *Owl* 16 September 1904.

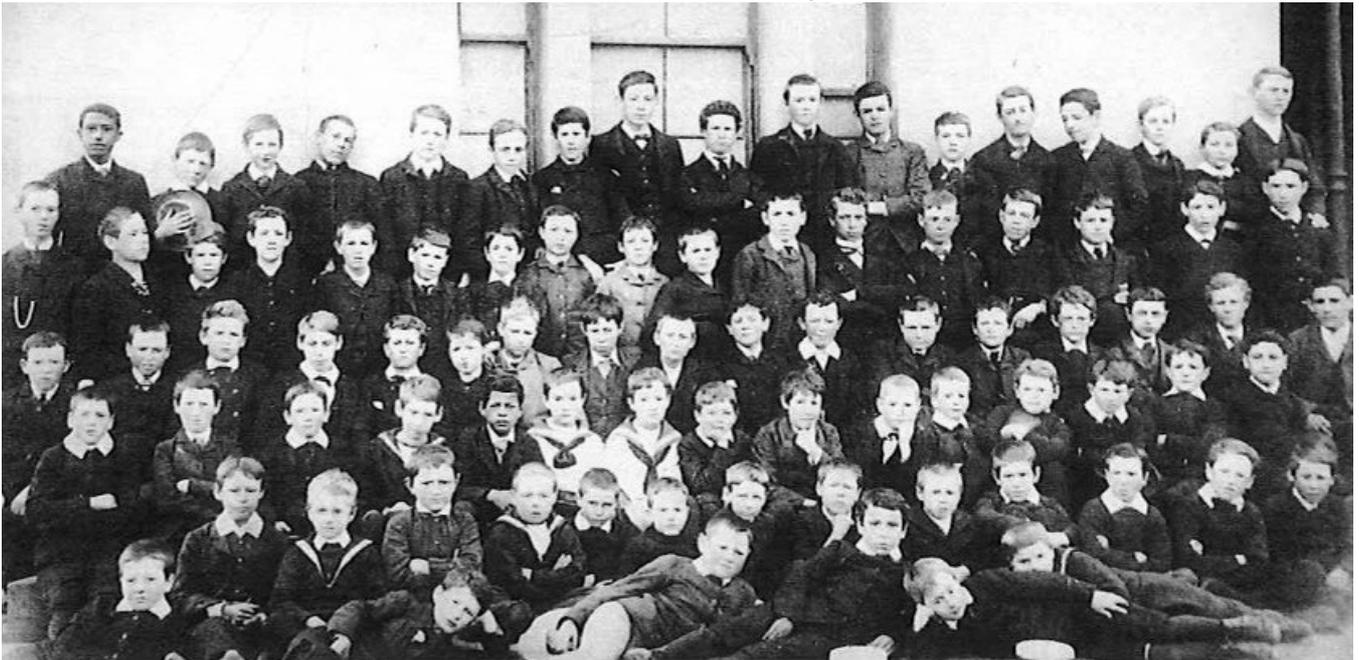


Fig. 2, Photograph.

SOUTH AFRICAN COLLEGE SCHOOL PHOTO (1886)

→ Abdullah is in the back Row, left.

documents and publications, as well as his inclusion in an 1886 school photograph, appearing to be arranged by school year from youngest in the front rows to the eldest in the back rows. His cousin, young Mohamed Dollie, is in the fourth row, the fifth child in from the left, seated left of the Saunders twins in white (see fig. 2).¹⁷⁴

In addition to Shaw, many other teachers at the South African College School were also of Scottish extraction, giving the school a strong Scottish and, in my opinion, Humean influence, particularly towards the sciences.¹⁷⁵ Shaw's own background in the natural sciences naturally accentuated these influences. Contemporary scholars consider Hume's model an attempt to synthesise the conflicting impulses of altruism and self-interest through the mediation of the body.¹⁷⁶ Morality and "moral character" or a cultivated ethos in this Scottish model was, importantly, embodied. The South African College School's pedagogical philosophy closely paralleled the Seminary's – sport¹⁷⁷ and health were integral aspects of a

¹⁷⁴ *SACS 175* also reports that Abdullah's younger brother (this was Ismail, although he was not specified by Veitch) and a 'Dollie cousin' were also students (158). The Dollies' passenger list when they immigrated to London show they only had one son, also named Mohamed. The South African College School Museum has a flipped version of this photograph on display with a listing of the students under 'S.A.C. School in 1886'.

¹⁷⁵ For the South African College School's Scottish teachers of this time, see Veitch, *SACS 175: a celebration* and Ritchie, *The history of the South African College*. For several school activities, even today, students wear Scottish kilts: for photographs, see University of Cape Town, Special Collections: BUZV collection. As to Scottish philosophical influences, see Shaw's writings, a few of which are listed in n. 77.

¹⁷⁶ See, for example, D. Garrett, *Hume* (New York: Routledge, 2014). On the development of personhood via a Scottish morality, moral education, and notions of 'character' and its connections to science, religion, and even race, see: T. Ahnert and S. Manning, eds *Character, Self and Sociability in the Scottish Enlightenment* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). Of particular interest is Chapter 7, 'Aspects of Character and Sociability in Scottish Enlightenment Medicine', 145-163.

¹⁷⁷ Cricket was an active sport at the South African College School at this time, but it cannot be definitely stated to what extent Abdullah might have or if he participated.

holistic education and person. This holistic conceptualisation of body, mind, and soul was so influential, “Physical Education” remains prominent in modern curricula globally. Given that Hume was a major influence on subsequent thinkers like Immanuel Kant, who, in turn, was one of the philosophical fathers of American Transcendentalism, much of the philosophical underpinnings of the pedagogical processes at the South African College School would have been familiar to Seminary-taught Abdullah. This resonance of ideologies between the two schools clearly reinforced for Abdullah that despite difference, universals – human empathy, for example – existed across social divides. To be educated and mentored by Dr. Shaw and other Scotsmen and women, it is unsurprising that when it came time to select a university, Abdullah matriculated at Dr. Shaw's *alma mater*, the University of Glasgow. Indeed, 'when Abdurahman was refused admission to the College, Dr. John Shaw helped arrange for his medical studies at Glasgow university'.¹⁷⁸ Shaw was only able to give a personal letter of support and endorsement because of his pedagogical methods and philosophy, best exemplified through his interactive approach and weekly ‘reps’ with his students. There appears some possibility that the Scottish were somewhat more favourable to non-racial education and social programmes at this time than the English.¹⁷⁹ Throughout this thesis, numerous Scottish-South African connections and marriages emerge.

The family's movements are opaque during Abdullah's years at the South African College School but sometime in early 1888, Khadijah and Abdul were together since Abdullah's younger brother Ismail was born on 16 October 1888 in South Africa.¹⁸⁰ After Abdullah had graduated from the South African College School, Abdul returned to South Africa to help with preparations and then accompany Abdullah to Glasgow.¹⁸¹ Khadijah and the rest of the family later followed, presumably for Ismail's education. Following Abdullah's footsteps, his younger brother Ismail also chose the University of Glasgow for his university studies, earning his Mb ChB from the University of Glasgow on 1 April 1915.¹⁸² Although Abdullah's parents eventually reunited in London, they never returned to South Africa. When Khadijah passed away after Abdul in 1902 at about 55 years of age, she was buried in Willesden New Cemetery. Later, her brother Mohamed and one of her other children – her daughter and Abdullah's sister, Gacilla Mohsena, was buried beside her.¹⁸³

Because little work has been undertaken on Abdullah's early life and the lives of his parents and family, authors have described Abdullah's move to Scotland as the result of racial segregation or the absence of a medical course in Cape Town. Yes, for Abdullah during his early years, there were great social and

¹⁷⁸ The University of Glasgow is the official name but is often also called 'Glasgow University'.

¹⁷⁹ See, for example, J. M. MacKenzie, 'Scots in New Zealand and Elsewhere in the British Empire: An International Perspective', *Immigrants & Minorities* 29, no. 2 (2011): 154-174 and J. M. MacKenzie, 'Essay and reflection: on Scotland and the Empire', *The International History Review* 15, no. 4 (1993): 714-739.

¹⁸⁰ UG/UAS RR: *Registrar's Roll of Graduates and Dates of Birth*, vol. 2, R3/1/1: 1915. Ismail later earned his M.B. at the University of Glasgow as well in 1912.

¹⁸¹ The language is imprecise – both of Abdullah's parents are said to have moved to the U.K. with him (For example, S. Hendricks, 'Tasawwuf (Sufism)', 384 and Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa*, 117). With Khadijah expecting Ismail, this was impossible. Abdullah lodged alone in Glasgow. The only answer is that Abdullah's father must have returned to the Cape to help Abdullah move to Glasgow and settle in there before returning to London.

¹⁸² 'Medical News', *The Lancet* 185 no. 4781 (1915), 837; Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa*, 117.

¹⁸³ General Register Office, Southport, England: Pancras Death Registration Index, Vol. 1B, Page 8, Line 81: Jul-Aug-Sep 1902: Khudeja Abdurahman; A Khan, *My life and experiences* (Khrishnavas international printers, London, 1951), 47. Unfortunately, I have been unable to identify where Abdul was buried.

political changes occurring in Cape Town concerning race. Coupled with the epidemics happening in the city all around him, the world, or at least, South Africa, must have seemed a volatile place to young Abdullah. This is too simplistic. Abdullah's studies abroad were brought about by a combination of factors. Because his father had been largely absent, moving to the United Kingdom allowed Abdullah to be closer to his father and repair that estranged relationship. There were echoes of this in Abdullah's later life. Despite valuing girls and daughters, Abdullah's relatives reported he felt sons were essential. Moreover, Abdullah selected medicine at Glasgow, a course unavailable at the South African College until 1920.¹⁸⁴ Another factor was the Shaw's personal intervention after Abdullah's rejection from the South African College. The South African College School and Headmaster Shaw had both influence and power on Abdullah's intellectual development. Shaw ensured further academic opportunities were open to him. In Abdullah's later life, he paid Shaw's kindnesses forward. As much as he was able, 'no deserving case was turned down by him. Many a parent whose resources were unable to stand the strain of higher education appealed to him for assistance, and they did not appeal in vain'.¹⁸⁵ The South African College School had a profound effect on Abdullah as it was the first school that included him as a full student. Having had a taste of this measure of equality after a childhood of set-apart mission schools must have had tremendous power on a young man. Moreover, Abdullah no doubt made a psychological connection between the South African College School's relative non-racialism and the school's strong Scottish influence.

¹⁸⁴ Establishment of a medical school took from 1902 until 1918. 1920 was the inaugural year. For more about the development of the medical school, see Ritchie, *The history of the South African College*.

¹⁸⁵ Raynard, *Dr. Abdurahman*, 29.

Chapter Two
BECOMING 'THE DOCTOR OF DISTRICT SIX'
Coming of Age & Homecoming

Before Abdullah set sail for Glasgow, his mother's uncle, the imam at the Main Road Mosque in Claremont, conducted a service for Abdullah to bless his well-being and for his success abroad.¹⁸⁶ Years later, Abdurahman established a school there for Muslim children. Even when he was young, as an 'old Malay friend' of Dorothea Fairbridge's later recounted 'meditatively', Abdullah was 'a very clever boy ... He knew how to get the wisdom of the Malays and the wisdom of the Christians'.¹⁸⁷ In a new country, Abdullah found his liminal status intensified. In South Africa, his primary differences were colour and religion, in Glasgow, new dimensions of language and nationality were added. This chapter discusses Abdullah's studies at the University of Glasgow and meeting his first wife Nellie with some discussion on the state of Muslim-Christian unions in the Cape. It then describes Abdullah's homecoming to South Africa, early examples of Muslim politicisation, and his ascension to 'The Doctor of District Six', a City Councillor, and the President of the African Political Organisation. Family networks and mobility, as in chapter one, continues to loom large in Abdullah's life.

The University of Glasgow (1888¹⁸⁸ to 1893)

The medical school opened in 1751 with the appointment of William Cullen. Over the next 150 years, medicine underwent rapid evolution and incorporation into official institutions and formal oversight. In 1858, a bitter and enduring dispute regarding medical licences was finally resolved between the licensing body and the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons in Glasgow when the Medical Act made a diploma, degree, or licence granted by a recognised examining body the pre-requisite for admission to the Medical Register and thus permission to practise.¹⁸⁹ Students now had to pass examinations and obtain formal credentials, as approved by the Act's new General Medical Council. The Council took charge of evaluating and enforcing standards of medical education. Two years later, in 1860, Commissioners under Scotland's Universities Act enacted ordinances that normalised the Bachelor of Medicine (MB) and the Master of Surgery (CM) degrees. This standardisation raised the prestige of students like Abdullah, who qualified

¹⁸⁶ Interview with Mrs. Gadija Wentzel (née Abdurahman), Dr. A's niece, in M. Ajam, 'The raison d'être of the Muslim Mission Primary School in Cape Town and environs from 1860 to 1980 with special reference to the role of Dr. A Abdurahman in the modernisation of Islam-oriented schools' (PhD Dissertation, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1986), 190.

¹⁸⁷ His name was Hadje Talip. L. Duff-Gordon, *Letters from the Cape*, annotated Dorothea Fisher (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), 54.

¹⁸⁸ Dates are contested. W. J. de Kock, *Dictionary of South African Biography*, I (Pretoria: Nasionale Boekhandel BPK, 1968), 1 and R. E. van der Ross, *Say it out loud: The APO Presidential Addresses and other major political speeches 1906-1940 of Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman* (Cape Town: Western Cape Institute for Historical Research, 1990), 3 gives 1888 but W. J. van Beek, in a letter to the *Sun*, 8 March 1940, reported seeing Abdurahman in 1889, shortly before his departure for Scotland. I could not find outbound records for Abdullah in passenger lists to confirm the year. However, as the UG Registry gives 1888 as the year of registration, I take this year to be the authority on this matter (University of Glasgow, University Archive Services (hereafter UG/UAS), Records of the Registry (hereafter RR): *Registrar's Roll of Graduates and Dates of Birth*, vol. 2, R3/1/1: 1893)

¹⁸⁹ See A. L. Brown and M. Moss, *The University of Glasgow: 1451 – 2001* (Edinburgh: University of Glasgow 2001), 22.

under these new standards.¹⁹⁰ This professionalisation of medicine had the social consequence of elevating the status of doctors and integrated them into a new emerging elite of bourgeoisie. Abdullah and many of his family, friends, and associates pursued medicine as an entrée into this new professional class. In 1937, Abdullah's daughter told a visitor that there were only about ten coloured doctors, almost all of whom were either Gools or Abdurahmans.¹⁹¹ During Abdullah's time, lectures moved to the new University buildings at Gilmorehill in 1870, but students continued morning clinical lessons at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary.¹⁹² A new Surgical House had been erected in 1861.¹⁹³ Why Abdullah chose surgery over other specialisations is unknown. Physicians had long held a prestigious position in society, but 'surgery' had been denigrated for centuries as barbarism. "Barber-surgeons" were typically considered low-status and suffered from ill-repute until the development of academic surgery¹⁹⁴ under the more widely respected "medicine".¹⁹⁵ Its rise from social pariah to a respected profession was profound, and Scotland stood at the centre of this cultural evolution. During the 1870's, the University changed in other ways as well, shifting their enrolment focus from the upper classes to expanding access to young men and women from the urban and commercial classes.¹⁹⁶ The shift in university gestalt towards a more inclusive, egalitarian culture permeated administration, curriculum, and certainly the impressionable young minds of Abdullah and their other students. A University class notebook dating from this time provides more details into Abdullah's curriculum. One key element, signifying a transformation in medical practise, was the shift from an instructional, authoritarian relationship between physician and patient to an increasing emphasis on bedside-manner and patient-centred care. The notebook sternly instructs students: 'In dealing with patients, be kind in manner and gentle in manipulation, so as to secure their confidence ... Let them, when you can, tell their own story, and suggest as little as possible'.¹⁹⁷ Abdullah's training in this compassionate mode of communication consequently shifts his relationship with his clients towards a more intimate and confessional nature, likely cementing his popularity and the affections of his community.

¹⁹⁰ M. W. Dupree and A. Crowther, 'A Profile of the Medical Profession in Scotland in the Early Twentieth Century: The Medical Directory as a Historical Source', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 65:2 (1991): 219 – 221. For more information, see Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, Archive Collections: GB 250 RCPGS 1: Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow.

¹⁹¹ UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library (hereafter UCLA): 2051 Ralph J. Bunche papers: Fieldwork notebooks: Capetown, Bastoland, Fort Hare, Thaba 'Nachu 1937 (Box 20, Folder 3): Entry, 22 October.

¹⁹² W. Downie, *The Early Physicians and Surgeons of the Western Infirmary* (Glasgow/London: Privately Printed 1923), 9

¹⁹³ It was here that Dr. Joseph Lister (b. 1827 – d. 1912) pioneered antiseptic surgery. For more information, see Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, Archive Collections: GB 250 RCPGS 28: Glasgow Royal Infirmary. Further specialised departments opened in the 1870's, including Ear, Nose and Throat and women's medicine.

¹⁹⁴ The two professors of surgery during Abdullah's tenure were larger-than-life men who weren't just bookish academics, but field-tested surgeons: Sir George Husband Baird McLeod (1869-1892) and Chair of Department, George Buchanan (1874-1900). Both men were imposing figures and veterans of the Crimean War. For MacLeod, see: J. A. Shepherd, *The Crimean Doctors: A History of the British Medical Services in the Crimean War*, Volume 1 (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 1991), 412-415, 430, 444, 643 and for his own work: G. H. B. MacLeod, *An exposition of surgical clinical teaching in Glasgow: being the lecture introductory to the winter course of clinical surgery delivered at the Western Infirmary of Glasgow (University Clinic)* (Glasgow: Western Infirmary of Glasgow, 1875). For more on Buchanan, see: Shepherd, *The Crimean Doctors*, 443-445, 641; Also see G. Buchanan, *Clinical surgery: being the substance of an address delivered in the University of Glasgow, 4th November 1874, on the occasion of the inauguration of the Chair* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Library, 1876).

¹⁹⁵ S. M. Tidskr, 'From barber to surgeon-the process of professionalization', *Svensk medicinhistorisk tidskrift* 11 no. 1 (2007): 69 – 87.

¹⁹⁶ P. L. Robertson, 'The Development of an Urban University: Glasgow, 1860 – 1914', *History of Education Quarterly* 30 no. 1 (1990): 47 – 78.

¹⁹⁷ G. H. B. MacLeod, *Clinical class note book: surgery* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, n.d). See *History of the Glasgow School of Medicine - A Significant Medical History* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 2004).



Fig. 3, Photograph.
PORTRAIT OF YOUNG ABDULLAH, UNDATED
→ *Probably in Glasgow or London, upon graduation*

Abdullah graduated with an MB CM degree on 27 July 1893¹⁹⁸ in a class of 146 and passed the examinations for the Diploma of Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians (LRCP)¹⁹⁹ in Edinburgh & Glasgow and then the examinations for the postgraduate diploma and membership in the Royal College of Surgeons (MRCS). Abdullah must have been single-minded in his studies. A thorough review through student organisation records and publications yielded no mention of his participation. There were two societies that, if Abdullah was involved in student activities, seem most likely to have counted him as a member: the Medico-Chirurgical Society and the Dialectic Society. The former due to his course program and the latter in light of his later '21 Club', a debating club. Regrettably, neither society's archives contain

¹⁹⁸ UG/UAS RR: *Registrar's Roll of Graduates and Dates of Birth*, vol. 2, R3/1/1: 1893; 'Medical News' *The Lancet* 142 no. 3649 (05 August 1893): 349.

¹⁹⁹ The LRCP used to be reserved for those who had only graduated with a Bachelor's but wanted to practise medicine in a small measure, but had become a popular initial qualification in the mid-nineteenth century, often taken in combination with the MRCS afterwards.

membership lists from Abdurahman's tenure, and his name does not arise in the societies' other papers. Abdullah may not have participated much in extracurricular activities because he spent many of his holidays and leisure time visiting his parents and extended family in London. His time in Glasgow seems to have been, at least at first, an isolated one. The 1891 census in April affirms Abdullah boarding alone at 14 Strone Terrace in Govan Parish, Lanarkshire.²⁰⁰ Until one day, 'while doing electioneering work for the Chancellor of the University of Glasgow,²⁰¹ Helen James was introduced to young Abdurahman, a medical student, by a fellow student, another South African.²⁰² They became friends, and in the home of the James family, Abdurahman was spared the loneliness of a stranger in a strange land'.²⁰³

Nellie and the Jameses

Helen 'Nellie' Potter James was born on 2 September 1872 in Greenock, Renfrew, Scotland²⁰⁴ to John Cumming James, an accountant, and his wife Harriet (née Stout).²⁰⁵ John, born around 1829, was originally from Forfar, Forfarshire. Harriet, who was about ten years John's junior, was originally from East Kilbride, Lanarkshire. The couple married in Milton, Glasgow on 15 November 1871.²⁰⁶ Together John and Harriet lived at 110 Moncur Street in the Glasgow Barony Parish in 1881 with their four children: Nellie was the eldest at nine-years-old, followed by Arthur (8), William (5), and Robert (2).²⁰⁷ It seems all of them survived to adulthood. Harriet's activities beside motherhood are not known. Nellie seems to have had a close relationship with her paternal grandparents. In a 1948 interview, Nellie recalled, 'As a young girl, she spent her summer holidays in Forfar [where her father was born], and played in the neighbouring gardens of Glamis, the home of the Earl and Countess Strathmore,²⁰⁸ the parent of our

²⁰⁰ Abdullah was listed under the mistranscribed name 'Abdulloh Raahman'. He lodged with Jane Pollock and her daughter Mary, along with another boarder, a 32-year-old German engineering draughtsman named Otto R. Anbuhl. General Register Office for Scotland, Edinburgh (hereafter GROS): Scotland Census: Govan Parish, Lanarkshire 1891.

²⁰¹ It is unknown what the relationship between the University of Glasgow and/or the Chancellor with the James family. A search of the UG/UAS RR show there was no John James, Harriet James/Harriet Stout or any of the other James children in their records.

²⁰² I have been unable to positively identify this compatriot. The only other South African whose years in Medical School intersects with Abdullah was a Johnstone Brown from Ficksburg, Orange Free State, who also graduated with an MB CM in 1893. He went on to become a ship surgeon. (UG/UAS RR: Registrar's Roll of Graduates and Dates of Birth, vol. 2, R3/1/1: 1893). However, in *The Lancet's* 'Medical News', Brown is listed as being from Scotland ('Medical News', *The Lancet* 142 no. 3649 (05 August 1893): 349.

²⁰³ Nellie Abdurahman, interviewed by Zelda Friedlander, *Spotlight* 12 March 1948, copy in UCT MA: BC 580, Zelda Friedlander papers.

²⁰⁴ GROS: Scotland, Births and Baptisms: No. 6035516 (microfilm): Middle-East-West Parishes, Greenock, Renfrew: Helen Potter James, 02 Sep 1872. Most secondary sources give her year of birth as 1877. These all seem to derive the date from of Nellie's estate papers; in them, her is listed as age 76 upon her death in 1953 (Western Cape Archives and Records, Cape Archives, State Archives Depot, Cape Town (hereafter KAB)/Master's Office, Supreme Court Cape Town (hereafter MOOC) 3349/53: Estate Papers, Abdurahman, Helen Potter, 1953: Death Notice). However, it is much more likely that the census data is the accurate one and is the one taken here as the accurate year.

²⁰⁵ Most mentions of Nellie's father in the historiography of Abdullah indicate he was a solicitor. This seems to come from R. E. van der Ross' account in *Say it out loud: The APO Presidential Addresses and other major political speeches 1906-1940 of Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman* (Cape Town: Western Cape Institute for Historical Research, 1990), 4. However, according to the 1881 and 1891 Scotland Census, John reported himself to be an accountant and no professional or directory listings or other records (census, electoral registers) suggest otherwise. (GROS: Scotland Census: Govan Parish, Lanarkshire 1881, 1891).

²⁰⁶ GROS: Marriage Register: No. 6035516 (microfilm): Milton Parish, Glasgow, Lanark: Jno. C. James and Harriet Stout, 15 Nov 1871.

²⁰⁷ GROS: Scotland Census: Govan Parish, Lanarkshire 1881; GROS: Scotland, Births and Baptisms: No. 6035516 (microfilm): Middle-East-West Parishes, Greenock, Renfrew: Arthur Burns James 01 April 1874.

²⁰⁸ This was Claude George Bowes-Lyon, the 14th and 1st Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne (b. 14 March 1855 – d. 7 November 1944), styled as Lord Glamis from 1865 to 1904 and his wife, Cecilia Cavendish-Bentinck (m. 1881; d. 1938). They were parents of Queen Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon the Queen Mother and the maternal grandparents of Queen Elizabeth II.

present queen'.²⁰⁹ John and Harriet were members of Scotland's emerging professional class.²¹⁰ Two years before Abdullah graduated from University, the 1891 census shows the James family resided at 31 Bank Street in Govan Parish, Lanarkshire with two lodgers; 58-year-old coachman John Carmack and 29-year-old Jemima Milligan and her six-month-old son Alexander. Nellie, now eighteen, was listed as a machinist.²¹¹ John vanishes from the household, and there is no other record for him in the census. In all likelihood, John passed away sometime between 1881 and 1891.

John is said to have been affiliated with the Scottish Labour Party and worked securing free and compulsory education for Scottish children.²¹² In the Scottish Education Act of 1872, approximately 1,000 school boards formed in Scotland and, in contrast to England, the boards immediately utilised their new power to enforce school attendance.²¹³ Scotland rejected poverty as a legitimate reason for evading compulsory education. Some assistance, supplied under the Poor Law, was administered by the School Attendance Committee. The boards were therefore freed up to establish and build schools.²¹⁴ Despite the improvements of the 1870's for Scottish education, demand still outstripped availability. Access to higher learning remained limited for the children of the poor.²¹⁵ Through the continuing petitions of activists, possibly including Nellie's father, a standardised Leaving Certificate Examination was instituted in 1888 to ensure educational quality across the country and school fees were abolished in 1890. In its place was a universal, state-funded educational system with common leaving examinations that was, at least in conception, free for all.²¹⁶ Perhaps the success of education reform in Scotland made the failure in South Africa that much more of a graphic contrast for Nellie. Decades later in 1948, Nellie reflected on these early years in an interview, 'What had impressed [her] on her arrival [in South Africa] was the fact that no secular public schools existed for Coloured children, who, if they did not attend Mission Schools, few in number, were deprived of the opportunity of attending school at all. Then, as the years passed, schooling for her own two daughters presented a problem'.²¹⁷ Abdullah's history shows little activism before he met

²⁰⁹ Nellie Abdurahman, interviewed by Zelda Friedlander, *Spotlight* 12 March 1948, copy in UCT MA: BC 580, Zelda Friedlander papers. I have been unable to identify John's roots in Forfar, but the only John James born within the same time frame residing near Glamis Castle was one in Angus of Dundee Parish. Living on Thorter Row in the docks, William and Cathrine James had seven children, of which John was the fifth eldest as successful merchants. I suggest that this might be James' family, but there is no definitive connection. GROS: Scotland Census: Dundee Parish 1841.

²¹⁰ T. R. Gourvish, *The Rise of the Professions in Later Victorian Britain, 1867-1900* eds. T. R. Gourvish and O'Day (London: Macmillan Education, 1988), 13. It is worth noting that, after the Act of 1858, there was a sharp increase in the medical professions feeding into this new emergent class. For example: J. Jenkinson, *Scottish Medical Societies, 1731-1939* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993).

²¹¹ GROS: Scotland Census: Govan Parish, Lanarkshire 1891.

²¹² S.Y. Gool, 'The Gools of Cape Town - A Family Memoir A South African Muslim family in search of radical modernity' (Unpublished manuscript, n.d.), 17; On involvement with education: R. E. van der Ross, *Say it out Loud*, p.3. Unfortunately, neither of these two sources identify their sources for this information and I have been unable to find evidence or more information on John's role or involvement in Scottish education through the British National Archives and newspaper searches.

²¹³ O. and S. G. Checkland, *Industry and Ethos: Scotland, 1832 - 1914* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989), 112-13.

²¹⁴ Ibid, 112-13. An umbrella office, the Scottish Education Department, was tasked with the overall administration of all the school boards. A. J. Lindsay, 'Sources for the study of education in the Scottish Record Office', *Scottish Archives: the Journal of the Scottish Records Association* 3 (1997): 61-68.

²¹⁵ W. M. Humes and H. M. Paterson, 'Scottish Culture and Scottish Education 1800-1980', *British Journal of Educational Studies* 32 no 2 (1984):180-181. For an entire generation following the Act, most classrooms were overcrowded, with as dismal a teacher to student ratio as 1:70. Struggling to cope with resource limitations, rote learning became *de rigueur* at the lower levels (O. and S. G. Checkland, *Industry and Ethos*, 112-13)

²¹⁶ For example, see R. Anderson, 'The history of Scottish education pre-1980', in *Scottish Education: Post-Devolution* ed. T. G. K. Bryce and W. M. Humes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 219-28.

²¹⁷ Nellie Abdurahman, interviewed by Zelda Friedlander, *Spotlight* 12 March 1948, copy in UCT MA: BC580: Zelda Friedlander Papers.

Nellie. His politicisation could have resulted from political debates and discussions in the James' family home, particularly around education. Certainly, Nellie seems inspired by her father's purported activities – she served on the board of several welfare and charity organisations at the Cape.²¹⁸ But for Abdullah, locating the home as a site for education, debate, and political discussions could just as easily have come from his family background with informal *madrasahs* and other community meetings often taking place in private residences. If anything, the parallel between the James' home and those more familiar to Abdullah functioning both as debate halls, education venues, and community gathering spaces must have struck him.

The Marriage of Abdullah and Nellie

The details of Abdullah and Nellie's marriage and the couple's movements between Abdullah's graduation in July 1893 and his permanent resettlement in Cape Town in 1902 are murky. Nellie and Abdullah's grandson, in an email read at the opening of the Cissie Gool Plaza at the University of Cape Town, reported that Abdullah took an internship in London²¹⁹ after graduation. Abdullah's obituary in the *South African Medical Journal* reports he held a house appointment for six months and then conducted postgraduate studies. But Abdullah does not seem to have practised medicine in London. The assortment of the United Kingdom medical registers, college rolls, and directories between 1893 and 1897 do not list him. And although he passed his MRCS, as a member instead of a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons (RCS), he is excluded from their rolls.²²⁰ The 'house appointment' may allude to Abdullah studying for his MRCS examinations in London, not an appointment *per se*.²²¹ Abdullah's move to London from Glasgow after graduation was a natural choice. Abdul was already in London, and it seems Khadijah's brother, Mohamed and his family, disembarked in London on 9 October 1893 to provide their children with education following the raising of the colour bar.²²² There is no record of Khadijah journeying with the Dollies, but it would be reasonable that she and the rest of the Abdurahman brood, for similar reasons, migrated to London to join their father at around the same time. Khadijah and the family joined her husband in London in 1891 or early 1892.²²³ A 1927 edition of 'Old Abdol' and Betsy's friend Lucie's *Letters from the Cape* features plates of Abdul and Khadijah. Khadijah is said in her plate to be 'nearly' 50-years-old and Abdul was already an old man. These portraits must have been commissioned in London, sometime around 1897.²²⁴ With Abdul and Khadijah's years apart while she was in Cape Town and he was

²¹⁸ Indeed, this is exactly what R. E. van der Ross claims. See R. E. van der Ross, *Say it out loud: The APO Presidential Addresses and other major political speeches 1906-1940 of Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman* (Cape Town: Western Cape Institute for Historical Research, 1990), 4.

²¹⁹ In email communication with the author, Clare Harrison with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow was also unable to find further records regarding Abdurahman's 'internship'.

²²⁰ The rolls detailing the fellows of the RCS are held in the volumes of Plarr's *Lives of the Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons*.

²²¹ 'Obituary: Dr. A. Abdurahman', *South African Medical Journal* xiv, (940), 99-100; A. Digby, 'Early Black doctors in South Africa' (*The Journal of African History* 46, no. 03 (2005): 448.

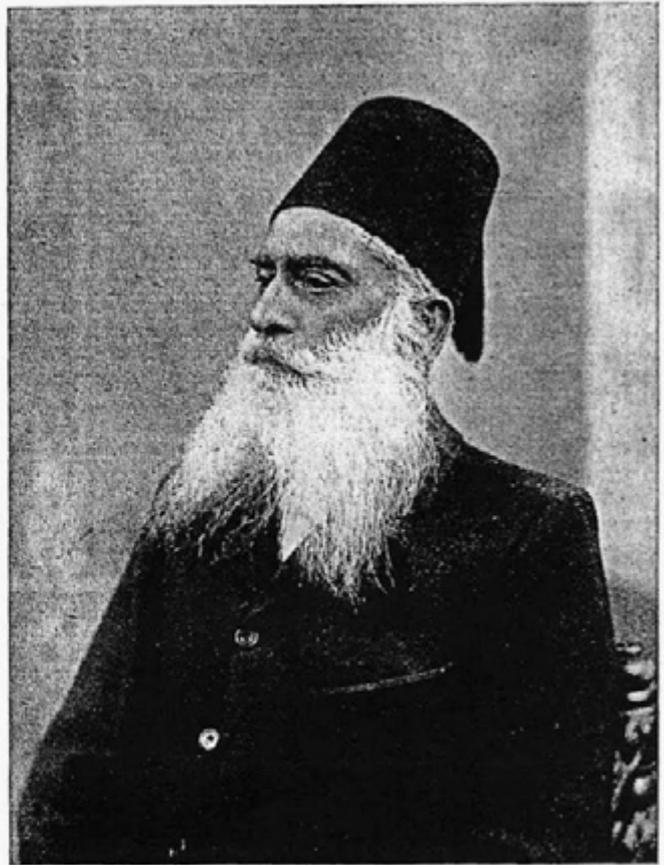
²²² The eldest Dollie was a daughter, 17, followed by a son, 11, and the youngest, a daughter, 10. They are not named in the passenger lists. (The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, Surrey, England: Board of Trade: Commercial and Statistical Department and successors (hereafter TNA/BOT/CSD): Inwards Passenger Lists, BT26: 9 October 1893). On the migration of the family being due to the colour bar, see H. J. and R. Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950* (Aylesbury, UK: Penguin, 1969), 117. Mohamed, senior passed away in 1906 (General Register Office, Southport, England: Brentford, Middlesex Death Registration Index 1906: Hadji Mahommed Dollie). Mohamed only had one son, also named Mohamed, who attended the South African College School with Abdullah for a time and also became a doctor.

²²³ This is the most likely date since because Abdul liquidated his assets and closed up accounts in the Cape in 1891. KAB/MOOC 91: Liquidation and Distribution Account, Ragman, Abdol. Alias Hadje Abdachman, 1891.

²²⁴ Khadijah's death notice reports that she was about 55 at the time of her death in 1902. She was about 50 in 1897 and Abdul passed away in 1898. These portraits



KHADIJA DOLLIE
wife of Abdul Rachman. Taken when nearly 50 years of age
'The prettiest Malay girl in Cape Town' of the letters
and the mother of Dr. Abdurahman



ABDUL RACHMAN
'the young Malay student at Al Azhar'
as an old man

Fig. 4, Etching.

KHADIJAH & ABDUL 'HADJI' ABDURAHMAN (C. 1897)

London, and then Abdullah in Scotland while the rest of the family was in London, these few years between Abdullah's 1893 graduation and his father's 1898 passing were the first and last time in a long time that all of Abdullah's nuclear family were all in one place. During this time, 'Abdullah Abdurahman' emerged. As with all boys, growing up condenses who they could be into who they are. For Abdullah, this natural progression was paralleled by the social treatment of his name. Before the mid-1890's, his name in records showed great variability. When he first arrived in Glasgow, he reported his name to the census taker as 'Abdulloh Raahman'. However, by the time *The Lancet* was publishing his University-leaving examination results,²²⁵ 'Abdullah Abdurahman' became the standard and continued to be so for the rest of his life. Later reports from family members suggested that this change and insistence upon 'Abdullah Abdurahman' was a conscious and intentional move on Abdullah's part as a reflection of his self-

²²⁵ 'Medical News', *The Lancet* 142 no. 3649 (1893), 347 – 350; and 'Medical News', *The Lancet* 142 no. 3648 (1893): 285.

confidence.²²⁶ These accounts are too cynical. Abdullah was not the first to adopt 'Abdurahman'. His father had already begun to style his surname as 'Abdurahman' before he left South Africa. The family followed. Ismail and Ebrahim have only ever styled their surnames as 'Abdurahman', as did Khadijah and all of Abdullah's siblings.²²⁷ In any case, after Glasgow, save the odd anomaly or two, Abdullah's name was stabilised.

Nellie and Abdullah married in England under Muslim rites in 1894.²²⁸ There has been some debate among scholars as to when they married, but Abdullah's travel records finalise the 1894 date. In Abdullah's solo sailing on 30 September 1893 from Southampton, Abdullah declared himself unmarried.²²⁹ On 28 Dec 1894, he sailed again for the Cape, alone, this time declaring himself married.²³⁰ As soon as Abdullah landed at the Cape, he registered in the 1895 South African medical register.²³¹ Nellie reported to the press in 1928 that she arrived at the Cape in 1896.²³² Nellie and Abdullah's eldest child was born that May. Abdullah set to work building his practise at 99 Loop Street. His services were listed in the 1896 and 1897 *South African Medical Directory, Cape Colony*. Sometime between 1898 and 1901, Abdullah returned to London leaving Nellie behind in the Cape, but no documents pinpoint the dates of travel.²³³ Abdullah surfaces in the 1901 census residing alone as a lodger with the Norman family in Lambeth, London as a 'chemistry student'.²³⁴ A report in the Ottoman State Archives shows Abdullah was still furthering his studies in London in September 1901.²³⁵ Two crucial pieces of information during this period is that Abdullah's father passed away in 1898,²³⁶ and his mother followed in 1902.²³⁷ Both were in London. Abdullah's extended stay in London away from Nellie and his two young daughters was indubitably the result of one or both of his parents' health. Although Abdullah never registered as a pharmacist or pharmacy assistant and never listed pharmacy as one of his capabilities or qualifications, there *is* further evidence that undertook further study. In 1900, Abdullah added a new service to his city directory listing.

²²⁶ Rustum Gool, in telephone conversation with Patricia van der Spuy 23 February 2002, cited in P. van der Spuy, "'Not only 'the younger daughter of Dr. Abdurahman': A feminist exploration of early influences on the political development of Cissie Gool' (PhD Dissertation, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 2002), 36. This is also mentioned by his daughter Begum that it was Abdullah who changed the family's surname. (University of London, Senate House Libraries, Institute of Commonwealth Studies: ICS2 Abdullah Abdurahman Papers (hereafter UOL/ICS2): Dr. Hendrickse's Notes, n.d. 3).

²²⁷ In Khadijah's death notice, her surname was also given as 'Abdurahman'.

²²⁸ One of Abdullah's grandsons believes that Abdullah returned to Cape Town in 1895 and was later followed by Nellie in 1899: Rustum Gool, email, read at the opening of the Cissie Gool Plaza at the University of Cape Town, 3 July 2001; Married by Muslim rites: KAB/MOOC 3349/53: Estate Papers, Abdurahman, Helen Potter. Born James, 1953. Historian R. E. van der Ross writes that they married in Scotland. Van Der Ross, *Say it Loud*, 4. This thesis also takes Nellie's estate declaration that the marriage was in England as authoritative.

²²⁹ TNA/BOT/CSD: Outwards Passenger Lists, BT27/149: 30 September 1893. (See Appendix A).

²³⁰ TNA/BOT/CSD: Outwards Passenger Lists, BT27/165: 28 December 1894. There is an error in the books, where Abdullah is marked as 39-years of age (See Appendix B).

²³¹ Abdullah is registered on 26 January 1895 *The Medical and Pharmacy Register for the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, vol III Covering the Period from 1st July 1894, to 30th June, 1895* (Cape Town: J. C. Juta & Co, 1895), 51.

²³² *Cape Times* 11 July 1928.

²³³ Abdullah registered his second daughter's birth in the Cape at the end of 1897, so the earliest date of travel was after that time.

²³⁴ TNA Public Record Office (hereafter PRO): Census Returns of England and Wales, 1901: Class: RG13; Piece: 422; Folio: 51; Page: 32; Household 238: Abdulla R Aldurchman 1901.

²³⁵ Due to Abdullah's relationship to Ataulah Bey, son of Aku Bakr Effendi, he sometimes came up in those records, especially as Ataulah Bey worked as a diplomat for the Caliphate. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (The Ottoman State Archives of the Prime Minister's Office, hereafter OSA), Yıldız Mütenevvi Maruzat Evrakı (Y.MTV): File:191, Folder:15, 5 September 1901.

²³⁶ According to an assortment of obituaries, see fn. 148.

²³⁷ See chapter one, fn. 72.

In addition to surgery, he now also boasted a dispensary on Hanover Street.²³⁸ It was only after Khadijah's passing that 'Mr. and Mrs. Abdurahman' set sail for the Cape on 6 September 1902.²³⁹ When Nellie set sail to join Abdullah is unknown. She travelled alone, leaving their daughters with family or family friends. Between at least one house-appointment, two elderly parents, a new marriage, postgraduate study, young children, and getting a new practise going, there is plenty to suggest Abdullah was highly mobile during these years, attending to family matters and responsibilities in both Cape Town and London. After these 15 years of *wanderjahre*, Abdullah finally returned to Cape Town permanently. His first appearance on the Cape voter rolls was in 1902.²⁴⁰ Some things can be ascertained from this tumultuous period of Abdullah's life. First, as a recent graduate just beginning to set up a private practise, it is unreasonable to assume Abdullah was drawing a significant income. Therefore, the frequent travel of both himself and Nellie must have been provided for by family funds. Related to the first, Abdullah, like his father before him, owes his socio-economic status only in part to his personal merit and ingenuity. Abdullah and the rest of his siblings were only able to relocate for study due to their father's education and assets, which were only possible through his grandparents. The foundation of trans-generational assets and property were vital to Abdullah becoming 'The Doctor of District Six'.

When Abdullah proposed marriage to Nellie, he 'warned her of the difficulties that lay ahead as the Scottish wife of an Indian medical practitioner in South Africa, where racial problems and prejudices were much to the fore'.²⁴¹ Despite Abdullah's deep devotion to Islam, he did not seem to begrudge Nellie her Christian practises and traditions. Even after marriage, Nellie continued to observe Christian practises. Her annual Christmas dinner festivities, for example, went to become her daughter Cissie's tradition as well.²⁴² At least one source insists she never converted.²⁴³ Dorothea's observation about Abdullah, the boy who was devoted to Islam even as he harboured genuine respect for other faiths, also proved true for Abdullah, the man. In a series of articles published in memoriam of Abdullah in the *Sun* after his passing, John Henry Raynard, whose 40-year relationship with Abdullah spanned the spectrum between close ally and confidante to intense adversary and back again, wrote, 'I have never heard him speak with any thing but reverence of religious matters ... It was in this respect that he would brook no ill-treatment of the Native.'²⁴⁴ [...] He told me that as a Moslem, his religion as expounded in the Koran forbade him to

²³⁸ *Juta's directory of Cape Town, suburbs and Simon's Town, 1900* (Cape Town : J.C. Juta, 1900).

²³⁹ TNA/BOT/CSD: Outwards Passenger Lists, BT27/391: 6 September 1902. (See Appendix C). I have found no records linked to Nellie sailing to the Cape between 1893 and 1902 nor of any married or unmarried Scottish woman whose passenger details (age, for example) alludes to the possibility of Nellie potentially travelling under an alias. Van der Spuy ('Not only 'the younger daughter', 28) states that Nellie, upon marriage, was given the Arabic name 'Wahida', although Nellie never used it. The author does not attribute a source for this. If true, this suggests that some of Nellie's journeys may have been under a pseudonym. Although I found no travel records for 'Wahida', perhaps some other alias was used. If this was the case, the reasons for it are unknown.

²⁴⁰ *Voters' roll / Corporation of the City of Capetown* (Capetown: Townshend, Taylor and Snashall, Printers, 1902), District 6, Roll Number 25. It notes that Abdullah votes in District 3.

²⁴¹ Nellie Abdurahman, interviewed by Zelda Friedlander, *Spotlight* 12 March 1948, copy in University of Cape Town, Special Collections, Manuscripts and Archives (hereafter UCT MA): BC 580, Zelda Friedlander papers.

²⁴² The ritual of Christmas Dinner is just one example. For others, see S. Gool, interviewed on videotape by Gairoonisa Paleker, University of Cape Town Centre for Popular Memory, n. d.

²⁴³ B. Barrow, 'Abdurahman, Shady Saint', *Drum*, January 1956, 53

²⁴⁴ 'Native' was often used at the time to differentiate between more recent non-white immigrants to South Africa in contrast to peoples already living in the region at the time of European contact. Although these groups are typically classified racially as 'Black,' they too are a heterogeneous group that have creolised through centuries of migrations and numerous cultural encounters for thousands of years, both in Africa and beyond, notably, through the Indian Ocean trade routes dominated by the Islamic world along the Swahili coast. Compare with other terms (footnotes 26, 56, 110).

regard the Native as anything but as a brother, a fellow human being created by the same God, and equal in the sight on Allah. The passion for justice by which the Doctor was animated ... was part and parcel of his personal religion'.²⁴⁵ Likewise, Abdullah never overtly asserted his faith in his public image. In contrast to private conversations such as the one with Raynard, Islam in Abdullah's public statements and speeches were much more opaque. 'There was the love of the well-turned phrase, the resounding rhetoric, the quotations, often lines of verse, and the recourse to Biblical sources', said van der Ross. 'It is noticeable that where Abdurahman made a religious reference, it was always from the Bible, never the Koran, which could be because his appeal was addressed so largely to Whites'.²⁴⁶ To understand the balance Abdullah had to strike between Christian and Muslim, and why, this thesis turns to a little background and context into Muslim-Christian relations at the Cape, with a particular focus on interfaith marriage and children.

Muslim-Christian Relations at the Cape

The legitimacy of marriage by Muslim custom in the Cape Colony at the close of the nineteenth century is unclear. Cape magistrates have been authorised to perform civil marriages for non-Christians since 1860, but the status of imams as marriage officers and the legitimacy of marriages officiated by imams remains muddled.²⁴⁷ Abdullah and Nellie's marriage was not officiated 'by a recognised marriage officer',²⁴⁸ but it seems the couple could have chosen to register, and thereby legitimise the marriage. But they never registered at the Cape. The 'Special License' rolls list few Muslims throughout the 1890's: one couple in 1895 and only two in 1896.²⁴⁹ Therefore, upon their arrival at the Cape, Abdullah and Nellie's marriage could have been considered an illegitimate but it does not appear they nor their children ever encountered problems. None of the Muslims births during this period appear to have been questioned.²⁵⁰ The legitimacy of the Abdurahmans' marriage only arose when her estate papers were drawn up after her death in 1953.²⁵¹ It was even possible that being unmarried had legal advantages. Nellie could own property, protected from Abdullah's creditors and even Abdullah himself.²⁵²

Some writers have concluded or suggested that, because it was interfaith, interracial, and to a much lesser extent, inter-cultural, Abdullah's marriage must have been exceptional.²⁵³ However, a closer look into

²⁴⁵ Abdullah goes on to denounce Muslims who cleaved themselves to the African National Bond, a defunct organisation that supported the segregation policies of the Nationalist Party as 'renegades to their religion'. (J. H. Raynard, *Dr. Abdurahman, A biographical memoir*, M. Adhikari, ed (Cape Town: Friends of the National Library of South Africa in association with the District Six Museum, 2002), 58-59.

²⁴⁶ R. E. van der Ross, 'Political and Social History of the Cape Coloured People, 1880 to 1970' (Unpublished manuscript, Cape Town: University of Cape Town 1974).

²⁴⁷ A 1913 Supreme Court decision invalidated all marriages save Christian or civil ones, with the result that any union made under Hindu or Muslim law was no longer recognised as legitimate (C. Walker, *The woman's suffrage movement in South Africa*. Cape Town: Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1971, 32). But these marriages may have been considered valid if contracted *before* 1913.

²⁴⁸ KAB/MOOC: 3349/53: Estate Papers, Abdurahman, Helen Potter. Born James, 1953.

²⁴⁹ See KAB/Marriage Registry (hereafter MRG)1: Special licences.

²⁵⁰ KAB/ Home Affairs Western Cape Index (hereafter HAWC): Birth Registers, 1895-1900.

²⁵¹ KAB/MOOC: Estate Papers, Abdurahman, Helen Potter. Born James, 1953.

²⁵² On 29 May 1908, Nellie became the owner of record for no. 5 and 6 McIntyre Lane; on 6 March 1915, she acquired 8 and 10 Wicht Street – a continuation of Mount Street near Castle Bridge; and 6 Wicht Street was registered to Nellie on 15 January 1917. Other properties only came into her possession in the 1930's (KAB/MOOC: 3349/53: Estate Papers, Abdurahman, Helen Potter. Born James, 1953)

²⁵³ cf. van der Spuy, 'Not only 'the younger daughter'; G. Paleker, "'She was certainly not a Rosa Luxemborg": a biography of Cissie Gool in images and words'. (MA dissertation, University of Cape Town, 2002); Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*; and van der Ross, *Say it Loud* and others.



Fig. 5, Photograph.
EARLY PHOTOGRAPH OF ABDULLAH & NELLIE (C. 1894)
→ Possibly their wedding day.

Muslim-Christian relations at the Cape reveals that marriages such as Abdullah's were not rare.²⁵⁴ Contrary to today's conceptualisations of the Malay as having been historically been insular, a great deal of syncretism between Christianity and Islam, and Christians and Muslims existed. Missionary Lightfoot observed in the 1890's that many Muslim women in the Cape were, 'in some instances ... found to be using Christian prayers with their children, and little children were repeating Christian hymns which they had learned from other children at school'.²⁵⁵ Abdullah was himself a product of these syncretic and creolising patterns. When Lucie was travelling in the Cape in 1861/2, she observed to her surprise that,

The demand for English girls as wives is wonderful here ... The [Muslim] priest amused me much with an account of how he had converted English girls ... and made them good *Mussulwomen* ... The Malays ... marry women of all sorts and colours, provided they

²⁵⁴ Not even within Abdullah's own family. Even Abu Bakr Effendi, father to Abdullah's sister-in-law, had married a Christian, Rukea Maker. Karim's daughter, Gertrude Gadeja Rutherford, born from his relations with a white British woman, returned to Cape Town to marry Abdullah's nephew, Abdullah Patel, the son of Abdullah's sister Fatima and the businessman from the Transvaal, only named as 'Mr. Patel'. See UOL/ICS2: Dr. Hendrickse's Notes, 2; van der Ross, *Say it Loud*, 4.

²⁵⁵ TF Lightfoot, 'The Cape Malays' in *Sketches of Church Work and Life in the Diocese of Cape Town*, ed. AGS Gibson (Cape Town, S.A. 'Electric' Printing and Publishing Company, 1900), 30, 43.

will embrace Islam ... The emigrant girls turn 'Malay' pretty often, and get thereby husbands who know not billiards and brandy – the two diseases of Capetown. They risk a plurality of wives and profess Islam, but they get fine clothes and industrious husbands.²⁵⁶

For a long time, Muslims and Christians lived closely in many quarters of the Cape without friction or perceptions of predation for converts. Interfaith marriages seem to have continued without much conflict throughout the late nineteenth century, but children issuing from these relationships became the battleground for new contestations. When Lucie's contemporary, a military man named John Mayson, journeyed to Cape Town in 1854, he referred to whites who embraced Islam as 'Christian perverts'. Mayson described conversion as dangerous, a manifestation of individuals 'pressed by poverty, and allured by Mahometan benevolence'.²⁵⁷ Some Christians began to express greater concern over existing cross-faith patterns of adoption, particularly in cases of Christian (or should-be Christian) children reared in Muslim homes. Orphans and unwanted children found their care and their bodies the loci for contests of religious domination. Children and education became pressure points for what amounted to efforts to defend and maintain whiteness against a growing Muslim population. Many new mission schools, orphanages and "homes", such as the Long Street Orphanage, materialised at this time with aims to keep children of non-Muslim parentage from the hands of the growing Muslim community; and to 'rescue' and recover children already in Muslim homes. 'White children are given to and adopted by Malays; these children are not all illegitimate, as people generally seem to think, and there are more white children taken by Mohammedans than is actually known ... Coloured children given to and adopted by Malays ... are very many'.²⁵⁸ The concern at this time was as much about a growing concern about preserving the race of the dear white children being 'taken', as well as about the numbers game of religious majority in the Cape. Even the Seminary and the Missionary Sunday School could be seen through this lens. However, despite the ongoing socio-cultural flows and exchanges, the growing political rigidity and contests for power along religious boundaries fermented discontent within the Muslim community and contributed to Cape Malay politicisation in the 1880's. This trajectory came to the foreground in Abdullah's brother-in-law, Ahmet Ataullah Bey's failed bid for office. This thesis contends that Abdullah closely followed Ataullah's campaign and that Abdullah's understanding of its failure was crucial to the success of his own campaign and career. Further, it traces the continuing transformation of political structure among Cape Muslims from the imamate struggles of his grandfather's time and the *Shafi* and *Hanafi* rupture of his father's time to the challenges resulting from the growing incorporation and integration of the Cape Malay population into municipal institutions and regulations. Through these patterns and his brother-in-law's part in them, Abdullah found himself at the unique moment in time when it became possible for him to rise to office.

²⁵⁶ Duff-Gordon, *Letters from the Cape*, 37. People married across faiths for a multitude of reasons. In a study of the cases in the NGK's archives reveal that primary motives range from the romance of enduring mutual attraction and affection but also that some unions were the result of apparent opportunism. See V. Malherbe, 'Christian-Muslim Marriage and Cohabitation: An Aspect of Identity and Family Formation in Nineteenth-Century Cape Town' *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36, no. 1 (2008): 5-24.

²⁵⁷ J. S. Mayson, *The Malays of Cape Town*, (Cape Town: Africana Connoisseurs Press, 1963), 15.

²⁵⁸ C. M. Prowse, *The Lure of Islam* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., c.1914), ii.

Ahmet Ataullah Bey, Almost the First Muslim²⁵⁹ City Councillor of Cape Town

Al Sayyid Al Amjadiy Ahmet Ataullah Bey was the son of Rukea Maker²⁶⁰ and Abu Bakr Effendi.²⁶¹ Ataullah was born in Cape Town in March of 1865²⁶² and was husband to Gacilla Mohsena, Abdullah's sister.²⁶³ Young Ataullah studied at his father's Ottoman Theological School and went on to the McLeahlen Academy on Buitengracht Street.²⁶⁴ His father Abu Bakr was a prominent teacher, engaging with students at his Ottoman Theological School on Bree and Wale Streets.²⁶⁵ Among Abu Bakr's other accomplishments, it seems that until he established the girls' branch of the Ottoman Theological School, it was 'indisputable that little provision is made for [Muslim girls'] instruction'.²⁶⁶ Khadijah was one of the lucky early girls who benefitted with Abu Bakr's inclusion of a girls' school.²⁶⁷ Muslim women, including Khadijah, seem to have benefitted from the growing discomfiture and competition between the Christian clergy and Muslim *ulemma*. To convert women was to protect the religiosity of children. In Cape Town, the 1889 census taker noted 15.4% of Malay women were literate, as compared to only 8.7% of men.²⁶⁸ Ataullah's political activities were sparked, like many other Muslims in the Cape, by new regulations passed in Cape following the epidemics between 1882 to 1885. Due to these regulations, the oldest Muslim

²⁵⁹ I specifically do not note Bey here as 'coloured'. The Turkish Effendis have had a complicated history with South Africa's racial classification system. For more on this, see H Gençoğlu, 'Abu Bakr Effendi: A report on the activities and challenges of an Ottoman Muslim theologian in the Cape of Good Hope' (MA Thesis, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1986). Recently, UCT PhD student H. Gençoğlu argues that a grandson of Abu Bakr Effendi's, Muhammed Shukri Effendi, was the first 'Black' doctor to graduate from the University of Cape Town and the first Black female South African doctor was not Abdullah's elder daughter, as long-held, but Abdullah's niece (mentioned in fn. 261 below, pg. 87, fn. 474) Havva Khairun Nisa. (See 'New evidence on first Black medical doctors at UCT & in South African history', *University of Cape Town: Faculty of Health Sciences*, 1 March 2016. Accessed 10 March 2016. <http://bit.ly/1RCOQvc>)

²⁶⁰ Ataullah's mother, Rukea (*Ruqaya*) was the adopted daughter of Hajji Haruon, a British émigré, and saddle maker (*Cape Argus* 18 January 1893). Her birth parents were Christians who converted to Islam (KAB/The Registrar, Cape Supreme Court (hereafter CSC) 2/2/1/128 37 Record of Proceedings of Provisional Case, October -December, Ann Barry ... 1858).

²⁶¹ In 1855, the imams complained to Queen Victoria that, as taxpayers, it was unjust they had received no Muslim missionaries as compared to the Christians. The crown acceded and the Ottoman Porte appointed Abu Bakr, a man from a prominent and well-educated Turkish family whose ancestors were the *ulemma* of the Ottoman State.

²⁶² OSA Yabancı Arşivler (hereafter YA), Birth Registry Book No; 96, 187.

²⁶³ Gacilla Mohsena and Ataullah had four children: sons Mehmet Fuat Ataullah, Abu Bakr Rusdu Attaullah, Havva Khairun Nisa and Khadijah. (See Attaoullah Fuat Effendi, *Turkish self taught* (London, 1942); also see G. Colak *Avrupada Osmanlı Kizlari* (Ottoman Girls in Europe) (Istanbul, 2013), 71-73; Gençoğlu, 'Abu Bakr Effendi', 97. Havva Khairun Nisa, their elder daughter also studied medicine (London).

²⁶⁴ OSA/YA: SAID, No. 9/1. At 12, he and his half-brother, Hesham Nimetullah, accompanied his father on a trip to Turkey via Mecca where Abu Bakr and presumably, Attaullah, met the new Ottoman Sultan, Abdul Hamid Khan II. The Sultan learned of Abu Bakr's activities at the Cape and ordered his Beyan ud-Din and Merasid-ud-Din published as a gift to the Cape Muslims. Abu Bakr returned to South Africa but left Ataullah and his brother in Istanbul to finish their education.

²⁶⁵ A.B. Effendi, *The religious duties of Islam as taught and explained* vol. 2, trans. Mia Brandel-Syrier (Leiden: Brill, 1960), xviii. The building is still standing today. Local gossip says that today, it operates as a brothel. See Fig. 6.

²⁶⁶ J. S. Mayson, *The Malays of Cape Town*, 23.

²⁶⁷ Unfortunately, Abu Bakr's marriage with Rukea was unhappy, and they eventually divorced (KAB/CSC 84: Record of Proceedings of Illiquid Case. Rakea Maker versus Abon Beker ... , 1869.; 'Abu Beker's Case,' *Cape Argus* 18 January, 1870 and 'The Muhammedan Case' *Cape Argus* 1 September 1873; and Effendi's statement to the press: *Cape Argus* 8 January 1870.). Rukea would sue for alimony, and it seems some of the proceeds went towards her opening her own Muslim school for girls (KAB/CO: 4164/M90: Memorial. Rakea Maker for Mohammedan School, Cape Town ... 1870) Abu Bakr married his students Tahora Saban Cook, in 1866 (Gençoğlu, 'Abu Bakr Effendi,' 34). Tahara was the daughter of Eliza Saban and Jeremiah Cook, a Yorkshire shipbuilder. The Cooks settled in Cape Town in 1847 (KAB/Records of the Colonial Office (hereafter CO): 3918 398 Memorials Received Jeremiah Cook for William Weyman. Request to 1820). Tahora's family were well-known: her uncle was Captain James Cook, the man who "found" North America (See A. Kippis, *A Narrative of the Voyages Round the World* (Philadelphia: Leary & Getz, 1853) and 'James Cook,' *The Encyclopaedia of Meydan Larousse*, 8:254-255). When Abu Bakr established the Muslim girls' school in 1864, Tahora became its principal (R. Loimeier, *Muslim societies in Africa : a historical anthropology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 258 and S. Orakçi, 'A Historical Analysis of the Emerging Links Between the Ottoman Empire and South Africa Between 1861-1923' (MA Thesis, University of Johannesburg, 62).

²⁶⁸ *Results of a Census of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope as on the Night of Sunday the 5th of April, 1891*, G.6-'92 (Cape Town, Richardson, 1892), li [roman numerals]. To put this into context, women in India only achieved these literacy rates in 1951. *Research, Reference and Training Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, India 2002: a reference manual* (New Delhi, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 2002), Table 1.5.



Fig. 6, Photograph
 ABU BAKR EFFENDI'S OTTOMAN THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL (2016)
 → Also see n. 89.

graveyard in South Africa, the Tana Baru, was ordered closed. The Muslim community fought this edict.²⁶⁹ Abdul Burns, who was leading the cemetery campaign, requested Ataullah Bey's help to unite the Muslims of the Cape since Ataullah had been working to forge greater Indian Muslim participation and integration with the Cape Malay in concerns affecting the wider Cape Muslim community.²⁷⁰ The congregation of the new *Hanafi* mosque, which included Abdullah's parents, also urged Ataullah towards a greater leadership role. Ataullah acknowledged their desires and gave an address in defence of the Tana Baru and organised another meeting to organise further protests.²⁷¹ An initial altercation occurred on 17 January 1886 when the community defied orders and buried a child in the cemetery. When the police tried to obtain names of those responsible, they were pelted with stones until they were forced to abandon the area. Three days of tension followed, but it came to nought. Tana Baru was still closed.²⁷² But, with the advocacy of Ataullah and others, the government made the concession to provide the Cape Muslim community with a new

²⁶⁹ A. Davids, *The Mosques of Bo-Kaap: A Social History of Islam at the Cape*. (Athlone: South African Institute of Arabic and Islamic Research, 1980), 61.

²⁷⁰ KAB Government House (hereafter GH): 1/413 no. 171: Despatches Received: 1 April 1881 and KAB/GH: 23/37 no. 3: Papers Despatched: Letter from Governor to Earl of Kimberley.

²⁷¹ Davids, *The Mosques of Bo-Kaap*, 178-179, 128.

²⁷² Mountain A, *An unsung heritage: perspectives on slavery* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 2004), 93-94

cemetery on grounds between Salt River and Mowbray.²⁷³ There is no evidence that Abdullah or his father participated. Nonetheless, it was his father's friends and his congregation. It certainly had an effect. In later years, Abdullah served as a member on the Moslem Cemetery Board.²⁷⁴

This outrage and violation of the Muslim community's 82-years of religious freedom spurred Ataullah into action. Cape Muslims overwhelmingly supported him. After he announced his candidacy, Imam Hassim Sahibo and his assistants called upon other imams in the Cape to promote Ataullah's campaign. All the other imams agreed, and Ataullah accepted the nomination after a large community meeting, held with 'almost the order and solemnity of a religious service' at Abdullah's family mosque. Historian Stanley Trapido goes on to say that this was a 'most striking example of the close relationship between the Imam's religious and political function'.²⁷⁵ In early 1893, Ataullah announced his candidacy in the *Cape Argus*. In his press, his profession is emphasised, as was his relationship to Abdullah to highlight Ataullah's local ties to figures with notable accomplishments in the community:

Ahmed Ataullah Effendi, a teacher employed by the Turkish Government, residing at Kimberley, has decided to present himself as a candidate for the house of assembly at the approaching general election ... He has had training in Cairo, Mecca and Constantinople, and now holds a well-paid appointment as teacher. His brother-in-law Abdullah Abdol Ragman, is now qualifying himself for the medical profession at the University of Glasgow and is expected to complete his studies in a few months, when he intends returning to the Colony to practise the profession here.²⁷⁶

Ataullah's campaign, however, was unsuccessful. Davids describes the opposition from prominent white politicians: 'Achmat Effendi referred to himself as a European,²⁷⁷ possibly as a result of his Turkish roots, 'a Mussulmen and a British subject'. Rhodes, Sauer and Hofmeyer were too shrewd politically to involve the government directly in legislation that could be construed as racial and constitutional tampering. The Cape Muslim vote was also a sizeable one to be too greatly antagonised'.²⁷⁸ His opposition utilised the press to besmirch Ataullah. With the title, 'A Moslem candidate', the *Cape Argus* published an opinion piece on Effendi's 'claim to represent his co-religionists in Parliament': 'The candidature of Mr. Ahmed Effendi, for the Parliamentary representation of Cape Town, particulars of which will be found in another column is a little more of the 'history making' of which we are so busy with just now', the article decried. 'His presence there, should he be elected, perfect though his constitutional right may be will we believe, lead to political issues from which we would all godly shrink, especially as he is not a native'. More than a xenophobic concern about electing a foreigner, the piece opined, 'If a Kaffir ever found its way into Parliament, the question would be raised in another form but Mr. Effendi *is not even Malay*; and the fact that he is a Moslem will make it impossible to regard non-European representation as a purely domestic question'.²⁷⁹ I emphasise the comment on Malays. In this context, it shows that even his worst opponents

²⁷³ *Cape Argus* 4 February 1905. Abdullah was buried here some fifty years later.

²⁷⁴ UOL/ICS2: Dr. Hendrickse's Notes, 5.

²⁷⁵ S. Trapido, 'White conflict and non-White participation in the politics of the Cape of Good Hope: 1853-1910', (PhD Dissertation, University of London, 1970), 392-3.

²⁷⁶ *Cape Argus* 18 January 1893.

²⁷⁷ For more on this, see n. 92.

²⁷⁸ Davids, *The Mosques of Bo-Kaap*, 174-175.

²⁷⁹ *Cape Argus* 18 January 1893. Emphasis mine.

suggest they might be willing to consider a Malay, characterised here as the least-objectionable 'other', for office. Although Ataullah was born in South Africa, he was still seen by many as a foreigner due to his extensive time overseas and his family's relatively recent immigration. First generation South African was not good enough for public opinion. Abdullah almost certainly folded the page on these insights for his own campaign, emphasising his family's century-long history in the Cape and de-emphasising his Indian roots in favour of his maternal Cape Malay lineages, even as the circle of his political allies who helped him secure his seat included the essential help of those from the African diaspora like his friends Rawson Walter Wooding and Henry Sylvester Williams.

Another point of view which may have affected Abdullah's platform was one concerning the 'civilisation' of the Cape. In *Imvo Zabantsundu*, an op-ed was published which portrayed Ataullah as being unfit for office, depicting him as little more than a simple, religious man 'not capable of managing public affairs to the required English civilise standards':

The House of Assembly wants men who can deal with the practical questions of the day, and about these the Effendi knows nothing. Compulsory education according to the defined standards is one of the questions. Another is the payments of large sums annually by the Treasury towards the compulsory annotation of every dwelling in Cape Town ... The British Empire is what it is because it is the nicest civilising power in the world. Cape Town has to be civilised up to English standards. What attitude does the Effendi assume towards civilisation? When this is answered we may enquire about special questions to represent the capital of the colony on the era of important discussions of profound and far-reaching political questions.²⁸⁰

In spite of Ataullah's education, linguistic prowess, and impressive family background and stature, Ataullah lost the election. Key factors in his loss were his European heritage and foreign birth, and no small amount of Islamophobia that, as shown in the previous section, had been simmering at the Cape for one hundred years. As for 'civilising', perhaps Abdullah's Glaswegian and London years did for his public image what years in the exotic Near East of Cairo, Mecca, and Istanbul could not do for Ataullah. Ataullah said in his concession statement: 'It is the first time in the history of South Africa that a non-European candidate has stood for parliament. I had the moral courage to do so. I bear my defeat like a man ... Standing as a candidate cost me nothing, everything that has been spent I have received from my co-religionist. I thank you gentlemen from the bottom of my heart'.²⁸¹ After his loss, Ataullah returned to Kimberley and handed over his father's school in Cape Town to his half-brother, Hesham Nimetullah.²⁸²

Even though Ataullah lost, his campaign may have been the first time Abdullah began to consider that a non-white could be a councillor in South Africa. That Ataullah was a family member must have intensified this effect. Unintentionally, Ataullah's failed campaign and the reasons given by his opposition provided Abdullah with foresight into what kinds of rhetoric he could use to overcome his dissenters and therefore,

²⁸⁰ *Imvo Zabantsundu* (Native opinion), 10 January 1894.

²⁸¹ *Cape Argus* 30 January 1894.

²⁸² R. Shell, 'Madrasahs and Moravians. Muslim educational institutions in the Cape Colony, 1792 to 1910', *A New Contree : A journal of Historical and Human Sciences for Southern Africa* 51 (2006), 6. Ataullah died in a tragic automobile accident in late 1903 while serving as the first Turkish Consul General to Singapore. *The Straits Times*, 10 November 1903. At least one source suggested that he was assassinated by English agents for his political activities on behalf of the Ottoman Caliphate. Gençoğlu, 'Abu Bakr Effendi', 31, n. 168.

pre-emptively discredit those points. Indeed, Ataullah's failure helped carve the space for Abdullah's success. This thesis reflects on Abdullah's public presentation of himself not as Indian or Muslim as further evidence that not only did he follow his brother-in-law's campaign, but also learned valuable lessons in political tactics. It was in this milieu that Abdullah's ability to bridge religious difference and to cohere the multiplex coloured people into a singular civil society and political entity proved essential. Between the influence of Abdullah's visits to the politically active James home, the reality of being the Muslim husband of a white Christian woman, and the failed election bid of his brother-in-law, it seems impossible that Abdullah did not himself become politicised, especially during and after the second Anglo-Boer War. However, with young children and recurring travel between London and the Cape, Abdullah's life does not seem to have settled down until after 1902. In 1904, less than a year after a tragic road accident took Ataullah's life, Abdullah stood for office.

The Doctor

When Abdullah first returned to Cape Town in 1895, his first order of business was to register for his practise licence and set up a practise.²⁸³ In 1896, he listed his medical office as 99 Loop Street in the medical directory.²⁸⁴ "Dr. Abdurahman" was open for business. Over the years, scholars tended to discuss Abdullah concerning his racial and professional exceptionalism: Abdullah Abdurahman, the first non-white City Councillor or politician in Cape Town; or Abdullah Abdurahman, one of the earliest non-white physicians in South Africa and the Cape. 'Firsts' are a frequent fetish in histories of the marginalised and often overstated and de-contextualised. Arguments could be made that the 'first' non-white politician at the Cape was Ataullah Bey or perhaps even the controversial figure of Sir Andries Stockenström, 1st Baronet, (b. 6 July 1792 – d. 16 March 1864) who was the grandson of a slave, although he was relatively fair-skinned and gained his office through a 'white' categorisation. In medicine, the 'first' non-white doctor to practise at the Cape was 'Dr. Jackson, a West Indian negro'.²⁸⁵ And of course, more recently, these terms – 'politician' and 'physician' have been problematised for erasing local systems of power and health. There were certainly non-white statesmen and health practitioners who were employed as doctors in Cape Town before hospitals, degrees, licences, and registers.²⁸⁶ In South Africa, most consider the 'first' non-white physician in South Africa goes to William Anderson Soga, similarly educated at the University of Glasgow

²⁸³ See n. 57.

²⁸⁴ *The South African Medical Directory for 1896* (Cape Town: 'Cape Times' Steam Printing Works, 1896), 27 and *The South African Medical Directory for 1897* (Cape Town: 'Cape Times' Steam Printing Works, 1897), 29. This address later changes to 119 but there is no evidence he ever moved his office. Therefore this disparity seems to be a simple matter of street re-numbering.

²⁸⁵ Raynard, *Dr. Abdurahman*, 23.

²⁸⁶ See, for example, H. Deacon, 'Cape Town and 'country' doctors in the Cape Colony during the first half of the Nineteenth Century', *Social history of medicine* 10, no. 1 (1997): 25-52.

(MB 1883, MD 1894).²⁸⁷ Common socio-economic and urbanisation imperatives were in play in the development of the medical profession in South Africa. Analysing a few of the pioneering university-trained non-white doctors, a few themes surface. Of first early European-trained, non-white doctors, four out of five were urban, as compared with six out of seven whites. Many of the families derived their socio-economic mobility from property ownership.²⁸⁸ These families were motivated by more than bourgeois aspirations. Their migration towards cities and transition from agricultural to professional occupations reflect wider insecurities about South Africa's rural future.²⁸⁹ Family and trans-generational connections were vital to this developing professional class. Another early doctor, Modira Molema (MB ChB Glasgow, 1919) was followed by his younger brother, Sefetogi Silas. Soga's son Alexander also attended the University of Glasgow for medicine. In Abdullah's case, medicine also became a family affair.²⁹⁰ His children and several other relations also pursued medical careers. Almost all of his direct descendants pursued health or teaching careers (see Family Trees). For families like Abdullah's, funding was provided through family means, but for some non-white South Africans, missionary assistance frequently proved essential. In yet another case of Scottish-South African relations, the Church of Scotland at Lovedale supported exemplary students like Molema and Soga for full medical training in Scotland. As evidenced by the high number of non-white South Africans trained in Scotland, the Scottish tradition of open enrolment across class and colour had a phenomenal impact on the early development of South African medicine and on local education.²⁹¹

But the new professional class at the Cape grew slowly among non-whites. By 1904, Abdullah was one of only 66 'Malays' listed professionally in the census, and among this small number, he continued to rise to distinction. His biographer noted, 'his name soon became a household word among both Europeans and non-Europeans ... Everywhere one heard people talking about "the clever young Malay doctor"'.²⁹²

²⁸⁷ Soga was the son of Xhosa minister Tiyo Soga and a Scottish woman, Janet Burnside. Janet was born on 18 March 1827 in Hutchesontown, Glasgow. She was the eldest daughter of Alan Burnside and Isabelle Kirkland. She is known to have lived in some of the worst slums of Glasgow. Tiyo and Janet were married in Glasgow before they set sail for South Africa. See: A. Digby, 'On the notable thesis of William Anderson Soga'. William graduated MD CM in 1883 and MD in 1894. His thesis (in light of n. 128), was 'The ethnology of the Bomvanas of Bomvanaland, an aboriginal tribe of South East Africa: with observations upon the climate and diseases of the country, and the methods of treatment in use among the people'. Born at Peelton, South Africa (then part of British Kaffraria), ordained as a missionary of the United Presbyterian Church Divinity Hall in Glasgow, Soga founded the Miller Mission in Bomvanaland (near Elliotdale) in 1888. He served there as a medical missionary, the first 'Black' person to do so. He died in 1916 and his brother, the Reverend John Henderson Soga took over the station. See: A. Digby, 'On the notable thesis of William Anderson Soga, the first Black doctor in South Africa', *South African Medical Journal* 97 no. 5 (2007), 345-346; UG/UAS RR: *Registrar's Roll of Graduates and Dates of Birth*, vol. 2, R3/1/1: 1894. William's son, Alexander Robert Bogue Soga also eventually attended the University of Glasgow and graduated MB ChB in 1912. After graduation, Alexander returned to South Africa where he practised as a surgeon at Idutywa (UG/UAS RR: *Registrar's Roll of Graduates and Dates of Birth*, vol. 2, R3/1/1: 1912).

²⁸⁸ This was the case with Abdullah, but also other early doctors, such as James S. Moroka (MB ChB Edinburgh, 1918) and Modira Molema (MB ChB Glasgow, 1919). A. Digby, 'Early Black doctors in South Africa', 448-451.

²⁸⁹ See, for example, C. Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988).

²⁹⁰ This pattern was not limited to non-white South Africa. Medical family dynasties there included the Leichings, Chiappinis, as well as the Atherstones. See A. Digby, 'Early Black doctors in South Africa'. Some of Atherstone's belongings are on display at the Cape Medical Museum.

²⁹¹ See, for example: A. Patton, *Physicians, Racism and Diaspora in West Africa* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1996), 97; J. Iliffe, *East African Doctors: A History of the Modern Medical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 19.

²⁹² Raynard, *Dr. Abdurahman*, 23.

Abdullah aspired to and achieved a comfortable, middle-class life.²⁹³ Abdullah had a strong sense of self-importance that some have described as arrogant. One view has been that it is this arrogance and self-importance that gave him his political ambitions.²⁹⁴ But other scholars have argued that Abdurahman's political aspirations ultimately stem from his calling as a doctor.²⁹⁵ To some extent, this thesis supports this hypothesis but insists a multitude of factors are at play. The ever-increasing restrictions on the coloured franchise and shrinking access to education would have been personal for Abdullah. Abdullah's struggles in his youth for recognition and access to education forced him and his family, both immediate and extended, to leave home. Abdullah was incensed. Some suggest his role as doctor transitioned organically to political activism.²⁹⁶ During Abdullah's day, the city struggled with sanitation, poverty, and disease, particularly in District Six and the Bo-Kaap. In making his house calls, Abdullah was surely painfully aware of the relationship between sanitation, municipal neglect, and disease. Politically, he understood the connection between quality housing and franchise qualification. Upon news of Abdullah's passing, Bishop S. W. Lavis recalled meeting Abdurahman in 1898 while he was ministering to the sick in Bo-Kaap's slums: 'He was then just beginning to feel for his people and the many misfortunes, to think for them, speak in their name. Throughout the years that have intervened, the Doctor, to his great honour, has never wavered or faltered in his mission as the champion of the defenceless, underprivileged and voiceless people'.²⁹⁷

Cape Town at the turn of the century was a fast-growing city, struggling with the influx of Rand refugees from the Second Boer War. Some 25,000 Indians, Eastern European Jews, and prostitutes from Europe all came tumbling into the city looking for homes and work. In this population boom, the non-whites: coloureds, Africans, Indians, and others, after a series of insufficient aid attempts to minimise overcrowding, all eventually found themselves crowded into an already overcrowded and under-serviced District Six.²⁹⁸ Cape Town was tense, volatile, and filled with unrest during the war – the influx meant worsening sanitation and overcrowding, leading to outbreaks of disease, resulting in protests. Martial law was declared in 1901 and lifted after the war ended in 1902. The most noteworthy effect of the war was the politicisation of previously marginalised and excluded social groups.²⁹⁹ Abdullah did not himself serve in the war. Instead, he remained in Cape Town where, as a medical doctor, he was inundated with the fallout from the war. The Abdurahman family escaped most of the war's effects, but the bubonic plague epidemic

²⁹³ Although sometimes described as wealthy, this seems to be inaccurate. In Gairoonisa Paleker's research on Cissie Gool, a series of interviews initially characterised the family as upper class and bourgeois, but later settles on 'petit bourgeois'. Her interviewees agreed. In interviews with Ray Simons, R.O. Dudley, Selim Gool, some contradictions exist. In her interview with Alie Fataar, they agree on 'bourgeois', although it is difficult to say exactly what working definition of 'bourgeois' the interviewees are working with as well. (G. Paleker's series of interviews (videotaped) of Simons, Dudley, Gool, Fataar, Centre for Popular Memory, University of Cape Town).

²⁹⁴ cf. G. Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall: A history of South African 'Coloured' politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987); Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*.

²⁹⁵ For example, Ajam writes 'There can be little doubt about the fact that Abdurahman, the public figure who committed much of his life to improve the human condition, was merely Abdurahman the physician writ large'. (M. Ajam, 'Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman – Benefactor of the Bo-Kaap', *Kronos* 17 (1990): 48).

²⁹⁶ cf. A. Digby, 'Early Black doctors in South Africa'. Digby highlights a correlation between heightened political activism and 'Black' doctors and includes some examples. This seems opportunity for further exploration.

²⁹⁷ *The Sun* 1 March 1940.

²⁹⁸ See N. Worden, E. van Heyningen, V. Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town: The Making of a City* (Claremont, Cape Town, South Africa: David Philip Publishers 1998), 286.

²⁹⁹ V. Bickford-Smith, E. van Heyningen, and Nigel Worden *Cape Town in the twentieth century: an illustrated social history* (Cape Town: New Africa Books, 1999), 27; Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall*, 7-29.

of 1901 brought forced removals to the Cape, and African residents were relocated from District Six to Uitvlugt and later, Ndabeni.³⁰⁰ For Africans and many others, this socio-spatial impact from the plague was more devastating than the medical.³⁰¹ The Muslim community feared they were next. Some scholars suggest Abdullah 'acted as an intermediary between the medical authorities and the Muslim community'.³⁰² Raynard provides more details here. In addition to his posts as the Cape Town branch's assistant secretary and later, the executive officer for the southwestern Cape, he also worked as a clerk for Abdullah's Loop Street offices from 1906 to 1908.³⁰³ His 1906 election to assistant secretary was all-but-guaranteed by Abdullah's endorsement.³⁰⁴ Raynard reported Abdullah 'inspired confidence in his ability among his patients', but not as a medical practitioner. Instead, it was in his capacity to challenge and persuade others to his way of thinking and his fearlessness to standing against authority for what he felt was right. 'In a dispute between the doctors on the Government and City Council staffs, as to whether a certain patient to whom he was attending, and whom the doctors pronounced to be a plague case, and wished to have removed to the 'Camp', 'the Doctor' denied the case as one of plague, and won a bet of £200 from these doctors'.³⁰⁵ Later again in 1918, another epidemic broke out. This time, it was Spanish influenza, brought around the world in the wake of the World War. Abdullah, now a public figure and City Councillor, took a much more visible role in mediations between Muslim leaders and the authorities.³⁰⁶ With the decline of imamate authority with changes in the politics at the Cape, Abdullah was perhaps able to fill a void in mediating between the community and the government. As recalled by an elderly resident of District Six, 'Dr. Abdurahman ... *hy was nog jonk en hy het baie mense gehelp met die flu, met die epidemie*'.³⁰⁷ In 1904, Abdullah stood for City Council. Instead of depending on the imams as the primary supporters of his campaign as Ataullah had, Abdullah's campaign stretched to worlds beyond South Africa. Abdullah's personal development has always been written to highlight the importance of transnational influences and flows, but his political career has typically been seen in isolation from these patterns. Abdullah's impact and importance, his career also must be understood in terms of his embeddedness and indebtedness to a much wider, global movement towards social equality. Seminal reconsiderations on race during Abdullah's life were emerging out of the Atlantic World, inspired by the Haitian Revolution and the American revocation of slavery. Pan-African thought was emerging from the Caribbean, Americas, and West Africa. One member of the Pan-African movement, Trinidadian Henry Sylvester Williams, had an enormous impact Abdullah's career and the refinement of Abdullah's rigid insistence that coloured and African peoples shared the same burdens and must fight their injustices together. Throughout the narrative of his family history has been the fibres and textures of ongoing transnational networks and connections. His campaign was no different.

³⁰⁰ See: C. Saunders, 'The creation of Ndabeni: urban segregation, social control and African resistance' in *Studies in the history of Cape Town* 1, ed. C. Saunders. (Cape Town: History Department, University of Cape Town, 1978).

³⁰¹ E. van Heyningen, 'Public health and society in Cape Town, 1880-1910' (PhD Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1989), 325.

³⁰² Ibid. However, Phillips suggests that Abdullah did not do much mediating during the 1901 epidemic. He was instead much more visible during the Spanish Flu outbreak (H. Phillips, "'Black October'". The impact of the Spanish Influenza Epidemic of 1918 on South Africa' (PhD Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1984, 58).

³⁰³ Raynard, *Dr. Abdurahman*, 34.

³⁰⁴ Ibid, 24.

³⁰⁵ Ibid, 23.

³⁰⁶ Phillips, 'Black October', 58; van Heyningen, 'Public health and society', 345.

³⁰⁷ UCT MA: BC 1004: Transcripts of Western Cape Oral History Project, District Six Interviews: Mrs. Tiefsa Abrahams, interviewer unknown, n.d. Translation: 'He was still young, and helped many people, with the flu, with the epidemic'.

Henry Sylvester Williams

Henry Sylvester Williams (b. 1867 - d. 1911) was one of the first immigrants of Afro-Caribbean origin to South Africa. Hailing from Trinidad, Williams was in England when he first learned of the 'un-Christian, degrading, and illegal' conditions plaguing non-white South Africans from Mrs. E. V. Kinloch, a black South African³⁰⁸ who had married a Scottish mine engineer.³⁰⁹ Williams formed an African Association in London in 1897 and lobbied the British government on behalf '[his] ill-treated countrymen' in South Africa.³¹⁰ He then organised the first Pan-African Conference in 1900 and became General Secretary of the Pan-African Association in London. With the strong encouragement of his friends in South Africa, including Rawson Walter Wooding of British Guiana, Williams decided to take his fight directly to South Africa.³¹¹ Williams' friend Wooding was a teacher and a musician. He opened Wooding's Private Preparatory School in June of 1902, serving the children of well-heeled coloured people at the Cape. Abdullah's daughters were among his music pupils.³¹² Williams landed in Cape Town in 1903 and became the first Black person³¹³ registered as a lawyer in the Cape. But he found it nearly impossible to practise as white colleagues blackballed him. To occupy his time, Williams gave lectures and speeches on 'Colour and Politics'. On one occasion, Williams gave a talk at the Wellington African Methodist Episcopal Church advocating petition for better schools for coloured children. Abdullah, who served on Wooding's School Board with Williams,³¹⁴ was in attendance. In April 1904, Williams chaired an African Political Organisation (APO) meeting to protest the treatment of coloured people in the Transvaal. Abdullah had been in attendance at this session as well.³¹⁵ When Abdullah declared his intention to stand for office, Williams made use of his contacts to form a new body, the South African Citizens Defence Committee to support him. The following year, in early 1905, William Thomas Sead, the editor of the *Review of Reviews*, reported,

I made Mr. Williams' acquaintance at Cape Town, as it was in his office that the idea of a federation of league of all the coloured races of South Africa was first mooted. This federation was decided upon at the house of Dr. Abdurahman, the able and universally respected Malay doctor, who was last year elected to a seat in the municipality of Cape Town. Of this federation Mr. Sylvester Williams is president. It includes all natives, Kaffirs, West Indians, Malays and Chinamen, although the last-named have no regular association as yet.³¹⁶

Among its other activities, the committee was said by Mathurin to be significant in its work registering coloured voters and thus instrumental in the election of Abdullah in September of 1904.³¹⁷ Abdullah's

³⁰⁸ Sadly, Mrs. Kinloch's name is never given in the literature and she is only ever described as 'black South African' or less frequently, 'African woman from Natal'.

³⁰⁹ O. C. Mathurin, *Henry Sylvester Williams and the Origins of the Pan-African Movement: 1869-1911* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 42.

³¹⁰ Mathurin, *Henry Sylvester Williams*, 46.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Mathurin, *Henry Sylvester Williams*, 46, 13.

³¹³ Williams was of Trinidadian and Barbadian descent but strongly identified Black as one of the early proponents of pan-Africanism.

³¹⁴ Yusuf Gool of the Indian Association and Cissie's father in law, was also in attendance. (Mathurin, *Henry Sylvester Williams*, 46).

³¹⁵ Mathurin, *Henry Sylvester Williams*, 46.

³¹⁶ *Review of Reviews* February 1905.

³¹⁷ Mathurin, *Henry Sylvester Williams*, 123.

success at the ballot box was the result of a convergence of several factors, interests, and many players behind the scenes as well.³¹⁸ As Mrs. Tiefa Adams of District Six later reminisced, Abdullah was 'a doctor, you know. *Ook, en hy was gees die man. Sê soos a king, because ... soos ... die Botha nou is, was hy gewees*'.³¹⁹ In 1905, Abdullah became the President of the APO.³²⁰ With the presidency of the APO, Abdullah also took on the role of editor of its newspaper, the *APO*. Abdullah would spend the rest of his life in politics.

³¹⁸ As Ataulah may have inspired Abdullah to run for office, Abdullah may have inspired Williams to do the same. In 1906, Williams ran and won the councillor seat for the Church Street Ward, Westminster. ('Henry Sylvester Williams 1867-1911', City of Westminster commemorative wall plaque (38 Church Street, Lisson Grove, London NW8). See Appendix D.

³¹⁹ Mrs. Tiefa Adams, interviewed by unknown, nd (UCT MA: BC 1004. Western Cape Oral History Project: District Six interviews, transcript). Translation: [Abdullah was] 'a doctor, you know. And also, this man, he was spirited. One could say as if a king, because ... as Botha is now, so was he [then]'.

³²⁰ Abdullah was not a founder of the APO. It was only after internal conflict and the successful manoeuvrings of secretary Matt Fredericks to remove APO's prior President John Tobin (of the Stone meetings) and his vice-president W. A. Roberts. Then, 'realising his education qualifications, the officials of the APO, urged by the last [sic] Matt. J. Fredericks, persuaded this young man [Abdullah] to accept the leadership of the organisation and there appeared on the political horizon a figure destined to play a prominent part in the affairs of men'. *Cape Standard*, 27 February 1940.

PART II
Chapter Three
THE DR. AND THE FIRST MRS. ABDURAHMAN
Of Mothers, Women and Suffrage

In 1909, Abdullah had travelled to London with his associates,³²¹ led by the Honourable W. P. Schreiner. Together, this band of representatives embarked on a journey to petition the British Parliament to oppose the South Africa Act for its inclusion of Clause 35, which curtailed the extension of the Cape franchise to the other three colonies (the Transvaal, Orange Free State, and Natal).³²² Although the deputation garnered the support of several prominent individuals and newspapers, the delegation failed in its objective. Most Parliament members both at home and abroad, no matter their sympathy, understood it was practically impossible to alter the course of the Clause's inclusion in the South African Act after Cape Governor and High Commissioner Alfred Milner agreed not to expand the franchise to the other colonies in 1901.³²³ Regrets were expressed,³²⁴ but the Bill nonetheless passed without alteration. After this disappointment, Abdullah threw himself fiercely into the fight for education. Nellie and Abdullah have long shared a common passion for securing quality public education for *all* children, but after the birth of their two daughters, Waradea 'Rosie' and Zainunnissa 'Cissie', this passion would reach fever pitch and permeate through multiple expressions of Abdullah and Nellie's lives. His attention at this time transitioned from caring for his aged parents to Nellie and his daughters, his emerging political career, and maintaining his medical practise. This chapter moves to explore the activities of Nellie with the Women's Guild arm of the APO, Abdullah's political partnership with his wife and the role of the 'home' as 'salons' or *madrasahs*. The alliance of Nellie's Women's Guild and Abdullah's APO was powerful, and the Abdurahman family and home became a pivotal centre for developing coloured politics. In the only surviving letter from Nellie to Abdullah, dated 8 October 1909, she wrote warmly to console her husband and to discuss domestic affairs.³²⁵ 'My dearest husband', Nellie began,

When you receive this you will be on your way back here to 'Home Sweet Home' and sunny South Africa. I was so pleased to get your letters today, although the news regarding your mission to England not so good as I hoped it would be. However, I feel

³²¹ In addition to W. P. Schreiner and Abdullah, the party included M. J. Fredericks and D. J. Lenders representing the African Political Organisation (APO); Rev. Dr. W. B. Rubusana, D. Dwayna (South African Native Congress), J. T. Jabavu (King William's Town Native Association), T. M. Makipela (Orange River Colony Native Congress), Mr. J. Gerrans (Bechuanaland Protectorate).

³²² See Appendix E for press photo of the 1909 Schreiner-led Deputation .

³²³ Historians agree that the 1906 and 1909 deputations stood no chance due to aforementioned factors: W. Beinart *Twentieth-Century South Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 90-91; A. Odendaal, *The Founders: The Origins of the ANC and the Struggle for Democracy* (Auckland Park, South Africa: Jacana Media, 2012), 266-7; D. Judd, K. T. Surridge, *The Boer War: A History* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 203-204 ; L. Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 151-2 and others.

³²⁴ See, for example, *Hansard* House of Commons Debate 28 February 1906 vol 152 cc1212-47; House of Commons Debate 28 November 1906 vol 166 c59; House of Commons Debate 19 August 1909 vol 9 cc 1615-41; House of Commons Debate 27 May 1909 vol 5 cc1378-424; with comments from the British Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith upon the Bill's second reading, House of Commons Debate 16 August 1909 vol 9 cc951-1058; and others.

³²⁵ The date on the letter could be construed as either 8 October *or* 10 August. Given that Nellie writes of the deputation's failure and that Abdullah would be well on his journey home by the time the letter is received, this thesis concludes that the date is correctly 8 October. (UCT MA BC506 Abdurahman Papers: A.2 Letter to Abdullah 8 October 1909).

sure that the majority of the coloured people are quite satisfied that you have done your utmost for them and time will do the rest. I hope to see you looking well and fit when you arrive at the docks. Have a good lazy time on board, put away all thought, books, and worry for the rest of the voyage so that you may be fit to start fresh when you get here ... I have attended to all your orders so that I trust when you return you will find all things to your satisfaction. The thing I (have done which I hope you agree with is that I have transferred some of your fire assurances to the 'general' by doing so) I have saved something on the premiums. The paper [APO] is going along nicely. I have added a good many to the individual subscribers list since you left.³²⁶

With kindest love and
 respect
 from
 your affectionate
 wife
 Nellie

This letter between Nellie and Abdullah provides rare insights into their marriage. There was genuine affection and ample support, shared political passions, and confidence on his part in her competence and ability to share household tasks and administration. Theirs appears to have been a marriage of partners for nearly thirty years. Although Nellie frames her decision as hoping Abdullah would approve, the fact that she felt assured enough to take action without consultation attests to trust and some measure of equality in their marriage. As briefly alluded to in the previous chapter and illustrated clearly in Nellie's letter, she also held some powers that, at the time, were unique to women married by Muslim rights.³²⁷ Because The Christian Cape would have considered Nellie technically unmarried, she could act as her husband's agent.³²⁸ Nellie's prediction that 'the majority of the coloured people are quite satisfied that you have done your utmost for them' proved true. As president of the Women's Guild, an ancillary 'apolitical' adjunct of the APO, Nellie led the organisation of a welcoming reception for the deputation, designed to merge a soft political reconnaissance for the returning men with the APO, social leisure, as well as a cultural showcase.³²⁹ After the social, Abdullah and Nellie returned to their home, situated on the outskirts of District Six just off Castle Bridge at 7 Mount Street. Their home was fondly named 'Albert Lodge', but there is no known reason for this name. Abdullah's father and his maternal uncle, Mohamed Dollie, were instrumental in Muslim affairs in London through their 'Temporary' Mosque, near Regent's Park, on Albert Street.³³⁰ Abdullah may have posthumously named the Abdurahman home in homage to his father's memory. It was Abdullah started his family, rose to become a prominent denizen of District Six, and grew larger than life, the *person* became the *persona*, 'The Doctor of District Six'.

³²⁶ UCT MA BC506 Abdurahman Papers: A.2 Letter to Abdullah 8 October 1909.

³²⁷ For more on this, see as example the case of Trijn van de Kaap, who inherited her husband's estate and continue to acquire property, as well as her daughter, Saartjie, who continued to hold and purchase property in her own right even after she married the imam Achmat of Bengal. It was because of Saartjie and the unique ability of Muslim women of the time to own, purchase, transfer, and sell property in their own rights that the Dorp Street *madrasah* (discussed in chapter one) and its attached Auwal Mosque (the first in the Cape) was made possible. For further reading, see F. R. Bradlow, and M. Cairnes, *The Early Cape Muslims: A Study of their mosques, genealogy and origins* (Cape Town: AA Balkema, 1978) and A. Davids, *The history of the Tana Baru* (Cape Town: Cape Town Committee for the Preservation of the Tana Baru, 1985).

³²⁸ I. Geffen, *The laws of South Africa regarding women and children* (Johannesburg: Esson, 1928), 65.

³²⁹ APO 7 May 1910.

³³⁰ *St. James's Gazette* 22 September 1896; *Morning Post* 22 September 1896; *Glasgow Herald* 23 September 1896; *Leicester Chronicle* 26 September 1896; *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 08 December 1896; *London Evening Standard* 22 September 1896; 19 January 1897; *Dundee Evening Telegraph* 20 January 1897.

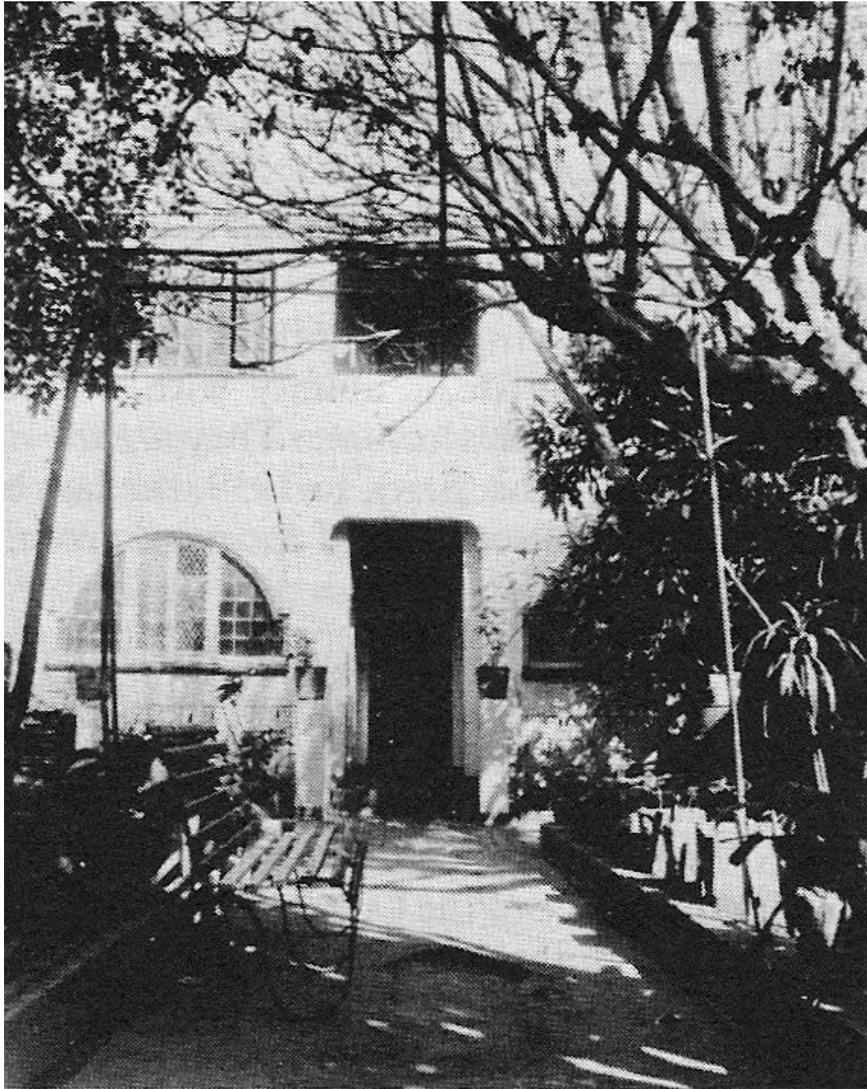


Fig. 7, Photograph.
THE ABDURAHMAN HOME: ALBERT LODGE AT 7 MOUNT STREET (C. 1900S)

Producing Persons: Raising Children of Healthy Body, Mind and Moral ‘Character’

For Abdullah and his associates, the immediate problem lay in the struggle for maintaining franchise rights across racial divisions, not gender. While this is a lamentable blind spot, it probably does not warrant much deconstruction. Abdullah seems to have spent no small part of his career having to make difficult decisions as to the fights he felt he could win. During the bulk of his career, this meant a focus on colour, and to a lesser extent, class as an achievable goal if education was made accessible to all. For both of these aims, the APO, for the most part, utilised the rhetoric of respectability. When taking into account Abdullah’s early childhood, this ‘respectability’ concept takes on a new colour. In his Presidential addresses, the notion of ‘character’ repeats frequently. The news clippings in both the Northwestern University and the

University of Cape Town's collections contain several columns on 'character'.³³¹ Later in life, Abdullah ghost-wrote speeches for Mr. Foster. One such speech emphasised the 'character' theme, saying, 'The Church, I know, feels its responsibility, and if by education it helps the growing generation to step forth into the world better trained to confront the perplexities of life, then it is doing a work that needs every encouragement and support. But man's economic status was not all that counts in a community. Character, as much as, if not more than wealth, gives an enduring status and prestige to a community, and education is a powerful factor in the development of one of the elements that shape character'.³³² And again in an undated speech that he seems to have never publicly given, Abdullah again harkens to the concept of 'character', which seems to be his own moral and faith-informed brand of 'respectability'. Connecting it to education and physical health, his is a holistic approach to personhood, Abdullah writes, 'To my own people I would repeat the advice I gave before and say that you should do your best to build up the character of your children by making your homes healthy and happy; that you should spare no expense in your endeavors [sic] to secure the best education for your offspring, and that you should steadily persevere in seeking to maintain a higher reputation as honest law-abiding citizens'.³³³

This 'character' rhetoric was not something Abdullah developed towards mid-life and the end of his career. It was the guiding current of his life as a way of understanding the relationship between faith and citizenship. It surfaced as early as 1910 in his Presidential address. An entire section was devoted to it: 'I have therefore resolved on confining my remarks on this occasion to the question of character and character building, because the importance of sound character is too often lost sight of by public men and statesmen. Good character is the most invulnerable armour we can put on for the fight we have to wage; and if you one and all aim at the cultivation of sound moral character, we need feel no cause for apprehension, and for looking to the future with anxiety'.³³⁴ This, and other passages like it, is usually linked to the idea that Abdullah advocated British liberal politics. While Abdullah may have adopted British values, neither 'civility' nor 'respectability' ever sees much ink in his speeches. In contrasting it against public men and statesmen, it begins to come into focus that 'character' used by Abdullah was not simply a synonym for liberal 'respectability'. Instead, he seems to mean something else. Moreover, why is 'character' in Abdullah's usage so commonly coupled with 'moral'? 'Moral' thus far among the teachers in Abdullah's life seems to have been an educated, philosophical, even scientific and secular way to discuss faith without the specificity of doctrine. In his early years, he studied with the Christian ladies of the Huguenot Seminary and the Catholic Marist Brothers who were 'morally called' to religious education and were some of the only in the Cape to provide them to children of colour. Formal admittance into South African College School and Glasgow provided Abdullah with teachers who had, in line with contemporary Scottish thought, socialised Abdullah with an idea of personhood as an interweaving of moral character

³³¹ One such column, author unknown, stated, 'And this brings me to the dominating force in the training of the faculties of the heart and mind and soul into harmonious co-operation for the highest end in life, the force that we can only designate by the word character'. (UCT MA: BC506 Abdurahman Papers: Folder B2: Newspaper Clippings: Loose clipping undated, unsourced, section headings: 'Quo Vadis', 'Character', 'Manners Maketh Man'.) Another item in the collection, undated, is entitled 'The Influence of Character: Ideals for College Students' by Rev. A. P. Bender.

³³² Northwestern University, Melville J. Herskovits Library of Africana Studies, 001 Abdurahman Family Papers (hereafter NWU/AFP): Speeches Written by Dr. Abdurahman for Mr. Foster (Box 1, Folder 7): '11 July 1936 Written for Foster opening St. Phillips'.

³³³ NWU/AFP: Speeches Written by Dr. Abdurahman, (Incomplete), n.d'. (Box 1, Folder 8): 'Conclusion', Untitled speech, 'Conclusion. To the Whites of South Africa.'.

³³⁴ Delivered in the OddFellows Hall in Port Elizabeth on Monday 4 April 1910 (APO 9 April 1910).



Fig. 8, Photograph
 ABDULLAH, PROBABLY A PRESS PORTRAIT UPON ELECTION TO COUNCIL (1914)

and sound body, incubated and liberated through education. These ideologies, after all, laid at the heart of both institutions' pedagogy. It likely intensified during his time in Glasgow, and Ataulah's inclination towards using 'moral' versus 'religious' in his political activism would have all had an impact.

"Moral character" for Abdullah, begins in the home. Abdullah explicitly connects public and social life to this "moral character" to women and motherhood, emphasising women's critical roles. Because it does not seem political, most authors³³⁵ skip over Abdullah's treatises on motherhood and women even though it is paramount to his framework of "moral character", which has usually gone unexamined beyond its surface similarity to a socio-political 'respectability'.

Let me go one step further with this address, which has taken the tone of a moral dissertation ... [The people's] strength of character, its moral force, depends on the character of each individual ... We must therefore cultivate true family and home life, and in that work the women can play a most important part. Numberless instances of the influence of mothers in determining the lives of great men might be cited from history. A

³³⁵ See, for example, Gavin Lewis' *Between the Wire and the Wall* and R. E. van der Ross' *Rise and Decline; Say it Loud; In Our Own Skins*; M. Ajam', 'The raison d'être of the Muslim Mission Primary School in Cape Town and environs from 1860 to 1980 with special reference to the role of Dr. A. Abdurahman in the modernisation of Islam-oriented schools' (PhD Dissertation, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1986); and others. The only author to shine a light on this has been P. van der Spuy's feminist analysis of Abdullah and Nellie's relationship in her biography of Cissie Goolbut it is presented as an example of the *APO* and hence Abdullah as patriarchal, preferring to restrict women to the home. Given that Abdullah's mother and grandmother both worked, this strikes me as a hollow assessment. See P. van der Spuy, "'Not only 'the younger daughter of Dr. Abdurahman': A feminist exploration of early influences on the political development of Cissie Gool' (PhD Dissertation, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 2002), 55.

mother's influence is incalculable. The character of children is far more dependent on that of the mother than that of the father. The home is the best nursery of character, and the mother is the queen of the home and the best instructor.³³⁶

These Presidential addresses, it must be understood, were delivered to male-only meetings of the APO. Thus, these words were written for *men* as a reminder and entreaty to other men to respect and value women. Two months later in the *APO*, Abdullah included an additional note, probably because its readership included women, 'In my last presidential address I ventured to make certain recommendations: the cultivation of sound moral habits, the observance of truth and sobriety, and the making it our constant endeavor [sic] to brighten our homes and regard them as the best training ground possible for our future citizens [and] ... to the weighty influence for good that women can exert in their homes'.³³⁷ Family, especially women and children are, to Abdullah, at the nucleus of the struggle for recognition and rights and education the connective tissue between family and society. There was no reason for Abdullah to have raised objection when Nellie joined and became active in women's organisations, especially when its aims matched his own.

Although Abdullah was a devout Muslim from an intensely faithful family, he was tolerant of Nellie's Christian traditions and identity. His childhood influences, no doubt, play a part in this. Nellie joined the Women's Christian Temperance Union in 1902³³⁸ soon after her and Abdullah's return from London. Nellie's participation with the Women's Christian Temperance Union probably even had Abdullah's approval, despite being couched in Christianity. Abdullah, as a Muslim, was a teetotaler, and he strongly supported abstinence from alcohol. In his 1910 APO Presidential address, Abdullah called alcohol a 'tremendous danger to our people – the drink evil, the drink curse. On other occasions I have spoken on that subject, and you all know what my views are. I cannot do better than express my conviction that drink is the greatest curse that can afflict any people who are endeavouring to rise in the scale of civilisation, and we as an organisation should stem every effort that has a tendency to weaken the restrictions on the sale of liquor'.³³⁹ Likewise, the *APO* under Abdullah supported a total prohibition of alcohol for all black and coloured people. But there was another aspect to Abdullah's support of Nellie's Christian temperance activities. For Abdullah, alcohol was major obstacle in the forming of that good, moral character.³⁴⁰ The

³³⁶ *APO* 9 April 1910

³³⁷ *APO* 4 June 1910.

³³⁸ No Women's Christian Temperance Union membership lists, minutes of meetings, or other organisation documents that could clarify the extent of Nellie's involvement have survived. More information on other women involved with the Women's Christian Temperance Union can be found in A. Tiltman, *The Women's Christian Temperance Union of the Cape Colony: 1889-1910*. BA Hons. diss., University of Cape Town, 1988.

³³⁹ See, for example, the oft-cited passage in his 1910 APO Presidential address under 'In Their Own Way' and 'A Mother's Influence' (*APO* 9 April 1910). In Abdullah's hometown of Wellington, local leaders spent the first two decades of the twentieth century establishing clubs and societies based around classed notions of respectability. The emerging coloured middle class strove to differentiate itself from blacks and lower-class coloureds, emphasising the latter's frequent presence in upper Pentz Street, or *Katienstraat* (F. J. Cleophas, 'Writing and contextualising local history. A historical narrative of the Wellington Horticultural Society (Coloured)', *Yesterday and Today* 11 (2014): 25-26). In 1918, a special commission gathered to collect data on 'drunkenness in the western districts of the Cape Province'. Abdullah testified in favour of prohibition, but showed restraint against characterising drink as a result of moral deficiency. In his explanation on why 'you see more drunkenness now than you did 10 or 12 years ago', he pointed out that coloured people are 'increasing both from natural causes' and, in distinguishing the local urban coloured community, continued, 'and also through people coming here from the country'. *Report of the Select Committee on Drunkenness in the Western Districts of the Cape Province, S.C. 7 - '18* (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1918), 276.

³⁴⁰ See, for example, *APO* 1 January 1910.

APO, for example, did 'not advertise brandy, wine or beer', no matter what.³⁴¹ Instead, Abdullah strongly encouraged sport for healthy bodies in complement to education for sharp minds as the 'means for young men to engage their attention on Saturday afternoons'³⁴² as the preferred alternative to the rowdy afternoons of petty crime and drink that were becoming associated with the coloured working class.³⁴³ Some social tensions are revealed here, tensions that continue to affect Cape Town, and indeed most urban metropolitans in the world today – the internal contests within seemingly cohesive social identities, the suspicions between the urban and rural context and often its connotation and euphemisms for 'educated'.

Much like Ferguson's comments to the Education Commission decades earlier in 1891, Abdullah believed in the role of family in a child's physical, mental and moral development: 'Parents seeing their children live a clean and pure life ... that will help them physically and mentally in the strenuous after-life'.³⁴⁴ In another speech ghost-written for Mr. Foster for the 1936 opening of the Plumstead Troop Scouts, Abdullah makes clear the relationship he envisions intertwining the conjoined development of mind, body, and moral character in children. In a rare manuscript of a speech intended primarily for boys and young men, Abdullah writes,

Whenever and wherever I see a scout, [...] He, I know, will by his action and behaviour, impose upon his fellow subjects new moral duties, new means of approaching the problems of modern life, new methods of discharging the duties that will devolve upon him as a citizen ... It is an atmosphere of merry friendliness, wherein there is ample scope of self-expression, self-realization and the development of a high moral character ... There is one aspect of scouting, in which I am much interested, namely, the physical training which scouts undergo with the object of attaining and maintaining the best possible development and functioning of the body. In the prosecution of that object scouting assists in the development of mental capacity and character ... Without physical training, education lacks something which prevents full development into worthy citizenship ...³⁴⁵

These ideas are echoed in an article chosen by Abdullah to be published by the *APO* titled, 'How to improve the Coloured race'. Historian Henry Cloete writes, 'Sport plays an important part in the improvement of the Coloured people; it would help the male and female to grow up into strong, healthy men and women. It will also crush the hooliganism which so much abounds among the Coloured race. Sport if carried on in the right way, would bring friendship, love and happiness which the race so much needs'.³⁴⁶ To Abdullah, a healthy body, paired with a learned mind and moral character, intuitively rejected the cheap pleasures of intoxication. Sport, however, provided youth with a wholesome alternative to hooliganism, united the community, and levelled the playing field, so to speak. The *APO* encouraged all

³⁴¹ *APO* 24 October 1919. Of course, part of this is also a protest of the tot system and the maintained impoverishment of poor coloured wine farm workers. Lieutenant-Colonel George Gray, the Deputy Commissioner of Police, concurred in his interview by the select committee on Drunkenness in 1918, suggesting that large numbers of farm labourers who had previously been administered and grown addicted to daily liquor rations were migrating in the 1910's into town to take advantage of the wartime economy boom. *Report of the Select Committee on Drunkenness in the Western Districts of the Cape Province, S.C. 7 - '18* (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1918), 5, 52.

³⁴² *APO* 24 October 1919.

³⁴³ M. Adhikari, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough. Racial Identity in the South African Coloured community* (Cape Town: Double Storey, 2005), 83.

³⁴⁴ *APO* 20 December 1919.

³⁴⁵ NWU/AFP: 'Speeches Written by Dr. Abdurahman for Mr. Foster, 1936' (Boxes 1, Folder 7): 'For Foster Opening Plumstead Troop Scouts 25/7/36'.

³⁴⁶ *APO* 20 December 1919.



Fig. 9, Photograph
ABDULLAH'S DAUGHTER BEGUM WITH ONE OF HIS CATCHES (C. 1930s)

manner of sport from gymnastics and rugby to boxing. Abdullah took marked interest in supporting aquatic sports. Abdullah had a fondness for fishing,³⁴⁷ a somewhat curious preference for a *Hanafi* Muslim at the Cape, given Abu Bakr's pronouncement against shellfish. Most likely, Abdullah holds fond childhood memories of fishing with his father when Abdul was still a fishmonger, before he left for the Russo-Turkish war in 1877. While Abdullah may not consume the fish, he loved to catch them.

On the *Tweede Nuwejaar* of 1920, a Cape holiday of special significance to coloured people, some fishermen³⁴⁸ decided to organise a seaside gala at the Kalk Bay pier. 'Under the distinguished patronage' of Abdullah, the gala was advertised as the 'Coloured community's effort towards the Governor-general's fund' and boasted swimming, diving, and boat races; but also popular activities like greased pole climbing

³⁴⁷ University of London, Senate House Libraries, Institute of Commonwealth Studies: ICS2 Abdullah Abdurahman Papers (hereafter UOL/ICS2): Dr. Hendrickse's Notes, n.d, 5; Western Cape Archives and Records, Cape Archives, State Archives Depot, Cape Town (hereafter KAB)/MOOC 67759: Estate papers, Abdullah Abdurahman; UCT MA: BC 1001, Western Cape Oral History Project, District Six interviews, Z. Booley, interviewed by A. Adhikari, nd.

³⁴⁸ The primary organisers, in addition to Abdullah, who was treasurer, were: Dick Fernandez, John Nicholas Menigo and another APO senior official, Stephan Reagon (APO 17 January 1920).

contests, side shows, and 'potato and thread and needle races'. Refreshment stalls were also installed for the full day.³⁴⁹ It was a smashing success.³⁵⁰ Part of the significance of this event was that the harbour, at this time, had already been operating segregated facilities and events like this allowed for a kind of spatial reclamation. 'Nearly 10,000 people arrived by train and over 2,500 paid admission to the pier at Kalk Bay for the annual regatta', reported the *APO*.³⁵¹ As we will see throughout this chapter, the APO was adept at understanding the significant role of social leisure in politics, of which Nellie played an integral part. The regatta was no exception. The coloured Cape Corps Band was present all day, and a concert was organised for the evening at the pier 'decorated with bunting and was beautifully illuminated at night', followed by a dance to the tunes of a string band.³⁵² These events encouraged a united coloured identity even as a class divide was becoming more entrenched. But class disunions were not the only cleavages becoming exposed at this time.

Nellie, Suffragette

Nellie's role in Abdullah life, both politically and privately, has rarely been discussed. Not unlike Khadijah, scholars typically relegate her to 'the white Scottish wife' much in the way that Abdullah's mother was little more than 'the prettiest Malay girl'. Yet upon closer examination, Nellie comes to into spotlight as Abdullah's right-hand woman. What he was to the APO, so she was to the Women's Guild (Guild), an auxiliary arm of the APO. And yet these were not her only political activities. She was a member of the Women's Enfranchisement League that emerged from the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Some pamphlets and other materials on women's suffrage in South Africa in the manuscript collections indicate Nellie's interest.³⁵³ Unfortunately, details about Nellie's participation with the Women's Enfranchisement League is limited to a singular report that she had argued women's franchise should be without colour bar at a meeting in Greenmarket Square.³⁵⁴ At least one author has speculated on Nellie's involvement based on a perceived friendship between the well-known suffragist Olive Schreiner and Nellie.³⁵⁵ While it is true Olive and Nellie were among the first women to join the Cape Town branch of the Women's Enfranchisement League when it launched in 1907,³⁵⁶ this merely shows that both women moved in similar social circles. Abdullah's friend and colleague, the Honourable William Schreiner, who headed the 1909 London deputation, was Olive's brother. Save for one instance, Olive's papers only

³⁴⁹ *APO* 30 December 1919.

³⁵⁰ The gala/regatta continued annually until it was taken over by the Gordon's Swimming Club after WWII (T. Carse, *Die bloudam is huloesland*, Cape Town: Haum, 1959, 51).

³⁵¹ *APO* 17 January 1920.

³⁵² *APO* 17 January 1920.

³⁵³ NWU/AFP: Pamphlets Published in SA, Women's Suffrage, 1908-1938 (Box 6, Folder 6). Most of the materials for Nellie exist in relation to the Women's Guild, but of the others that remain, women's suffrage is a distinct interest. For example, there is a *Cape Times* on 'the Woman's vote' (9 July 1909), and promotional pamphlets on the South African and British suffrage campaigns are included. Julia Solly, the Superintendent of the Franchise Department at Kimberley, and Nellie had also corresponded at least once (J. Solly, 'Franchise and the Women's Christian Temperance Union', *White Ribbon*, May - June 1911, 2. The *White Ribbon* is the Women's Christian Temperance Union's newspaper).

³⁵⁴ R. Suttner, *All My Life and All My Strength: An autobiography by Ray Alexander* (Johannesburg: STE Publishers, 2004), 56.

³⁵⁵ In P. van der Spuy, "'Not only 'the younger daughter of Dr. Abdurahman': A feminist exploration of early influences on the political development of Cissie Gool' (PhD Dissertation, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 2002), Nellie is speculated to have been active in women's suffrage and to have held friendships with Mary Brown, Julia Solly, and Olive Schreiner. There is no evidence for these relationships.

³⁵⁶ E. Everett, Zainunnissa (Cissie) Gool 1897-1963: A biography. BA Hons diss., University of Cape Town, 1978, 2; Z. Friedlander, *Until the heart changes. A garland for Olive Schreiner* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1967).

reference Abdullah, never Nellie. Pre-dating the deputation on 9 April 1909, Olive writes to W. P.: 'That scene in the house yesterday, was without any exception the most contemptible from the broad human stand-point I have ever seen in my life ... And as they squirmed & lied, & each one giving the other away, & all gave away principle, all the while there was Abdurahman's drawn dark intellectual face looking down at them'.³⁵⁷ On that same day, Olive reached out to Abdullah to establish a friendship with him. This letter is the only time that Olive references Nellie, but it is clear her interest was in Abdullah, not Nellie. 'Dear Dr. Abdurahman', she began, 'It was a great pleasure to me to meet you & your wife yesterday & I trust that our brief acquaintance may ripen into sincere friendship. [...] I am sending you a little paper I wrote during the war.'³⁵⁸ [...] I think your paper first rate'.³⁵⁹ Olive and Abdullah remained in friendly contact, at least up until Olive left South Africa for Europe in late 1913, as attested by Gandhi's letters.³⁶⁰ Abdullah's daughter, Cissie, later in life, also commented on how greatly Abdullah respected Olive.³⁶¹ This respect seems well-earned. As the Women's Enfranchisement League branches began to nationalise in the years just before union, the members of the Cape branch also found themselves struggling with questions of a colour bar in a national movement for women's suffrage. Eventually, the women adopted and accepted the terms of the National Convention concerning race and franchise and only sought women's vote on 'the same terms as it is or may be granted to men'.³⁶² Olive left the Women's Enfranchisement League.³⁶³ Curiously, Nellie remained a member of the Women's Enfranchisement League.³⁶⁴

The Contours of Gender in the Personhood of "moral character"

Abdullah has sometimes been criticised by feminists for a perceived conservatism about patriarchy. In general, this is because he never publicly issued statements for women's suffrage until much later in his career, when the Women's Enfranchisement Act had already passed. Feminist readings of his history suggest Abdullah was an 'authoritarian patriarch' who considered a woman's place to be in the kitchens or

³⁵⁷ This was a parliamentary debate promoting Union. Abdullah was there as a spectator (UCT MA: BC16 Olive Schreiner collection: Box 4, Folder 2, 1909: 9 April 1909, Letter to William Philip ('Will') Schreiner).

³⁵⁸ It has not been possible to ascertain which of her writings this might have been.

³⁵⁹ This was a copy of the *APO*.

³⁶⁰ L. Stanley and H. Dampier, "'I trust that our brief acquaintance may ripen into sincere friendship': Networks Across The Race Divide In South Africa In Conceptualising Olive Schreiner's Letters 1890-1920", *OSLP Working Papers on Letters, Letterness & Epistolary Networks*, no. 2 (2010): 29.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

³⁶² Some white suffragists, such I. K. Cross, a contemporary suffragist, were unable to connect their own political struggles for equal rights with the struggles of non-white women for the same. I. K. Cross, 'The Women's Movement in South Africa - and Elsewhere', in *Women of South Africa*, ed. T. H. Lewis (Cape Town: Le Quesne and Horton-Smith, 1913), 306. Also see the *Report of the Select Committee on the Enfranchisement of Women, SC12-1929* (Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, Government Printers, Castle Street, 1929), 51 and C. Walker, *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945* (Claremont, Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1990), 326-329.

³⁶³ She seems to have stopped participation with the Women's Enfranchisement League in 1909, but nominally remained on the roster to avoid trouble for her niece. See National English Literary Museum Archives, Grahamstown, Olive Schreiner collection: 2001.24/40 Letter to Mimmie Murray 23 July 1911. Also see Appendix F.

³⁶⁴ However, many years later, in 1938, when Cissie established the League for the Enfranchisement of Non-European Women, Nellie assisted her with the establishment. In the Northwestern University, Melville J. Herskovits Library of Africana Studies, 001 Abdurahman Family Papers archives, there is a pamphlet advertising a meeting to discuss the establishment of this league with 'Z. Gool' and Mrs. Abdurahman as speakers, among others.

at most, only in support of men's activities.³⁶⁵ This thesis disagrees. It was true that Abdullah's sentiments about women's suffrage remained opaque until after 1930 when women, but only white women, won the vote. It was equally true Abdullah's speech in response to the Women's Enfranchisement Act could be read as an opportunistic statement to further the coloured men's franchise since he discusses the denial of the vote to coloured women only in terms of it being an extension of Union betrayal to coloured men. And indeed, his earliest statements on women typically involved their roles as mothers. Women were painted in family brushstrokes, not public or political ones.³⁶⁶ However, Abdullah never spoke against women's enfranchisement, and his enduring admiration of Olive Schreiner suggests a much more complex and nuanced attitude towards gender equality and franchise. Women in Abdullah's early addresses and statements were only explicitly mentioned in two areas. The first was the right to education at the same rigour and standard as their male counterparts.³⁶⁷ This attitude is unsurprising, given his early training under his mother and the young women of the Huguenot Seminary. It was of intense personal relevance after a rejection letter from the Department of Education barring their daughters from admission to the Cape of Good Hope Seminary. And the second, taken by some authors as patronising and dismissive of women's rights, was Abdullah's emphasis on women's importance as mothers. It seems one of the issues here is a continuing misunderstanding about the conceptualisation of gender and family; and the relationship of the family unit to society and politics in Islam. Unfortunately, these misunderstandings and its misalignment with liberal models peel at the limits of post-modern feminist thought.

These matters extend vastly out of the scope of this thesis, but to draw attention to a few cursory points: First, that Abdullah explicitly included girls when he spoke of education is predictable. Unlike most of European education until Victorian times, Islam from its inception declared education equally the provenance of every individual, regardless of gender.³⁶⁸ Khadijah's education, and later teaching at Abu Bakr Effendi's girls school, was made possible from Effendi's adherence to these values.³⁶⁹ For Rosie and Cissie to be denied quality schooling incensed Abdullah at every level. For many Muslim women, the pursuit of education only ended because, second, as girls become young women, and young women become married, their primary roles in society changed from daughters to mothers. The base unit of

³⁶⁵ For example, van der Spuy, 'Not only 'the younger daughter'. Sharp critique is taken against Abdullah and indeed, all men of the APO as being patriarchal and dismissive of women. The author goes as far as to say that Abdullah's future statements in favour of women's rights only resulted from his interactions Sarojini Naidu from whom, he 'apparently learned much from his 'dear sister' about the benefits of women's participation in mainstream politics; not only was she persuasive, but political capital was to be made by sharing a platform with a powerful woman' (P. van der Spuy and L. Clowes, "'A living testimony of the heights to which a woman can rise": Sarojini Naidu, Cissie Gool and the Politics of Women's Leadership in South Africa in the 1920s' *South African Historical Journal* (2002): 19.

³⁶⁶ See, for example, the oft-cited passage in his 1910 APO Presidential address under 'A Mother's Influence' (APO 9 April 1910).

³⁶⁷ For example, "Even if there were no souls to cure ... the world needs accomplished men and women to keep up its outward temporal prosperity". Yes, South Africa, we may add, is greatly in want of such men and such women, and accomplished men and women can only be produced by education'. (NWU/AFP: Published Speeches Written by Dr. Abdurahman, 1904-1931: 'Speech on the Education Bill' (Box 1, Folder 6)).

³⁶⁸ For further reading: M. Z. Siddiqi and A. H. Murad, *Hādīth literature: its origin, development, special features and criticism* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993); A. Aliyah, 'Great Women in Islamic History: A Forgotten Legacy' *Young Muslim Digest*, 18 February 2015; M. Iqbal, 'Muhammad Akram Nadwi: Al-Muhaddithat: The Women Scholars in Islam'. *Islam & Science* 6, no. 1 (2008): 71-74. As an additional note, the rest of Mohammad Akram Nadwi's 40-volume collection on around 8,000 Muslim women scholars, *Al-Muhaddithat: The Women Scholars in Islam*, is in the process of being adapted into English. Currently, only the prefatory (2013) volume is available in English.

³⁶⁹ Of course, mileage from society to society varies for an endless array of reasons. Just as it is noteworthy that, as stated in n. 33, there is a long and distinguished tradition of female Muslim scholars, it is also equally noteworthy that Cape Muslim women were receiving at least a rudimentary education well ahead of the rest of the Muslim world in the 1870's. Both of these trivia ultimately reveal that education for Muslim women was still the exception, not the rule, regardless of doctrine.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION,
Capetown, 25th October, 1907.

Madam,

You will remember that during the Parliamentary session you once called on Dr. Muir in reference to the admission of your girls into the Good Hope Seminary, and that he then promised to make some inquiry into the probable attitude of the School Board in the matter. In the bustle of the session the thing was laid aside, but was not forgotten. Since then Dr. Muir has had the opportunity of a talk with the Chairman of the Board on the subject, and finds that his attitude is practically similar to that of the Managers of the Good Hope Seminary, and apparently his view is likely to be the view of the Board. Dr. Muir regrets therefore that for the present he cannot give any helpful suggestion.

I have the honour to be,

Madam,

Your obedient servant,

Signed

pro SECRETARY.

Mrs. Abdurahman,
Albert Lodge,
Mount Street,
Capetown.

Fig. 10, Letter.
FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO NELLIE (25 OCTOBER 1907)

society in Islamic ideology is not the individual, but instead the family. As such, motherhood occupies a revered position in Islamic society. A well-known hadith from the *Sahîh Bukhârî* identifies the mother as the first three priorities and the father only fourth.³⁷⁰ An Arabic proverb, 'The mother is a school', combines these two values. For Abdullah, this was especially resonant. Even as most of South African society denied him a formal education, his mother was his primary teacher. His reverence and care is further evidenced by Abdullah's extended stay in London in 1901 shortly before Khadijah's death. Abdul's relationship with Betsy and Abdullah's relationship with Khadijah demonstrate this essential significance of mothers to a person's life.

When Lucie was visiting Cape Town in 1862, Abdullah's grandparents proudly shared letters they had received from their son, Abdul, 'the young theologian'. Abdul lovingly wrote in one such letter: 'to his *hoog eerbare moeder* (high honourable mother) a fond request for money, and promises to return soon'.³⁷¹ Notably, Abdullah wrote to his mother and not his father. Due to the high value of motherhood, the sympathetic couple invited Lucie to Abdul's homecoming feast, 'Old Abdul Jemaalee thinks it will divert my mind, and prove to me that Allah will take me home safe to my children, about whom he and his wife asked many questions'.³⁷² Moreover, Muslim women have long been free to own property and operate businesses or work if they chose, as Abdullah's grandmother Betsy seems to have tried to do.³⁷³ As noted before in this thesis, Nellie herself owned a few rent-bearing properties and had acted as Abdullah's agent in his absence and renegotiated terms of contracts on his behalf. Indeed, before the APO Hall moved to Longmarket Street, meetings took place at the 'Independence Hall' on Wicht Street,³⁷⁴ property that was held in Nellie's name even after Abdullah and Nellie separated. As early as 1913, when working women in the Free State were forced to carry passes, Abdullah was outraged, seeing it as an attack on women and as such, an attack on the family. He took to the pen and wrote, 'The sanctity of homes is violated. Wives are compelled to carry passes. Mothers driven to abandon their offspring of tender years and seek employment. Daughters are wrenched from parental care and control, and forced into the service of some white scoundrel'.³⁷⁵ In short, Abdullah's attitudes about women's franchise alone does not, and should not, be taken as the definitive word on his views about wider gender equality and status.

This cultural dissonance, however, may have come as a jolt to Nellie. Presumably having spent a significant amount of time with Abdullah in London, Nellie must have met Mohamed, Abdul and Khadijah, been familiar with the activities of the Temporary Mosque, and knew of his brother-in-law Ataullah's run for office. Nellie may not have been prepared to arrive, only to find many of the Muslim women at the Cape were rigidly 'apolitical'. Some historians have interpreted the lack of visible political

³⁷⁰ 'A man came to the Prophet and said: "O Messenger of Allah! Who from among mankind warrants the best companionship from me"? He replied: "Your mother". The man asked: "Then who"? So he replied: "Your mother". The man then asked: "Then who"? So the Prophet replied again: "Your mother". The man then asked: "Then who"? So he replied: "Then your father"'. (*Sahîh Bukhârî*, Book of Good Manners and Form (Al-Adab), 5971 and *Sahîh Muslim* 7/2).

³⁷¹ L. Duff-Gordon, *Letters from the Cape*. Annotated by Dorothea Fisher. London: Oxford University Press, 1927), 43.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

³⁷³ See examples of other women owning and operating businesses and properties elsewhere in this thesis (chapter 2: 14, 19, n. 80; chapter 3: n. 8). Betsy probably applied for a licence and was denied (see introduction, 2).

³⁷⁴ J. H. Raynard, *Dr. Abdurahman, A biographical memoir*, M. Adhikari, ed (Cape Town: Friends of the National Library of South Africa in association with the District Six Museum, 2002), 24.

³⁷⁵ This speech was delivered in Kimberley on 29th September 1913 (APO 11 October 1913).

activity was the result of political apathy. This was then written as if chiaroscuro against the sharp intensification of politicisation among Muslim men. More recent scholars Yusuf da Costa and Achmat Davids have rejected this characterisation. They point to a men-only deputation to the Colonial Secretary in 1885 to protest the closure of Tana Baru, which was 'accompanied by three to four thousand women and children who were stationed outside Parliament', and yet somehow many authors dismissed that the presence of women and could have been political.³⁷⁶ Part of the reason this presence was unprecedented, according to da Costa and Davids, was that, only until very recently, the zeitgeist among Cape Muslim women had been to 'embrace the veil' and retreat from an overtly public or 'political' life. This retreat, they argued, was *not* apolitical but the opposite. As Cape Muslim women observed the waves of urbanisation, rising poverty, industrialisation, increasing segregation, and all the other consequences of the mineral revolution and 'modernisation', they embraced a 'Muslim consciousness' and rejected the pressures to assimilate and 'modernise'. Da Costa and Davids' insights have been observed among Muslim women in other contexts as well. In the wider Islamic world, veiling and the *hijab* or headscarf had fallen widely out of favour by the 1930's and only came back into vogue in the 1970's with the emergence of Islamic revivalist movements *contra* globalisation and 'modernity'.³⁷⁷ This is currently one of the major themes in studies of Islamic feminism.³⁷⁸ Modernity and agency for Muslim women often do not manifest in ways expected by liberal, feminist sensibilities.³⁷⁹ This cultural dissonance probably loomed in the Abdurahman home and complicated notions on the 'right' way to raise the Abdurahman daughters. Delving into life at Albert Lodge begins to reveal some of the ways the matrices of political ideology both manifests in and is generated by family dynamics and life within the home.

Nellie, President of the Women's Guild

'A number of ladies met at the residence of Mrs. Abdurahman, for the purpose of forming an association, the aim of which would be to work towards uplifting and educating the women, to assist the men in their work, and to take a general interest in the welfare of the coloured people'.³⁸⁰ And so the Women's Guild was founded. Nellie was elected chairwoman and president at the inaugural meeting. The Dr. and Mrs. Abdurahman proved a powerful couple. With more than 70 branches at one time, Nellie presided with influence and power over many women. If the APO was 'Abdurahman's Political Organisation', the Guild was certainly 'Nellie's Guild'. The directive of coloured politics during their reign seems, at least in part, as

³⁷⁶ A Davids criticises that this unprecedented gathering was chalked up as little more than a curiosity or to 'demonstrate the strong community sentiments', (A. Davids, *The mosques of Bo-Kaap. A social history of Islam at the Cape*. Athlete, Cape Town: South African Institute of Arabic and Islamic Research, 1980), 75. Also see Y. da Costa and A. Davids, *Pages from Cape Muslim history*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter, 1994, 61-66.

³⁷⁷ See, for example, K. Bullock, 'Challenging Medial Representations of the Veil'. *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 17 no. 3 (2000): 22 – 53.

³⁷⁸ There is an abundance of literature on these matters. For further reading on these themes, see: E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger, *The Invention of tradition* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); S. E. Hutchinson, *Nuer dilemmas : coping with money, war, and the state*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996; L. Vail, *The Creation of tribalism in Southern Africa*. London and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989; C. A. Muller, *Rituals of Fertility and the Sacrifice of Desire: Nazarete Women's Performance in South Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1999.

³⁷⁹ For further reading, check out: S. Mahmood, *Politics of piety: The Islamic revival and the feminist subject* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); L. Deeb, *An enchanted modern: gender and public piety in Shi'i Lebanon* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); R. Rinaldo, *Mobilizing piety: Islam and feminism in Indonesia* (London: Oxford University Press, 2013); H. Moghissi, *Feminism and Islamic fundamentalism: The limits of post-modern analysis* (London and New York: Zed Books, 1999). Also, see n. 66.

³⁸⁰ As noted in the 7 May 1910 APO, although some literature notes the establishment as later, in 1911 (R. E. van der Ross. *Say it out loud: The APO Presidential Addresses and other major political speeches 1906-1940 of Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman*. Cape Town: Western Cape Institute for Historical Research, 1990, 11).

if representing the Abdurahmans writ-large. The Cape Town branch of the Guild passed three objectives: first, 'to promote unity among the Coloured women of British South Africa, and to aid and assist towards the uplifting of the race'; second, 'to obtain better and higher education for children, and to take an interest generally in all educational matters'; and lastly, 'to assist and encourage as far as possible the work carried on by the men members of the African Political Organisation'.³⁸¹ The Guild opened membership to 'all coloured women born in South Africa, or who have adopted in as their own'. The race requirement was necessarily flexible, considering that the President was 'coloured' only by marriage. The Guild met weekly 'for the purpose of needlework, dress cutting and making, reading, etc' and bimonthly for 'social discussion and for review of work done'.³⁸² The Guild encouraged young women members and waived the subscription fee of one penny per week for girls under 16 years of age.

Historiography has overlooked the Guild. On the rare occasion it is recognised, the coverage has often been passing or otherwise subsumed under the APO. The slivers of volumes that reference the Guild are primarily concerned with wider political activism among 'Black' women and do little more than name the organisation to footnote Cissie's upbringing.³⁸³ This is a gross reduction of the Guild's gravity. It was more than just a field school for a future politician to hone her craft. Although it was officially apolitical, the Guild nonetheless did many political things. Several factors may have contributed to this curious contradiction. The easy answer is gender politics – that the APO was patriarchal and dismissive of women, and the Guild perhaps not have been permitted to stand otherwise. However, given Nellie's open membership in political organisations, Abdullah's respect of politically active women like Olive Schreiner and his own youth filled with determined young women and teachers, this hypothesis is out of sync with the evidence. What was more likely was that there was internal dissent regarding women and politics and the Abdurahmans took a soft stance so they could better unite the community. The APO never explicitly banned women from membership, but it was known it was an organisation for men. For the few women who defied convention and attended APO meetings, they were met with distinct disapproval.³⁸⁴ An examination of the Guild's activities reveals the extent that Abdullah extends and supports women in public life. At least, as much as it was possible for him to do while still maintaining the peace within the men-only APO. Abdullah had often been criticised for being too assimilationist. But when examined closer, it often seems the main flaw had more to do with being too conciliatory. For the sake of group

³⁸¹ APO 21 May 1910.

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ R. E. van der Ross's comments on the Guild are limited to, 'in a sense a forerunner of later ideas and organisations which espoused the rights of women ... Bearing in mind that few Coloured women had even a standard six education at the time, and that many had no schooling at all, the Women's Guild no doubt became a popular and influential social and educational forum for women'. (R. E. van der Ross, *Say it out loud: The APO Presidential Addresses and other major political speeches 1906-1940 of Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman* (Cape Town: Western Cape Institute for Historical Research, 1990), 11-12). M. Adhikari's annotated *Straatpraatjes* contains commentary on the Guild's activities, but others, such as G. Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall: A history of South African 'Coloured' politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), only discusses the Guild's activities as if a part of the APO and not an organisation of its own. Feminist reconsiderations of women's political history have introduced some attention but only within thematic volumes proving ongoing female politicisation in South Africa (for example, C. Walker, *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, Claremont, Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1990, 30; F. de Haan, ed, *Women's Activism: Global Perspectives from the 1890's to the Present*, London: Routledge, 2013, 30, 35-36) or to buffet the importance of Nellie and Abdullah's daughter, Cissie Gool (see, for example, van der Spuy, 'Not Only the Daughter').

³⁸⁴ For example, one unnamed woman had, for a time, regularly accompanied her husband to all the APO meetings. When Nellie founded the Women's Guild arm of the APO, the APO pointed out with relief that she could stop coming to the men's meetings. (APO 17 July 1909). The APO changed their stance in 1928 to allow women to attend conferences, stand for the executive or vote in APO business. Resisting this change, one male delegate to the APO's 1928 conference nonetheless 'refused to sit in the same room with women'. (*Cape Times* 13 April 1928).

solidarity and coherence, Abdullah had to please multiple parties and manage a melange of moving parts. Beyond Abdullah, an inspection of the Women's Guild reveals some of the debates concerning gender within the coloured community. In any case, the Guild had not typically been considered 'political'.

Guild meetings were conducted on Tuesday evenings so they did not overlap with the APO's Thursday meetings. Wednesday afternoons were needlework lessons for the young members. In the beginning, these meetings took place at Albert Lodge. By May 1910, the meetings were moved to the APO Independence Hall.³⁸⁵ The Guild often organised socials and leisure activities to raise funds towards the political activities of the APO. Coinciding so closely with the Guild's establishment that it was probably the catalyst, the women rallied to raise money for the 1909 deputation to London to challenge Clause 35. The first appearance of the Guild in the *APO*, on 5 June 1909, was an advert in the *APO* for a 'Grand Concert' to be held on the evening of 7 June to raise funds for the 'Draft Constitution Fund' to defray the costs of the deputation.³⁸⁶ Nellie, who was never shy of the spotlight, was one of the vocalists. The next day, Nellie (and Olive Schreiner as well) were at the Alfred Docks to see the Deputation pull anchor.³⁸⁷ Another fundraiser – a tea party – was organised the next year to send delegates from the Cape branch of the APO to the national conference in Port Elisabeth. Abdullah's friend and colleague, Rawson Walter Wooding from British Guiana who was mentioned in chapter two, presided at the piano and once again, Nellie placed herself on the stage, singing two songs³⁸⁸ and giving an address that 'raised the committee, and encouraged the women to assist their husbands in the social and political work'.³⁸⁹ Nellie's propensity to merge social leisure with political purpose emerged as the Guild's template. At nearly every major APO event involving Abdullah, Nellie organised an auxiliary Guild social to promote, fundraise, or otherwise generate positive press. The Abdurahman children were present at nearly all of these events.

Similar parallels emerged in other women's organisations of the time. For example, in Marijke Du Toit's study on the politicised domesticity of Afrikaner women in the Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging, she observes that women subverted the male political space by mobilising the idealisation of motherhood or *volksmoeder* ideology to carve out public lives and to extend their spheres of influence into social policies through social events and activities. Utilising this mode, Afrikaner women were able to 'apolitically' politicise and actively participate in the construction of Afrikaner identity.³⁹⁰ The Guild of Loyal Women at this time were equally 'apolitical' even as they laid out explicitly political principles to draw ties between South African and the Cape Colony closer together and organised teas for social causes.³⁹¹ These parallels suggest the Guild represented universal social trends for middle-class women, ethnic and nationalistic organisations, or both. Nellie took every opportunity the Guild offered to politicise and promote, *without* doing so overtly so as not to alienate those members who did not want to be

³⁸⁵ *APO* 7 May 1910.

³⁸⁶ *APO* 5 June 1909.

³⁸⁷ *APO* 19 June 1909, *APO* 7 May 1910.

³⁸⁸ A 'Mrs. Cupido' also sang two songs to Wooding's accompaniment.

³⁸⁹ *APO* 26 Mar 1910.

³⁹⁰ M. du Toit, 'The domesticity of Afrikaner Nationalism: Volksmoeders and the ACVV, 1904-1929'. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29, no. 1 (2003): 155-176.

³⁹¹ E. Van Heyningen and P. Merrett. "'The Healing Touch': The Guild of Loyal Women of South Africa 1900 – 1912'. *South African historical journal* 47, no. 1 (2002): 24-50.

associated with political activism. Possibly other women, not men, limited the Guild and other women's organisations of the time to be 'apolitical'.³⁹² Nevertheless, Nellie had a distinct agenda with the Guild and ensured it did not exist *only* to support the men. For example, she arranged a lecture series that highlighted political matters concerning education, children, women and race. One such talk in April of 1910, under the auspices of Nellie as chair, featured Dr. Frances Elizabeth Hoggan (b. 1843 - d. 1927, née Morgan), who 'gave a very interesting address to the coloured women under the auspices of the Guild'.³⁹³ After Hoggan's husband George, also a doctor, passed away in 1891, Hoggan turned her attention to political activism for educational and social reforms outside the United States, especially in the Middle East, the United States, India, and South Africa. Her address at the Women's Guild was a part of these activities. 'The lecturer confined her remarks to the notable coloured women of America. It is hoped that in the near future a lecture would be delivered on the notable coloured women of South Africa ...'³⁹⁴ Two weeks later, Abdullah continued to write of Hoggan, remarking in the *APO*, 'Dr. Hoggen [sic] concluded an interesting address by advising the Coloured people of South Africa to unite, be proud of their colour and race, and to educate their children'.³⁹⁵ Abdullah demonstrated his admiration for politically active women through multiple examples. As noted in the Interlude, it does not seem that this necessarily translates into an endorsement of women in public life or politics. Instead, it translates into his notions of *qualified* public officers. When someone meets Abdullah's high standards of intelligence, education, and the amorphous and vaguely religious "moral character", he is a devoted and loyal supporter, regardless of whether they are men or women. But this does not mean that the rest of the *APO*, or the Women's Guild, for that matter, agreed with these sentiments.

Fissures within the APO and the Women's Guild

By the end of 1911, a handful of women within the Guild wanted to break away from the *APO* and proposed to change the 'APO Women's Guild' to the 'African Women's guild', a move that was swiftly rejected by the rest of Guild who 'so severely reprimanded [them] that they immediately tendered their resignation, which was received with evident satisfaction by the Guild'. The *APO* reported, 'As these rebellious spirits have now been eliminated ... that close relationship which existed formerly between the Guild and the Cape Town branch of the *APO*, and which was somewhat strained of late, will, we feel sure, be re-established to the benefit of all'.³⁹⁶ Nellie's role in this conflict is unknown, but she did not resign. But, given her role as wife to the President of the *APO*, it is uncertain to what degree her choices may have

³⁹² On one occasion, at the Guild's 'usual six-weekly social in the Temperance Hall', the senior vice-president of the *APO* 'said a few encouraging words to the Guild' and the chairman commented that 'he thought women could be a great assistance to their husbands', Nellie corrected them that 'the object of the Guild was two-fold', both 'to uplift coloured womanhood, and to help the men'. *APO* 3 July 1909. It is noteworthy that Abdullah made sure he included this exchange in the *APO*.

³⁹³ *APO* 5 May 1910.

³⁹⁴ *APO* 5 May 1910. Born in Brecon, Wales in 1843, Hoggan was barred from medical studies in Britain and obtained her qualifications from Zurich University in 1870. In the 1880's, Hoggan became heavily involved in advocacy for intermediate and higher education in Wales, particularly for girls. The following year, in 1911, she spoke at the first Universal Race Congress in London. For further reading, see: N. McIntyre, 'Frances Hoggan – doctor of medicine, pioneer physician, patriot and philanthropist', *Brycheiniog* 13 (2007): 127-46; O. Thomas, *Frances Elizabeth Hoggan, 1843-1927* (privately printed, Brecon, 1970). For Hoggan's works, see: F. Hoggan, *Physical Education for Girls* (London: Swan, Sonnenschein & Allen, 1880); F. Hoggan, 'Medical Women For India' *Contemporary Review* (August 1882): 267-275; F. Hoggan, *The Position of the Mother in the Family in its Legal and Scientific Aspects* (Manchester: A Ireland & Co., 1884) and others.

³⁹⁵ *APO* 21 May 1910.

³⁹⁶ *APO* 4 November 1911.



Fig. 11, Photograph.

NINTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE APO IN JOHANNESBURG (1912)

→ Sitting in the centre of the second row is Dr Abdurahman (President); on his left are Matt J. Fredericks (General Secretary), and C. J. Carlse (Executive Officer). On the right of the President are P. J. Daniels (Senior Vice-President), H. Hartog (Treasurer), and W. J. van Beek (Junior Vice-President).

been limited by the APO or by her own choice. Nellie enjoyed power and being in the spotlight, but that does not necessarily mean that she wanted to embrace life in the public eye, either. This conflict in the Cape Town branch ripped through the other Guild affiliates across the country.³⁹⁷ Once *de facto* independent in their operations despite being closely aligned, these affairs caused the APO to initiate the incorporation of the Women's Guild into the APO. The APO commented that 'It was chiefly owing to the attitude of those ladies, that we withheld our approval of the Conference called together by the Cape Town branch'.³⁹⁸ Nellie nevertheless managed to arrange for branches of the Guild to meet in Johannesburg at the end of December in 1911. She served as chair, reiterating 'that the object of the gathering was to promote unity among the coloured women of South Africa, and to discuss and promote, if possible, the benevolent, social and intellectual welfare of the womenkind'.³⁹⁹ But with all the enmity and confusion, only seven branches sent delegates. The conference was a flop.⁴⁰⁰ In 1912, Abdullah and the men's APO were experiencing their own problems.

³⁹⁷ For example, although Kimberley resolved to boycott the annual 1911 Women's Guild conference, their statement in the APO read that they 'would have it understood that they have not the slightest idea of breaking away from the APO, but would adhere to, assist and encourage as far as possible the work carried on by the members of the organisation'. APO 2 December 1911.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ APO 3 February 1912.

⁴⁰⁰ Originally, the main agenda of the conference was to produce a top-level organisational constitution to cohere the branches, but there are no extant copies. The only things known of the constitution's contents comes from the APO: (1) 'the Executive body of the APO should be asked to approach the Managers of Schools with a view to securing the appointment of Coloured teachers only in schools for Coloured children' and (2) support for 'Lady Gladstone's Nursing Scheme' was resolved. APO 3 February 1912

In 1912, after Abdullah's speech at the annual conference in sharp criticism of the Native labour policies, the APO was in an uproar. Factions led by N. R. Veldsman, James Curry, and others accused Abdullah of radicalism and making 'veiled threats calculated to incite hatred and suspicion among the darker races of this country'.⁴⁰¹ They pointed to statements like: 'Year after year resolutions to effect closer union among all Coloured races are sent up for discussion to our Conference, and if Europeans persist in their policy of repression, there will one day arise a solid mass of Black and Coloured humanity, whose demands will be irresistible'; and 'The farmers' Native problem is the adoption of the best method of keeping the Coloured people and the Native races as serfs on his land'.⁴⁰² But it made enough of an impact that even Abdullah's supporters and colleagues, W. P. Schreiner and J. T. Jabavu, criticised it as far too extreme and alienating. At this time, Sol Plaatje was staying at Abdullah's Loop Street address and was surely a strong influence on Abdullah's views on non-white political unity and the force of these speeches on Native policies. The debates and challenges to Abdullah's leadership arising from this speech continued throughout 1912. Abdullah's following speech in 1913 did little to mollify matters.⁴⁰³ Unsurprisingly, Abdullah was accordingly attacked for his religion as the source of his radicalism; he was a 'Moslem threat'.⁴⁰⁴ The APO, concerned with segregation as the greatest threat, continued, for the most part, to rally behind Abdullah. Naturally, the effects of these fractures within the APO reverberated in the Guild.

Initially, the Guild and the APO's meetings were all held exclusively of one another. The women met on Tuesdays, and the men met on Thursdays. The weekly sessions of the women were devoted to needlework and other home economics tasks and lessons for young women, but once every second month, the Guild had a social evening geared towards discussions, lectures, talks, and debates on current events. In a move to possibly take increasing control of the Guild after the events of 1911, the APO rescheduled their monthly APO business meetings to Tuesdays. 'It was decided that in future the debate meetings would be held on the third Tuesday - the Ladies' night - when the men would, as it were, pay the ladies a visit, and get a cup of tea, and perhaps a cake into the bargain'.⁴⁰⁵ This change meant that Nellie began to preside over meetings of both men and women. This can be interpreted in a number of ways. The men could be described as trying to make amends and be more inclusive with the Women's Guild but could also be described as insinuating themselves into the Guild to exert further control over the women. At the time, the women seemed to have been pleased with the change. The APO declared the first co-ed meeting (in March 1912) a success.⁴⁰⁶ But, as must be pointed out, the Guild's viewpoints are occluded and unreported. From

⁴⁰¹ Only twenty people openly stood behind Veldsman and Curry, at least according to Abdullah's APO. Curry led the charge to try to gather enough supporters to establish an opposition organisation, the South African Coloured Union and held an inaugural conference in February of 1913. Curry described the APO as having fallen to Abdullah and now posed a Muslim threat to coloured Christians and declared the SACU Christian-only. Despite Curry's best efforts, the APO carried on, and the SACU only gained drew negligible support. APO 24 February 1912.

⁴⁰² This address was delivered in the Pilkington Hall, Johannesburg, and 1st January 1912 (APO 13 January 1912 and 27 January 1912).

⁴⁰³ See: UCT MA: BCZA 21-23: *Cape Argus* 4 October 1913; APO 25 October 1913, 11 October 1913, 10 February 1912, 27 January 1912; *SA News* 3 March 1912, 2 February 1912, 27 January 1912.

⁴⁰⁴ APO 24 February 1912.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ APO 23 March 1912.

this point forward, the Guild was on the descent.⁴⁰⁷ The Guild's presence in the APO independent of the APO declined due to its incorporation and shared meetings. Nellie's lecture series continued, although perhaps the quality depreciated. During one such talk in August 1912, Wooding's wife (probably as a request from Wooding to Abdullah on behalf of his wife) gave a conservative talk on the appropriate role of women. In it, Mrs. Wooding entreated for a return to the 'good old days', stressing values of 'self-respect' and advocated that girls' education focus on a 'practical' or home economics course. 'We should make our homes attractive' and prioritise and etiquette and manners, she said.⁴⁰⁸ This topic is clearly not up to the same standard as Nellie's previous speakers, such as Dr. Hoggan. Moreover, it cannot be overstated that Nellie disagreed. The following month, Nellie gave a forceful presentation on the Montessori methods in women's education.⁴⁰⁹

In 1914, following attacks on women in the Transvaal, the Administrator of the Cape Province proposed to amend the Municipal Ordinance for the 'compulsory registration and medical examination of domestic servants'. Nellie's Guild and Abdullah's APO were outraged. 'As the domestic servants were practically all coloured, it behooved [sic] the Organisation to register its strong protest the drastic and demoralising proposal of the Administrator'.⁴¹⁰ Ruth Alexander (née Schechter), who later befriended Abdullah's daughter Cissie, wrote in the APO: 'The logical result of the proposed legislation would be that no decent woman would allow her daughter to go into domestic service'.⁴¹¹ A joint Guild and APO meeting, open to the community, was called to discuss this matter. Mrs. Wooding and Nellie who dominated the meeting. Mrs. Wooding exclaimed 'it was the duty of every woman in Cape Town to protest' and Nellie said that 'she felt so strongly on the matter that she could hardly express her thoughts. She would rather do the domestic work herself than have servants under the proposed conditions'.⁴¹² Ex-member N. R. Veldsman, who had spoken so strongly against Abdullah two years ago, was in attendance at this meeting. With four daughters in domestic service, Veldsman set aside his opposition to Abdullah and resolved to support whatever action the APO chose to undertake, adding that, to his mind, 'it was a matter which so peculiarly affected the women that he thought they should have a woman in the chair, and nothing but women speakers'.⁴¹³ The APO and the Guild, along with many community supporters decided to send a deputation, including *both* Nellie and Abdullah to protest the Administrator director. Further, the women of District Six were resolved to take to the streets to march. The Administrator, grasping his mistake quickly, withdrew the proposal almost as quickly as he proposed it. If women had marched, it would have been the first time women in such number were gathered *en masse* since they stood before Parliament during the Tana Baru troubles.

Albert Lodge: A Gathering Place

⁴⁰⁷ van der Spuy suggests this descent is political. But considering the empty coffers and the context, it seems more likely that women who wanted a more politically overt platform for women's rights left the Guild to seek different organisations, those who only joined for social purposes probably began to peel off due to the budget restrictions - membership probably became less fun. Moreover, with a wartime budget, many of the ladies were perhaps unable to continue affording their membership fees.

⁴⁰⁸ APO 24 August 1912.

⁴⁰⁹ APO 21 September 1912, 19 October 1912.

⁴¹⁰ APO 2 May 1914.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

⁴¹² APO 2 May 1914.

⁴¹³ The meeting was presided by Mr. Gales, but in reality, Mrs. Wooding and Nellie had fair dominated the proceedings. APO 2 May 1914.

The controversial 1913 Presidential Address was the last that Abdullah delivered for six years. After 1914, the APO issued a moratorium on national conferences. The outbreak of World War I gave the APO an opportunity to gracefully pause activity. In 1915, the *APO* temporarily ceased publication and suspended political activity and protests to support the Allies.⁴¹⁴ Accordingly, the political activity of the Abdurahman family receded behind closed doors throughout these years. Another blow was that Abdullah lost the City Council seat in 1913 for two years when qualifications were raised and over a thousand people were removed from the voter rolls.⁴¹⁵ But this does not mean the Abdurahmans were not active. Formal civil societies such as the APO and the Guild were not the only ways the Abdurahmans engaged in politics. Albert Lodge operated as a base of operations for Nellie and Abdullah. This thesis has discussed some of the earliest meetings of women's organisations taking place at Albert Lodge, but has not discussed the ongoing, informal politics, lectures, and other outreach occurring in the Abdurahman home. Frequent hosts to local and visiting dignitaries and politicians, the Mount Street home was a hub of social and intellectual activity. When Mohandas Gandhi was in town, he made sure he visited Albert Lodge.⁴¹⁶ 'October 23 [1912], Wednesday', he wrote in his diary, 'Tea at Abdurahman's. Discussion with Committee at night'. Gandhi was not the only esteemed guest at Albert Lodge. Dr. Louis Herrman, a well-known educationist, writer and broadcaster, recalled attending the weekly gatherings at Albert Lodge on several occasions.⁴¹⁷ Other guests, in addition to Abdullah's friends John Merriman, Jan Hofmeyr and William Schreiner,⁴¹⁸ had included University of Cape Town history professor Eric Walker⁴¹⁹ and Raeburn Munro.⁴²⁰ Most of these gatherings seem to have been a part of Abdullah's debating society, the 21 Club.⁴²¹ Abdullah understood the power of soft politics – he charmed, befriended, and entertained powerful men in his home and, in turn, used their presence to convert others to his way of thinking. John Merriman, for example,

⁴¹⁴ 'In order to conquer that gigantic evil the Coloured people twice tendered their services, and twice were those services refused by our Government on the ground that it was a white man's war. Eventually, however, we were invited to take part in the great struggle, and were made the associates of the Powers that did their best to crush militarism and brute force ... In this settlement of the world's difficulties I think that the Coloured races of Asia and of Africa are entitled to the fullest consideration. Our people responded nobly to the call of the British Empire. They did not hang back, despite the rebuff they met with when they first offered their services, and despite their thousand and one genuine grievances they rallied round the flag, while a certain section of white South Africans, who had received all the blessings of self-government, declared that England's difficulty was their opportunity to strike for Independence'. Abdullah's 1919 Presidential Address of the APO, delivered in City Hall, Cape Town on 22nd April 1919 (*Cape Times* 23 April 1919).

⁴¹⁵ NWU/AFP: Cape Town. City Council - Cape Municipal Ordinance of 1912 (Box 2, Folder 3). Abdullah's copy was marked up with lots of marginalia. Not much of it is particularly revealing, other than the meticulous way he combed through the ordinance, looking for any kind of gap or loophole to protect the coloured vote. His copy of the School Board Act was subjected to the same treatment.

⁴¹⁶ Everett claims 'Mahatma Gandhi stayed with the 'Abdurahman] family when he visited South Africa' ('Zainunnissa (Cissie) Gool', 2). And this was echoed again in van der Ross' *Say it Loud*, 4. Y. S. Rassool asserts that Gandhi was a guest at Buintencingle with the Gools in *District Six - Lest we forget. Recapturing subjugated cultural histories of Cape Town (1897-1956)*, (Bellville: University of the Western Cape, 2000), 26-28. According to Rassool, Gandhi was there to help his uncle, Abdul Hamid Gool, who Gandhi met in London, putty and paint his surgery offices. Both seem inaccurate. Mohandas seems to have lodged with the Gools. In letters and telegrams (343, 346, 363, 364, 369, 375, 398 ranging from 29 March to 22 April 1911 written from Cape Town, Mohandas gave his lodging address as 7 Buintencingle, the Gool house (MK Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* vol. 11, Bombay: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1958, 315, 318, 333, 335, 339, 345, 365).

⁴¹⁷ UCT MA: BC695 Louis Herrman papers.

⁴¹⁸ For example, *APO* 6 May 1911.

⁴¹⁹ See UCT MA: BC618 Eric Anderson Walker Papers.

⁴²⁰ Munro, with John Campbell, had self-published a volume, *The Great Rand Strike: July, 1913*, on the events in the Rand District of South Africa where, after three days of rioting by minors, Johannesburg police opened fire into a crowd of protesters who ignored orders to disperse. Forty people were killed. Afterward, the government agreed to some concessions to improve working conditions.

⁴²¹ University of London, Senate House Libraries, Institute of Commonwealth Studies: ICS2 Abdullah Abdurahman Papers (hereafter UOL/ICS2): Dr. Hendrickse's Notes, n.d., 5.

... met him [Abdullah] at the home of a mutual friend, the English-born scholar, Professor Fremantle. Dr. Abdurahman touched Merriman with his account of life as an educated Coloured man and described the social prejudices as having worsened, as indeed they had, since the growth of the poor white question had increased economic competition. In addition, racist theories were a current Western aberration; and though Merriman was ashamed of 'distaste for colour' (which he thought a moral failing) he feared miscegenation and saw his revulsion as merely conventional morality. To him Abdurahman was pathetic, a marginal figure 'with European culture and the fatal bar' [as] (Abdurahman was a coloured man).⁴²²

Perhaps the most compelling power of Abdullah was his charisma. Despite this initial assessment, Abdullah won Merriman over, and they eventually formed a friendship with mutual respect and high regard. The first of Abdullah's Muslim Institutes for primary education would not have been possible without Merriman's support.⁴²³ His politics reflected these social changes: 'In the last phase of his career, Merriman was a tireless champion of the voteless, the neglected, the poor and oppressed ... John Dube and Dr. Abdurahman were frequent visitors:⁴²⁴ Merriman certainly compensated, by his courtesy and many acts of intervention, for his earlier prejudice against the doctor'.⁴²⁵

In addition to family tradition, Abdullah grew up when private homes were still often the site of *madrasahs* for schools and ersatz community town halls,⁴²⁶ but also as simple space for a little tea and hospitality, like his grandfather had done for Lucie. This quasi-public and community use of private homes for multiple purposes was similarly familiar to Nellie, whose own family reportedly took Abdullah in during those first lonely days in Glasgow. Nellie arranged for tea and other refreshments, but it seems Abdullah took the lead in these gatherings. The guests were his colleagues and friends, and the remembrances are overwhelmingly of Abdullah and his debating society. However, Nellie's hospitality as hostess was essential. Nellie had been a major player in Abdullah's affairs for a long time, at least to collecting rents and other household affairs, as evidenced by letters from her tenants.⁴²⁷ As shown through her initiatives with the Guild, she was his wife and, as much as possible for the time, his partner and political ally. Between his debating society, City Council, a thriving practise, and presiding over the APO, Abdullah, as Raynard observed his days clerking for Abdullah's medical office, 'had no leisure. He used to write the articles for the A.P.O. paper while being driven in his trap on his daily visitations to his patients'.⁴²⁸ Political concerns were discussed among authors, friends, scholars, civic leaders, and politicians in the Abdurahman home. Although the family may have retreated from public politics, their home remained a hub and incubator of political discussion and activity. These meetings were not just social; they produced results. Of all of Abdullah's attempts at unionising, the only success was with the Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA),

⁴²² P. Lewsen, *John X. Merriman* (Johannesburg: Ad Donker, 1982), 276.

⁴²³ M. Ajam, 'The raison d'être of the Muslim Mission Primary School in Cape Town and environs from 1860 to 1980 with special reference to the role of Dr. A Abdurahman in the modernisation of Islam-oriented schools' (PhD Dissertation, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1986), 193-212.

⁴²⁴ See fn. 548.

⁴²⁵ P. Lewsen, *John X. Merriman* (Johannesburg: Ad Donker, 1982), 276.

⁴²⁶ See H. Villa Vicencio, *Colour class and constitutionalism* (MA Thesis, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1993).

⁴²⁷ Several letters relating to rents and property are among her surviving letters across the two main collections (NWU/AFP: Letters, 1912 - 1940 (Box 1, Folder 4) and BC506 Abdurahman Papers: A1: Letters to Mrs. Abdurahman).

⁴²⁸ Raynard, *Dr. Abdurahman*, 34.

established through the Albert Lodge gatherings.⁴²⁹ The social and political life of District Six, with Mr. and Mrs. Abdurahman and Albert Lodge at the inner circle, carried on for thirty years. Even after they separated in the mid-1920's, their relationship continued to be friendly, and the couple even hosted guests together. On one occasion, when American Ralph J. Bunche⁴³⁰ was visiting Cape Town, he took dinner with Cissie, Abdullah, and Nellie at Albert Lodge.⁴³¹

⁴²⁹ In 1934, Abdullah claimed he and his home was the origin of the TLISA: G. Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall*, 35; ADHIKARI, M. 'Coloured identity and the politics of coloured education: the origin of the teachers' league of South Africa'. *The International journal of African historical studies* 27, no. 1 (1994): 115. A. Wieder, *Teacher and Comrade: Richard Dudley and the Fight for Democracy in South Africa* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press), 13. This is supported by the TLISA's publication, the Educational Journal, which noted upon his passing, 'It was he who influenced and guided the late Harold Cressy in the organization of a Teachers' Union'. (*Educational Journal*, February 1940).

⁴³⁰ Ralph J Bunche was an American political scientist and diplomat. For more information on Ralph J. Bunche, see B. Urquhart, a former Undersecretary-General of the United Nations' *Ralph Bunche: an American life* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998). For manuscript collections on Bunche, see the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library: Ralph Bunche papers, The South Africa Research Trip Series (1937): Box 23 Folders 1 and 8; and the UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library (hereafter UCLA): 2051 Ralph J. Bunche papers.

⁴³¹ It is at this dinner that Bunche reports that Albert Lodge was the site of the first YMCA meeting, over 100 years ago (UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library (hereafter UCLA): 2051 Ralph J. Bunche papers: Fieldwork notebooks: Capetown, Bastoland, Fort Hare, Thaba 'Nachu 1937 (Box 20, Folder 3): Entry, 1 October).

Chapter Four
GROWING UP AS THE DOCTOR'S DAUGHTERS
Raising Daughters of Sound "moral character"

In 1938, Zainunissa Gool, née Abdurahman, stood for the City Council seat for Ward 7, but she was not the first Abdurahman woman to stand for formal politics. In 1928, about three years after Abdullah left Nellie, the APO was struggling to find candidates who were willing to stand for office. Cissie's husband Abdul Hamid Gool considered it, but declined. Another nomination, Abdul Gamiet, said he was too busy, and the other gentlemen suggested were all unable or unwilling. Nellie was then suggested. It was the first time a woman was nominated as a candidate for Ward 6. The *Cape Times* reported: 'Mrs. Abdurahman⁴³² was nominated, but an objection was raised to her not being coloured. The Secretary said that the notice calling the meeting did not mention 'coloured'. The Chairman stated that the notice he had received regarding a previous meeting, which he had not been able to attend, mentioned 'coloured'.⁴³³ Mr. Reagon: And 'men'. (Laughter)'.⁴³⁴ In response, Nellie replied,

I do not like the word colour ... As a matter of fact I see no colour ... If there is a man and a woman capable of representing you in the Ward, who live in the Ward, put them up whether they are coloured or white ... The only thing I regret is the apathy of the people in the ward in which I have lived for 32 years – it is a long time, and it makes one feel almost old. My husband has been on the Town Council for many years, and has done a great work there ... I do not think a woman should stand if she has a family to bring up. My family, I can say, is brought up: and I can look after the young people of Cape Town and especially of the district in which I have lived so long.⁴³⁵

The last portion of Nellie's statement suggests she is canny of whose support she needed to win, and under what circumstances a woman's politicisation could be respected by the residents of Ward 6. Her platform states that her focus as a councillor would be to act as a 'mother' to the community, a role that she now can undertake now that her children were grown. Perhaps she sincerely believed that mothering comes first, or she learned from Abdullah that this must be the way to frame her candidacy. Worth noting is the emphasis by both of their 'local' status. A week later, Nellie declined her nomination. The *Cape Times* reported that Nellie 'intimated that she was unable to stand for the Ward on this occasion, but hoped to be able to do so at some future date'.⁴³⁶ It is hard to say what the greatest obstacle to her success was – her gender, her race, or perhaps, in threads that connect back to Atallah, her foreignness was the main detraction. Nellie failed, but ten years later, in 1938, her daughter Cissie won a seat on the City Council.

⁴³² The press showed some confusion for a short while until around 1930, when the style treatment finally normalised on how to distinguish the Mesdames Abdurahman - Maggie was 'Mrs. Abdurahman' while Nellie was always be identified as 'Mrs. N. Abdurahman'.

⁴³³ In this case, Nellie qualified for both white *and* coloured. Because of her husband, she was able to attend a coloured meeting, and yet when presented as a possible candidate, she became white again.

⁴³⁴ *Cape Times* 11 July 1928.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁶ *Cape Times* 18 July 1928. The withdrawal did not stick, and Nellie made it onto the ballot, but received the least number of votes, 309. The votes were - J. Frank 859; S. Goldstein 850; S. Bernstein 841; A. Ismail 579; Nellie Abdurahman 309. (Cape Town Mayor's Minute, 1929, 4).

In this chapter, we shine a flashlight on his children, with particular attention to Nellie's daughters to explore themes of generational political transmission, and how fatherhood affected Abdullah's politics. This thesis searched the archives extensively to uncover details about Abdullah and Maggie's children, but found little details. Part of this is due to the absence of Maggie from the record, as she clearly preferred for herself and her children to stay out of the limelight. Another reason was that they were still young at the time of Abdullah's death. His eldest with Maggie Begum Jehanara Gadija⁴³⁷ was barely 14 and his two sons, Abdullah Dara Shikoh⁴³⁸ and Nizamodien Ebrahim Stansfield,⁴³⁹ were only 10 and 7, respectively. Cissie's adoption and continuation of the Albert Lodge gatherings indicate that Maggie rarely hosted socials. It also shows that when it comes to the home, Abdullah conceded to his wife's wishes. Through the discussion of his daughters' childhoods, this thesis draws attention to Abdullah's philosophies on the role of education as the mediator between the essential 'person' to an engaged 'citizen'. The second half of this chapter takes a closer look at the relationship between Abdullah and Cissie and their political differences and the contemporary gossip regarding their estrangement. Their conflict and contest reflected larger social trends, when one generation of political activism and politicians gave way to a new generation. Cissie, in a sense, inherited not just his Albert Lodge soireés, but his council seat. Abdullah and his old APO colleagues found their sons and daughters challenging their ideologies and their tactics, reflecting the sea changes in thought brought through by political changes in Europe, new ideas from the Atlantic, and the fast-changing South African landscape brought on by the mineral revolution.

Concerning the Births of 'The Jewel of District Six' and 'The First Black Woman Doctor'

Abdullah's eldest daughter, Waradea 'Rosie', typically identified as 'the first Black woman doctor of South Africa'⁴⁴⁰ was born on 8 May 1896.⁴⁴¹ One year and six months later, Zainunissa 'Cissie' followed on 6 November 1897.⁴⁴² There has been some confusion as to Cissie's birth date – she declared herself younger

⁴³⁷ Begum married Capetonian doctor Ralph Hendrickse, who she met while studying at the University of Cape Town. After working for a few years in Durban, the couple left to travel through West and East Africa before eventually settling in England.

⁴³⁸ A few records of his teachers reports show that he was making good progress towards his teaching credentials (See Northwestern University, Melville J. Herskovits Library of Africana Studies, 001 Abdurahman Family Papers (hereafter NWU/AFP): Biographical (Box 1 Folder 1)). In Glasgow, Abdullah met a Scots nurse, Muriel Ross. The two eloped and moved to Guyana, South America, where he was a medical doctor serving the British Foreign Service. Eventually, they settled in Alberta, Canada where Muriel became a provincial-level politician. (See Muriel's obituary in the *Edmonton Journal*, 30 December 2013).

⁴³⁹ Nizam obtained his undergraduate credentials at the University of Glasgow, and then proceeded to the University of British Columbia where he earned his Master's and later PhD in chemistry. Maggie probably accompanied him to the Vancouver area. Nizam later married a teacher. See N. Abdurahman, 'Synthetic Studies of Indole Alkaloids', PhD Dissertation, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 1967.

⁴⁴⁰ University of Glasgow, University Archive Services (hereafter UG/UAS), Records of the Registry [hereafter RR]: *Registrar's Roll of Graduates and Dates of Birth*, vol. 2, R3/1/1: 1893). Although it is known that Rosie was on the membership rolls for her sister's political organisations (the National Liberation League and the Non-European United Front) along with her mother, neither Rosie nor Nellie appear to be active participants in either organisation.

⁴⁴¹ Western Cape Archives and Records, Cape Archives, State Archives Depot, Cape Town (hereafter KAB)/Home Affairs Western Cape Index (hereafter HAWC): Birth Registers I/3/9/312: Waradea Abdurahman, 1896. Rosie was probably born late at night. On her later registration forms for UCT, she lists the day as 9 May 1896 instead. UCTA/R: 1918 No. 307 and 1919, No. 531. Later, on her marriage certificate in 1929 she fibbed that she was born in 1901 (KAB/HAWC: Marriage Register: Ebrahim Abdul Kader And Waradea Abdurahman, 1929 (1/3/58/1/5-95). or (see Appendix H). This is probably not a matter of confusion and instead, vanity to suggest that she was under instead of over 30-years-old.

⁴⁴² KAB/HAWC: Birth Registers 1/3/9/3/4, folio 76. Of trivial note: on the register, Abdullah lists 99 Loop Street as his residence.

and younger as the years progressed.⁴⁴³ By her 1962 registration at the University of Cape Town, she declared that her birthdate was unknowable because it had never been registered.⁴⁴⁴ This is patently untrue. Abdullah duly registered the birth of both girls. The confusion surrounding the dates of birth and in particular, the years, might seem of little consequence. But, the importance of certainty regarding their birthdates and the gap between them is significant for three reasons. The first is that Rosie could not have been weaned at less than a year old, meaning that the Abdurahmans hired a wet nurse. The second is that, if they did not stagger births and plan accordingly, it conveys Abdullah's economic security to hire domestic and childcare assistance.⁴⁴⁵ As noted in chapter two, as a young doctor, yet un-established and with frequent travel, his level of financial assurance resulted from trans-generational wealth. The third is that having two healthy daughters who survived the vulnerable years of infancy and early childhood in the 1900's was no small feat.⁴⁴⁶ 'During the last ten years, 17,000 coloured children were born in Cape Town, but out of that number no fewer than 4,342 of them died before they reached 12 months ... out of every four children born in Cape Town, one died during the first year'.⁴⁴⁷ It is a testament to Abdullah's economic and professional success that Rosie and Cissie both grew, healthy and robust, into adulthood. Cissie and Rosie grew up in District Six in the early years of the twentieth century, a particular historical moment that has since received attention due to public fascination with its later forced removals.⁴⁴⁸ In some ways, the Abdurahman daughters came to epitomise the halcyon days of District Six before its destruction. As young girls in a firmly middle-class family, Cissie and her sister Rosie grew up in a society where their subjectivity was moulded through a complex interplay between race, class, nationalities, gender, age and religion. Unlike many other young children of the period, Rosie and Cissie were able to experience childhood as an extended and fairly carefree phase of life. Through their parents' and their grandparents' successes, these girls were able to devote their youth to education, enrichment, and leisure.

⁴⁴³ In 1918, Cissie gives her date of birth as 10 September 1898 (UCTA/R, 1918, No. 383); in 1922 she gave 10 September 1899 (UCTA/R, 1922, No. 937); in 1931, she gave 10 September 1900 (UCTA/R, 1931, No. 1032); in 1932, she did not give a day, just 'September 1899' (UCTA/R, 1932, No document no. assigned). On her marriage register in 1919 (KAB/Archives of the Register of Marriages, Births and Deaths: Ah Gool And Z Abdurahman, 1919 (MRG 4108)), she claims it was 1898. The literature reports either 1897 (Cissie's obituary in the *Cape Times* 7 July 1963 lists 6 November 1897) or 1900 (M. Adhikari, ed, *Jimmy La Guma. A biography by Alex La Guma*, Cape Town: Friends of the South African Library, 1997, 84 and T. Karis and G. M. Carter, eds. *From Protest to challenge. A documentary history of African politics in South Africa 1882-1964*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1977, 35). The 1897 date from the obituary had stuck and is the date chosen for de Kock's *The Dictionary of South African Biography* (1968) and the more recent *Cape Town in the twentieth century* (V. Bickford-Smith, E. Van Heyningen, and N. Worden. *Cape Town in the twentieth century: an illustrated social history*, Cape Town: New Africa Books, 1999).

⁴⁴⁴ In Cissie's 1962 registration form, her entry for Date of birth is 'not registered (doubt)'. (University of Cape Town, University of Cape Town Archives, Records of the Registry, Student Registration Form (hereafter UCTA/R): 3346 Zainunnissa Abdurahman 1962).

⁴⁴⁵ UCT MA: BC 1081 Simons Collection, Folder N: See letter to Abdullah from Cissie, 31 December 1911.

⁴⁴⁶ In early twentieth-century Cape Town, just one in four non-European infants survived past age 5. Major factors in this statistic were the tuberculosis and plague epidemics of 1901 which asymmetrically impacted non-white populations. The influx of refugees from the interior flooding into District Six as a result of the second South African War exacerbated these problems ('In the Cape Peninsula, 401 'Coloured' plus 'Asiatic' cases were reported, with 236 deaths. The last case was discovered in January 1902', E. van Heyningen, 'Public health and society in Cape Town, 1880-1910', PhD Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1989), 307. Also see page 259 ff.

⁴⁴⁷ See Abdullah's articles on children and health in *APO* 20 November 1909 and 14 January 1911.

⁴⁴⁸ For example: S. Jeppie and C. Soudien, eds. *The struggle for District Six: past and present* (Cape Town: Buchu books, 1990). Most accounts of popular culture in District Six derive from living memories of people interviewed in the 1980's and 1990's. For collections of primary sources, see the District Six Museum, Cape Town; University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives (hereafter UCT MA): BC 1004, Transcripts of Western Cape Oral History Project

If these three reasons were not significant enough, another might reveal new understandings of Abdullah's family life. During this period, for a bourgeois family, having only two children was uncommon.⁴⁴⁹ Family size was limited by female fertility and infant mortality, not birth control. For births in the Abdurahman family to suddenly come to a standstill after Cissie is unusual. Nellie and Abdullah spent the next 26 years together, but without any more children. The birth and death registers show there were no further children at all – no premature births or infants who did not survive into adulthood. Given that Abdullah fathered three more children with his second wife, it does not seem that there was either lack of desire or ability for more children, at least on Abdullah's side. Cissie's son, Rustum declared Abdullah had always wanted a son. This must be taken with a grain of salt. Although some evidence suggest Cissie believed Abdullah wished she was a son, there is none that Abdullah ever expressed this desire.⁴⁵⁰ The cessation of child-bearing between Nellie and Abdullah is puzzling. There is no information available to suggest if Nellie refused to have more children or if she were unable. Perhaps there were complications with Cissie's birth or other problems that limited the Abdurahmans from having more children. Other wisps of information lend themselves to this interpretation: Rosie was reported to have been born in Abdullah's medical offices,⁴⁵¹ but Cissie was born at home. Perhaps labour began suddenly and progressed too quickly, leaving Nellie without time to get to Abdullah's offices as she did with Rosie; perhaps this is correlated to the taking Rosie early off the breast. For Abdullah and Nellie, having only two children also set the Abdurahmans apart from the rest of their contemporaries. With a small nuclear family, Rosie and Cissie enjoyed and felt entitled to demand more attention from their parents. Both girls had more substantial access to their mother than their father, who was absent much of the time because of his multiple careers.⁴⁵²

The Education of Rosie and Cissie

With both of their parents working towards coloured education rights and access, a sub-standard education was unacceptable. Rosie and Cissie were pressured to excel. The girls were on the front lines to demonstrate the power of education to uplift the community and the next generation. After Nellie's failed petition to the Cape Department of Education, governesses were hired to assist Nellie with childcare and to

⁴⁴⁹ C. Simkins and E. van Heyningen, 'Fertility, mortality, and migration in the Cape Colony, 1891-1904', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 22 no. 1 (1989), 79-111.

⁴⁵⁰ Rustum Gool as cited in P. van der Spuy, "'Not only 'the younger daughter of Dr. Abdurahman': A feminist exploration of early influences on the political development of Cissie Gool' (PhD Dissertation, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 2002), 51. Van der Spuy suggests that it is Abdullah's patriarchal politics and his androcentric desire for a son that eventually led to their estrangement. I disagree. Considering that Nellie and Abdullah continued to be together for 29 years after the birth of Cissie, I suggest instead that wanting sons was not a strong enough motivation for Abdullah to leave Nellie. If Nellie was stifled and oppressed by Abdullah's patriarchal politics and attitudes, it is implausible that she was a member of overtly political organisations such as the Women's Enfranchisement League or as publicly involved as she was in the Women's Guild and other aid and welfare organisations.

⁴⁵¹ See chapter 2, n. 62.

⁴⁵² There was, of course, the 1906 and 1909 deputations to London, but he also traveled throughout the country to visit APO branches; For example, in December 1907 he was in Port Elizabeth (UCT MA: BC506 Abdurahman Papers: B5.2, news clippings, *South African News* 9 December 1907), in August 1910, he visited the Kimberley branch (APO 10 September 1910).

provide lessons.⁴⁵³ At some point, Harold Cressy⁴⁵⁴ took over as tutor to Rosie and Cissie.⁴⁵⁵ Because the girls were young - 10 and 11 respectively, it is unclear if they had any sense that their childhood was unusual, or that their educational possibilities were rare. As their father lamented in January of 1913, a 'Coloured child that has passed the seventh standard has no opportunities for further progress, unless his parents are prepared to spend four or five times the sum they would otherwise spend, on home tuition, and private tutors'.⁴⁵⁶ In addition to book learning and lessons, given Abdullah's holistic views of education, cultural lessons were provided as well. Culture, as well as educational and political activity, was vital in the Abdurahman household and its bricolage of aspirations towards "moral character" and full citizenship. Rosie and Cissie were pupils of music teacher Rawson Walter Wooding.⁴⁵⁷ Nellie also took singing lessons from Wooding and altogether, by as early as April 1910, the Abdurahman women's talents were publicised in the *APO*. In the following year, both girls performed publicly for the benefit of the APO at the Western Province Amateur Musical Society show.⁴⁵⁸ The first full recital put on by the Western Province Amateur Musical Society only took place two years later in February 1913: 'The solo instrumentalists were Misses Rosie Abdurahman, Marie Lotter, Violet Arendse, Cissie Abdurahman, and Master Henry Wooding, each of whom played with excellent taste and expression, but to Rosie Abdurahman must be given the honour of having rendered her solo with that brilliancy of touch and expression of feeling which only belong to a true artiste'.⁴⁵⁹

Other than their needlework classes with the Guild on Wednesday afternoons, and attendance at other Guild meetings, Cissie and Rosie enjoyed the extended childhood of their class. The girls played tennis, spent afternoons at the beach at Oudekraal with their friends – often their cousin Rukea Dollie or the Gool girls Zobeida, Gadija and Anima 'Minnie', and sometimes the girls went 'rinking'.⁴⁶⁰ In the early 1900's, spending a day socialising with friends at a roller-skating rink was the latest craze. It did not take long before these precious spaces were refusing non-white people access. In January of 1910, two men were denied entry to the skating rink, one on account of his religion and the other on account of his colour. The first to respond the Guild, not the APO. The Guild called for a boycott of the rink. Rosie and Cissie, then 12 and 13, participated in their first political protest in boycotting the rink. The APO diligently covered

⁴⁵³ G. Paleker, "'She was certainly not a Rosa Luxemborg", 27.

⁴⁵⁴ Cressy had obtained his Intermediate BA certificate while teaching at Clanwilliam. With this qualification, he applied for entry into university. Accepted into Rhodes University in 1909, he was denied matriculation upon his arrival due to his colour. Victoria College (later Stellenbosch University) likewise rejected him for the same reason. He then applied to the South African College. Dr. Abdurahman heard of Cressy's plight at this time and took Cressy under his wing. Cressy was elected assistant secretary of the APO. Using his position as City Councillor and his friendship with political ally J.W. Jagger, an MP who was on the South African College Council, they 'pressurise[d] the College into accepting Cressy's application [with] the threat that the Cape Town City Council would withdraw its £2000 annual grant. Cressy graduated in 1910 with a BA. (*APO* 11 February 1911). Journalist George Manual dates this 'pressurisation' to 1907 and report the sum as £3000. In this version, Cressy was not directly the reason for this pressurisation, but was the first to benefit. (G. Manual, *Kampvegters* (Cape Town: Mason, 1985, 7-8).

⁴⁵⁵ A. Gool, interviewed on videotape by Gairoonisa Paleker, University of Cape Town Centre for Popular Memory, n. d.

⁴⁵⁶ *APO* 25 January 1913.

⁴⁵⁷ Their friendship was a mutually beneficial one – Abdullah sat on the Board of the Wooding School and the Wooding's Western Province Amateur Musical Society (Wooding's Western Province Amateur Musical Society). The Wooding's Western Province Amateur Musical Society was established in 1909 to teach the pianoforte. Many of Wooding's students were both children of APO members and of his school. Mrs. Wooding sat on Nellie's Guild's executive. *Cape Standard* 27 February 1940.

⁴⁵⁸ Rosie sang 'Queen of the Night', and Nellie performed three songs: Tancredi's 'Overture', 'Under the Deodar', and 'Gondola Dreams'. Cissie did not sing, but both girls performed a pianoforte duet with R. Wooding. The girls together played 'Valse's Maimez-Vous'. *APO* 21 October 1911.

⁴⁵⁹ *APO* 8 March 1913.

⁴⁶⁰ G. Paleker's series of interviews (videotaped) of Amina Gool, Centre for Popular Memory, University of Cape Town.



Fig. 12, Photograph

WORKERS AT THE WOMEN'S GUILD BAZAAR

→ Back Row, L to R: F. Dollie (*Quakeress*), D. Mills (*Gipsy [sic]*), P. Smeda (*Nurse*), Mrs *Abdurahman* (*Japanese*), H. Riderhoff (*Milkmaid*), L. Layne (*Liberty*), S. Riderhof (*French Waiting Maid*), Front, L to R: C. *Abdurahman* (*Turkish Girl*), R. Dollie (*Japanese*), M. Smeda (*Scarlet Troubador*), Rosie *Abdurahman* (*Turkish Girl*).

and published on the boycott with as much seriousness as any other political action reported in its pages.⁴⁶¹ Because of the Guild's position, Nellie likely imposed the boycott on Rosie and Cissie. Nellie took other opportunities to showcase her girls and their accomplishments. On 11 March 1911, a themed bazaar was held 'to provide funds for [a] proposed Industrial Exhibition of women's work', and to use the event as a platform to education and promote the coloured education cause.⁴⁶² The Bazaar opened at mid-day in a flurry of mauve and yellow, the Guild's colours, and continued well into the evening when the Guild members changed into 'fancy dress' costumes.⁴⁶³ William Schreiner, who delivered the Bazaar's opening address, joked that certainly, the Guild was apolitical, since political organisations were 'not supposed to be a friend of everybody'.⁴⁶⁴ To have the then-Senator speak ensured a strong media turnout and coverage.

⁴⁶¹ APO 15 January 1910.

⁴⁶² This exhibition does not seem to have happened. The closest approximation was a sale of members' works in 1913, which appears to not have been well-attended. APO 3 December 1910; APO 25 March 1911.

⁴⁶³ The Turkish dress was probably a nod to their own family's connections to Turkey through Abdul. Japanese cultural products were popular among politicised coloured people of the time who admired Japan's seemingly easy transition from an insular, traditional, feudal society into a robust and modern world power in a mere matter of decades. Coloured South Africans considered the Japanese to be, like them, also a 'brown race' – some people claimed Japanese successes as proof positive of coloured 'potential'. Moreover, old grudges against the Russians resulting from the Russo-Turkish war meant that the Japanese victory over the Russians in 1905 was especially celebrated. See A. Abdurahman, *Straatpraatjes: language, politics and popular culture in Cape Town, 1909-1922*, ed. Mohamed Adhikari (Van Schaik Publishers, 1996), 79.

⁴⁶⁴ APO 25 March 1911.

Considering that William was Abdullah's friend, he must have pulled strings in support of his wife's endeavours. In another address two years later, William directly praises Nellie, and in so doing, highlights her dominance over the Guild: "Everyone should show their sympathy by giving [the Guild] their support. It was already teaching many children in a practical way, under the auspices of Mrs. Abdurahman. The prime objective was to get hold of the children, and that was what the women were doing". Education wasn't the Guild or Abdullah's only concern. "One of its most cherished ambitions [of the bazaar]", said William, "is to raise sufficient money to build a hostel for Coloured girls and women in the city".⁴⁶⁵ Abdullah was greatly concerned about the building of white hostels to promote cheap white migrant labour from the other colonies and the growing impoverishment of coloured people. He may have discussed with Nellie that domestic worker hostels for coloured women may be a good cause for the Guild to promote. In any case, not enough funds were raised and a coloured women's hostel never came to fruition.

As with other Guild socials, family friend Wooding's Western Province Amateur Musical Society provided the musical performances. Even this bore the fingerprints of Nellie and Abdullah's socio-political dominance; Abdullah served as one of Wooding's Western Province Amateur Musical Society's three vice presidents. Abdullah reviewed the bazaar in the following *APO* with high praise and feted Nellie's accomplishment. At a time when the politics of women were overshadowed by men, this indicates Abdullah respected and supported their efforts. Unfortunately, the Guild's activities were still primarily social and coverage often relegated to the 'Amusements' column. His continuing insistence on the inclusion, however small, of his wife and daughters' endeavours in the pages of the *APO* shows his pride in his family and their undertakings. Authors have presented the semi-public life of Nellie and Abdullah's daughters as the result of Abdullah's ambition. Considering the girls' visibility occurred primarily through the Guild's activities instead of the *APO*, Nellie's proclivity for public life, and Abdullah's later children's distinctly private lives, it is probably Nellie, not Abdullah, who pushed the girls' into the spotlight.

In 1911, as Rosie and Cissie approached high school age, Abdullah and Nellie intensified their efforts towards coloured education. Private education, which the girls had received up to this point, was probably provided for them by their father and supplemented by tutors. But university preparations required more sustained study. For Abdullah, he must have been considering for some time the contrast between a home-education and immersion in a well-developed school and curriculum with one's peers. When the Supreme Court case of *Moller vs Keimos School Committee* decided formally to bar coloured children,⁴⁶⁶ Abdullah knew he could not wait for legislation to come around to include his girls. The *APO* set up a Shilling Fund to assist with Moller's legal costs and Abdullah declared 'every European who has married a Coloured person will be regarded by the Organisation as one of our own'. The term 'European' is absurd, Abdullah wrote, given that 'the majority of Dutch South Africans have a strain of Coloured blood in them'.⁴⁶⁷ Nellie and the Guild took charge, and *APO* branches perceived as not supportive enough of the Women were

⁴⁶⁵ *APO* 20 September 1913

⁴⁶⁶ The consequences of the 1905 School Board Act made for de facto segregation but did not bar non-white pupils outright. The *Moller vs Keimos School Committee* case settled some of the ambiguity. For more, see I. Loveland, *By Due Process of Law?: Racial Discrimination and the Right to Vote in South Africa, 1855-1960* (Oxford and Portland, OR: Hart Publishing, 1999), 134-139 and J. Dugard, *Human Rights and the South African Legal Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 305-324.

⁴⁶⁷ *APO* 7 October 1911, 26 August 1911.



Fig. 13, Photograph

R. W. WOODING WITH SOME PUPILS (C. 1913)

→ Back, L to R: Henry and Maud Woodman, **Mr R. Walter Wooding**, Cissie Abdurahman, Caroline R—? Front, L to R: Marie Lotter, Elizabeth Adams, Gladys Daniels, Mrs A. J. Kellerman, **Rosie Abdurahman**.

chastised.⁴⁶⁸ Popular protests and Abdullah's clever (and public) unravelling of the Act and its consequences resulted in a minor victory – the School Board passed the resolution that, 'in view of the representations made in regard to differentiation in the matter of colour on the part of the Coloured people in District Six, that this Board resolves that beyond making provision for the needs of the Coloured children in the Cape District in accordance with the public funds available for that purpose, the Board will lay down no rule in regard to admission to such a school'.⁴⁶⁹

Abdullah seized this opportunity. A year prior, he had already declared an intention to open a 'Second Class Public School for Coloured Children'.⁴⁷⁰ With this small win, the Women's Guild met with an 'influential deputation from the Cape Town's men's branch' who 'beg[ged] the assistance of the ladies in establishing an education fund, by means of which intelligent Coloured boys and girls might be assisted in

⁴⁶⁸ See APO 9 September 1911 where a Mr. Ficks of the branch in Hopefield stated in a speech to their local Guild branch that 'one of the first things which required the attention of the Guild was that of education'. And APO 23 September 1911, where the Robertson branch of the APO was told 'it behoved the men to do what they could to support the women in the good work they had undertaken'. Similar complaints were made of the Zeekoeivlei branch. (APO 12 August 1911).

⁴⁶⁹ APO 15 July 1911, 12 August 1911. (Also see Appendix I).

⁴⁷⁰ APO 15 January 1910; APO 9 April 1910

obtaining education'.⁴⁷¹ In December of 1911, a formal advertisement for the inauguration year of Trafalgar High School appeared in the pages of the *APO*. Trafalgar began with only a few pupils in a run-down, two-bedroomed cottage with rented accommodation from the adjacent Anglican St. Philip's Church on Chapel Street. Harold Cressy served as the first principal.⁴⁷² Trafalgar A2 Public School opened on 22 January 1912 with a class of 60 students (28 males and 32 females) and five teachers.⁴⁷³ Through much of Abdullah's efforts, Trafalgar High School's roll soon increased enough to require larger premises. Five years later, Abdullah persuaded City Council to allocate a decommissioned building for Trafalgar high School, along with £3,000 for its renovation.⁴⁷⁴ Years later, Cissie and Rosie's friend Zobeida, recalled, 'When we went to high school - Trafalgar High - oh, it was the talk of the Muslim community. "That's those girls going to school"'!⁴⁷⁵ In early 1913, the *APO* proudly reported that three pupil-teachers passed their examinations, Principal Cressy passed his higher education examinations, and three young women, all related to Abdullah, were singled out for academic achievements. Rukea Dollie, a cousin, earned the Cape T3 certificate. Niece Havva Effendi passed the London Matric in four subjects and was studying medicine in London.⁴⁷⁶ Rosie obtained the Cape Junior Certificate.⁴⁷⁷ Just a month prior, to close out the year, Abdullah's *APO* had run a writing competition, from which both Rosie and Cissie won top prizes. The results are unsurprising, but the contents of their entries reveal some of the dynamics of the Abdurahman family.

The 1912 *APO* Writing Competition

The entries of both girls were typically redolent of adolescent clichés and of the florid Victorian prose that was then in vogue. But they are nevertheless of use, their thinly-veiled autobiographical elements lay bare the girls' perceptions of their lives. Given the historiographical discussions about the twentieth-century transitions in coloured politics that use Abdullah and Cissie as proxies, these creative writing pieces give precious insights into the conflicts, tensions, and dynamics within the Abdurahman family. In Rosie's story, 'The Better One', a Black single mother lived alone with her two children, the elder child, a daughter and the younger, a son. The elder daughter was a clear case of Rosie's Mary Sue.⁴⁷⁸ Sibling rivalry for parental attention comes into focus as Rosie describes the younger brother, 15-years-old like Cissie, to be 'unlike his sister in many respects'.⁴⁷⁹ Criticisms follow; the spoiled, naughty brother dominated the mother's care

⁴⁷¹ *APO* 12 August 1911

⁴⁷² For more information about the history of Trafalgar, see 'Trafalgar High School, Cape Town, marks 100 years', *South African History Online*, Accessed 11 August 2014.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁴ *Heritage Impact Assessment, submitted in terms of section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, prepared for Harold Cressy High School Alumni Association, Case ref 14042909* (Cape Town: Vidamemoria Heritage Consultants, 2014).

⁴⁷⁵ UCT MA: BC 1004, Western Cape Oral History Project, District Six interviews, Mrs. Zobeida Booley, interviewed by A. Adhikari.

⁴⁷⁶ Recently, Halim GENÇOĞLU argues that because of the Cape's ambiguous classifications of race, Havva, not Rosie was the first Black South African woman doctor. Havva specialised in gynaecology and became well-known in her field. (G. Colak *Avrupada Osmanlı Kızları* (Ottoman Girls in Europe) (İstanbul, 2013), 71-73 and A. Uçar, 140 yıllık miras: Güney Afrika'da Osmanlılar. *Tez Yayınları*, 2000, 362.

⁴⁷⁷ *APO* 25 January 1913.

⁴⁷⁸ The term 'Mary Sue' originates in a piece of fan fiction ('A Trekkie's Tale') written by Paula Smith in 1973 for her fanzine *Menagerie* no. 2. It has since entered the media studies lexicon to describe a character in television, novels, and other products who is an idealised persona that clearly acts as an author insert, typically to drive the story towards wish fulfilment. Rosie describes her idealised self: '[She was] about sixteen ... pretty, slight, and graceful. Her long hair hung down her back in lovely thick curls. She was reserved and had few friends'. *APO* 21 December 1912.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*



Fig. 14, Photograph

PORTRAIT OF CISSIE (L) AND ROSIE (R) IN THE APO WRITING COMPETITION RESULTS (1913)

→ *This photograph was probably taken after the 1913 Wooding's recital. Note that the girls seem to have the same hairdo and dresses as the previous photo.*

and attention because he was aggressive and demanding, worse, he had poor judgement in his associations. The climax was pure wish fulfilment – the brother dies so the daughter never had to share her parents' attention again. In some ways, sadly, this story reflects life. Throughout their childhood, Rosie was frequently overshadowed by Cissie, who was the more flamboyant child and garnered more compliments in the pages of Abdullah's APO than Rosie. This competition was no exception. The APO awarded Cissie the win, commenting that even if the contest had no divisions (Rosie won her age division), Cissie would still win first place.⁴⁸⁰ Cissie's verbal facility was an enduring quality. Years later, it was remarked that she 'talks a mile a minute'.⁴⁸¹

Cissie submitted two items under the pseudonym 'Toadie Jimison', an unnecessary pretence since she had already recited the poem, 'His Mother's Boy' at a meeting in the previous year. 'His Mother's Boy' is set, like 'The Better One', in a single-mother context, but the son is an only child and Cissie's doppelgänger. If the mother was characterised in Rosie's story as being dismissive and preoccupied with the other child,

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library (hereafter UCLA): 2051 Ralph J. Bunche papers: Fieldwork notebooks: Capetown, Bastoland, Fort Hare, Thaba 'Nachu 1937 (Box 20, Folder 3): Entry, 29 September.

Cissie characterised her mother as being iron-handed. What Rosie's protagonist reads as attention, Cissie's protagonist experiences as controlling. What Rosie describes as the consequence of the brother's poor social choices, Cissie describes as the mother's authoritarian social standards. Of the 'son' and mother, 'Both were proud, and spoke to none; [...] When children sought his company [...] She'd proudly check the little mites, / And lead him then away ... None but her proud and selfish self / His presence could enjoy'.⁴⁸² The pieces of both girls highlight the absence of the father and dissatisfaction with the mother. Although Cissie's son, Rustum confided Abdullah was the disciplinarian in the home,⁴⁸³ Nellie rankled both girls more. If anything, the key theme of Abdullah to emerge from his daughters' words is his absence. A point of contention for Cissie, as shown through these pieces, was her choice of 'friends'. Given her adolescence, one wonders if these 'friends' were young suitors.

Cissie's other piece, a short story, entitled 'Back to the Shores of England' follows the dreamy Englishman 'Eric Raven', described as the swoony stuff of princes and fairy tales, with 'thick brown curly hair [and] bright blue eyes'. His counterpart, 'Bess', was a 'half-Native' – with an Englishwoman mother and a 'Native' father. The tale is told from his perspective and begins when the couple embarked for Johannesburg from their rural home to seek opportunities, but four days in, Bess inexplicably developed a high fever. As her condition deteriorated, Eric 'inquired at a large farm whether he might be able to get a bed for his now dying wife. The farmer, a typical long-bearded Dutchman, after learning from his wife, who could understand English slightly, what Raven wanted, took a good look at him, and gladly granted his request. Raven thanked him, and with a grateful heart, lifted his wife in his giant arms, and carried her to the *stoep*. The farmer stepped forth to give Eric some assistance. But he drew back instantly, for instead of a dying Englishwoman, he was horrified when he saw the dark form of the Native girl and exclaimed: '*Ala Machtig! O, God, Ik will ne zo n wart gaffer mens in min huis he ne*'.⁴⁸⁴ [...] Raven who could understand Dutch, was cruelly stung by the words of the farmer'. Bess was then taken out to an outhouse where she died. 'He soon learned of the bitter feelings and prejudice of the people against his children [Enid and Edwin]. His heart shrunk from the cold bitter world, and he clung and looked more and more to his children for comfort, happiness and love'.⁴⁸⁵ The children do not make much of an appearance until after Bess dies. As a curious note, Cissie once again depicts the pair of siblings as a girl and a boy.

Of interest in both of Cissie's pieces is that they both thinly cloak anger and retaliation fantasies. The father gets his comeuppance for ignoring the children when the mother dies and in literary wish fulfilment, is 'taught his lesson' to appropriately look to his children for love instead of the mother or the external world. In another instance of mother-death, Bess' mother died when she was an infant. Eric stepped in to save her while she was a child. Eric taught Bess to 'read and write, and even in her spare hours to draw and paint. He explained the difference between right and wrong; told and taught her of God ... did all in his power that she might make her religion not only a theory, but a practise'. He impressed upon her the importance of religion and morality, but that worship of Him must happen 'in the silence of her heart'.

⁴⁸² APO 21 December 1912. For the full poem, see Appendix J.

⁴⁸³ van der Spuy, "'Not only 'the younger daughter'", 56.

⁴⁸⁴ Translation: 'My Word! Oh God, I don't want a black kaffir in my house'.

⁴⁸⁵ APO 21 December 1912.

Faith and its morality was emphasised, but left without specificity whether Cissie was referring to Islam or Christ. Two things are possible here. It either suggests Abdullah was the primary teacher for Rosie and Cissie or, as is more likely, he began as their primary teacher and spent many hours with the girls, but as his political career grew, he had to hand over the lessons to tutors, and both girls suffered a sense of loss. Cissie's short story is not the only thing that illustrates a deep-seated resentment and desire for recrimination. In 'His Mother's Boy', the climax comes when the son falls mysteriously ill after suffering a lifetime of his controlling mother. Like Eric, this mother also learns her lesson for the child's perceived victimisation and, 'She promised to give her boy to the world / If ever he recovered; / [but he dies, and now the mother is alone] / She bowed her head before the Lord / And yielded up her child / Gone was her haughty, selfish spirit, / She was humbled, meek and mild'.⁴⁸⁶ Much has been made of Cissie as being 'her father's daughter', but perhaps it would be more accurate to say Cissie was 'her mother's daughter'. Later in life, Cissie's university acquaintances recalled that, initially, Cissie 'remained aloof and detached from other students. Those who did become friendly with her remember her as being reserved and proud'.⁴⁸⁷

Both stories reflect the melodrama and transparent simplicity of most adolescent creative efforts as well as the literary style of the times. Yet there are common themes worth unpacking from both tales that reveal some of the dynamics in the Abdurahman family. First, both girls wrote themselves into the story as misunderstood and tragic heroes or heroines of sorts. The tragedy for both have something to do with parental absence through external forces. In Rosie's story, the mother's affection has been obstructed by the neediness and demands of the younger brother. In Cissie's story, it is implied that access to the father's affection was obstructed by the mother. Both are only corrected through the contrivance of death. Rosie's story notably begins with the father already absent. Race also exists in both stories – explicitly a problem in Cissie's pieces, and passively so in Rosie's. Cissie's poem idealises the son as a golden boy. In this piece, it is her race *and* her gender that stops her mother from fully accepting her. In Rosie's story, the sibling is the problem. There is little information on the relationship between Rosie and Cissie to suggest to what degree sibling rivalry is a factor in the Abdurahman family.⁴⁸⁸ In Cissie's story, the mother is the problem – classic Electra complex elements exist. In both, there are themes of alienation from the father and distraction or domination from the mother. Gender also played a part for both girls. In Rosie's story, her protagonist's more traditional femininity puts her at a disadvantage to her 'little brother's' more masculine traits. In Cissie's, there is an idealisation of the male over the female. But neither story nor the poem seem to frame sons as the obstacle between their literary doppelgängers and parental attention. If anything, in Rosie's story, it is her femininity and being 'better' that keeps the mother, not father, aloof and in Cissie's pieces, it is suggested that race plays a larger part in her insecure identity than gender.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ E. Everett, 'Zainunnissa (Cissie) Gool 1897-1963: A biography' (B.A. Honours thesis, University of Cape Town, 1978), 3.

⁴⁸⁸ Paleker writes of her interviews, 'While many of the interviewees knew Waradia or Rosie, as she was known, they could not confidently respond to questions regarding the relationship between the two sisters'. (G. Paleker, "'She was certainly not a Rosa Luxemborg"', 27.

Nevertheless, these pieces suggest Rosie and Cissie struggled with anxious attachments to both parents; there is a bit of fear and resentment of the mother and a yearning for the father.⁴⁸⁹ Considering the three pieces written by Rosie and Cissie, the image becomes more distorted. In both stories, there is a preoccupation with sons but not because the *father* loved the children less, but that the mother did. It has been interpreted in biographies of Cissie that the public persona of Abdullah as authoritarian, even arrogant, that it is his strivings towards political success that he pushed his daughters into the spotlight and pressured them to become living models performing ideal 'respectability'. But in these stories, it may have been Nellie who did. Both girls took future steps that seem to emanate from these family dynamics. Rosie's need to prove herself 'better' may have led to her intention to study medicine when she entered the University of Cape Town. Even after she failed her July exams in 1918,⁴⁹⁰ she must have asked her father to pull some strings, much in the way Dr. John Shaw of the South African College School once did for Abdullah. In 1919, Rosie withdrew from the University of Cape Town to matriculate at the University of Glasgow.⁴⁹¹ Cissie later used racism to explain her failures at the University of Cape Town. Cissie also struggled, passing only one course, 'Philosophy: Ethics and Politics', in 1918.⁴⁹² Cissie suggested that her early failures resulted from racism, actively dissuading neighbourhood girls from attending because the racism was too great.⁴⁹³ Both girls were tenacious. Rosie eventually graduated with a MB ChB from Glasgow in 1927 when she was 30. To Cissie's credit, she too refused to be deterred and graduated with an MA in psychology in 1932 from the University of Cape Town when she was 35. A year before her death, she also earned an LL.B.

Cissie's Letter to Abdullah

Cissie's quasi-Electra tendencies towards Abdullah and internal emotional turmoil was not restricted to these publicised pieces of writing. In the sole surviving personal letter written from Cissie to Abdullah at the end of 1911, she writes an outpouring of overly emotive prose, conceptualising her feelings towards her father romantically. This letter is typically overlooked in studies of Cissie because it is *not* located in the Abdurahman collections. Instead, it is held in the Simons Collection; Ray Alexander Simons was a good friend of Cissie's, a communist and frequent critic of Abdullah. How a letter of such a personal

⁴⁸⁹ For more on attachment theory, its trans-generational impacts and its consistency from childhood through adulthood, see: M. D. S. Ainsworth, M. C. Blehar, E. Waters, and S. Wall, *Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the strange situation* (Hillsdale, NJ: Earlbaum 1978); L. A. Sroufe, B. Egeland, E. A. Carlson, and W. A. Collins, *The development of the person: The Minnesota study of risk and adaptation from birth to adulthood* (New York: Guilford Press, 2009); M. Main and E. Hesse and N Kaplan, 'Predictability of attachment behavior and representational processes at 1, 6, and 19 years of age' in *Attachment from infancy to adulthood: The major longitudinal studies*, ed. Klaus E. Grossmann, Karin Grossmann, and Everett Waters (New York: The Guilford Press, 2005), 245-304. For relationship to political socialisation and policy, see: H. Warming, *Participation, Citizenship and Trust in Children's Lives* (Cape Town: Springer, 2013), particularly 54-7, 67-8, 195-6. While this intersection between attachment theory, trans-generational transmission, and political socialisation as it may be applied to the Abdurahman family is tantalising, it lives beyond the scope of this project.

⁴⁹⁰ UCT Archives: General Purposes Committee, Minutes, 31 July 1918.

⁴⁹¹ UCT Archives, Student Registration Form 1919. The Register for 1918 notes she left in Oct 1919. Probably to take the sting out from her failure, there were rumours at the time, as relayed by Lancelot Hogben in his autobiography (L. T. Hogben, *Lancelot Hogben, Scientific Humanist: An Unauthorised Autobiography* (London: Merlin Press, 1998, 113) and later affirmed by Amina Gool as Rosie, that Rosie was courted by a young Zoology lecturer who asked her to the university dance. Hogben relays then that a 'group' was formed to go together so as to detract from the optics of an interracial 'date'. And yet the university, regardless, raised outrage that a coloured woman was attending at all, (The girl in question was affirmed to be Rosie by A. Gool in G. Paleker's series of interviews (videotaped) of Amina Gool, Centre for Popular Memory, University of Cape Town). Rosie failed Zoology in 1918, that much is for certain, but there's also no indication that she sat or attempted any other exams to progress either.

⁴⁹² UCT Archives: Senate Minutes 8 January 1919.

⁴⁹³ Amina Gool, cited in van der Spuy, 'Not only "the younger daughter"', 116.

nature came to be in the Simons Collection is a mystery. This letter was written in Abdullah's study, in the presence of Cissie's future husband.⁴⁹⁴ Abdul Hamid, commonly known as 'A. H.' or 'B. G.' to his family and close friends, spoke at one of the APO's public meeting soon after returning from London. B. G. trained there at Guy's Hospital and returned a doctor.⁴⁹⁵ Written in B. G.'s presence, this letter might have come into Ray or Jack Simons' possession, possibly by accident, through B. G., not Cissie'. 'Dearest father', Cissie began, '[A]ll afternoon ... my thoughts kept wandering away and thinking of the evening when our tea-table would be fatherless ... I suddenly realized the fact that your destination would soon be reached, and we would in a few days be separated by a long distance of hundreds of miles ... I felt very strange when I arrived home, the house seemed cold and empty and robbed of its richest treasure, I felt absolutely done up and often had to suppress rising passions lest I should vent my sorrow out in a flood of tears'.⁴⁹⁶ When taken in combination with the other pieces of writing, Cissie's discontent in family life was competition with her mother for father's affections while Rosie's was competition with her attention-seeking and emotionally demanding sibling for her mother's attentions. If anything can be glimpsed of Cissie's relationship with her father from these personal writings, it was not that he betrayed Nellie in leaving her for Maggie but that Cissie felt Abdullah betrayed her by leaving her subject to Nellie's control and did not intercede enough on her behalf.

B. G. was the son of family friends Yusuf and Wagheida Gool. Cissie and Rosie both grew up around the Gool girls and certainly was acquainted with B. G., although he was much older than them and then overseas for study.⁴⁹⁷ Yusuf Mohammed Hamid Gool and his brother Abbas were born in the Swat Province of modern-day Pakistan. His father was a Pushtan *Maulvi* or religious scholar. While Yusuf was still young, the family moved to Rander in Gujarat, India. After marrying his first wife, Bibi, Yusuf emigrated to Mauritius. When his health began to affect him, Yusuf, much like Lucie, moved to the Cape and, finding it to his liking, stayed.⁴⁹⁸ Where Abdullah's family businesses were fruit and fish and later, medicine, the Gools followed a similar trajectory. The family's economic success was founded in the spice business, which allowed them to send their children abroad for studies. With their success, the family moved to a large home with stables at 7 Buitensingel at the top of Long Street near the Turkish Baths and Pools.⁴⁹⁹ The Gools' friendship with Abdullah's family undoubtedly had its origins at the *Hanafi* mosque. Yusuf, like Abdul, was one of its founders.⁵⁰⁰ To add to their familial ties, Wagheida's mother was a Dollie and a relative of Khadijah's.⁵⁰¹ Nephew Selim Gool reports that 'a joke was soon to circulate around town about the [number of] unmarried sisters living in this large house: the abode was soon re-named "number

⁴⁹⁴ She refers to 'Dr. Gool' as being in the room with her.

⁴⁹⁵ APO 26 August 1911. B. G. was apparently commonly called 'B. G.' for 'Boeta Gootie' or a corruption of 'Big brother' or sometimes 'Cheops' among family and friends (S.Y. Gool, 'The Gools of Cape Town - A Family Memoir A South African Muslim family in search of radical modernity' Unpublished manuscript, n.d., 22).

⁴⁹⁶ UCT MA: BC 1081 Simons Collection, Folder N: See letter to Abdullah from Cissie, 31 December 1911. Also worth noting is that if Abdul was living with them at Albert Lodge, there might have been a mention in this letter as to home affairs when father is gone.

⁴⁹⁷ For more about the Gool family, see Y. S. Rassool, *District Six* and S.Y. Gool, 'The Gools of Cape Town - A Family Memoir A South African Muslim family in search of radical modernity' (Unpublished manuscript, n.d.).

⁴⁹⁸ Y. S. Rassool, *District Six*, 8.

⁴⁹⁹ Yusuf's company, J. M. H. Gool & Co. operated at 25 Church Street and was successful enough to become the suppliers to Her Majesty Queen Victoria's Army Y. S. (Rassool, *District Six*, 9).

⁵⁰⁰ Y. S. Rassool, *District Six*, 4.

⁵⁰¹ Y. S. Rassool, *District Six*, 19.



Fig. 15, Photograph
CISSIE AND B. G.'S WEDDING PHOTO (1919)

seven beauty-single”⁵⁰² The Gool children lived in a ‘white’ neighborhood adjacent to the Bo-Kaap where ‘Old Man Dr. Abdurahman’ often ‘popped around ... for a game of cards and a chat’.⁵⁰³ B. G. and Abdullah shared multiple interests and pursuits, including politics for a while, until B. G. chose to turn down his nomination and not pursue public life, despite the ringing endorsement of Mohandas Gandhi himself.⁵⁰⁴ But their educational and work association continued throughout the rest of Abdullah’s life.

In the beginning, they collaborated, along with John Xavier Merriman’s ample support and assistance, on the founding of Abdullah’s first Muslim primary school – the Rahmaniyyeh Institute in 1913. Even at the end of Abdullah’s life, with his last project in Schotsche Kloof, B. G. was Abdullah’s right-hand man, described as Abdullah’s friend. Both doctors, members of common political organisations, and B. G.’s nephew later said ‘the bond between Dr. Abdurahman and my grandfather ... brought [Cissie and B. G.] together and their marriage followed in the fullness of times’.⁵⁰⁵ Years later, the youngest Gool daughter who grew up with the Abdurahman girls, intimated Abdullah was set against Cissie and B. G.’s marriage.⁵⁰⁶ Abdullah apparently boycotted the wedding in 1919.⁵⁰⁷ Abdullah does not seem pleased by Cissie and B. G.’s marriage. In her interview with B. G.’s sister, Amina, Gairoonisa Paleker observed ‘there is an obvious process of self-censorship more apparent in her interview than in any of the others ... [An] implication is that Gool has revelations, hitherto unexpressed, to make about Cissie. But these revelations never surface clearly. The overwhelming sense one has after viewing her throughout the film is that there is a degree of personal antipathy towards Cissie’.⁵⁰⁸ What is known is that Cissie left B. G. later in their marriage after an affair with Jewish lawyer and communist Sam Kahn.⁵⁰⁹ This may have caused the Gool family to hold a grudge against Cissie. But there is some discomfiture about B. G. as well. As his nephew, Selim, recorded in his compilation of family notes, ‘Needless to say, both the traditionalist Jewish and Moslem communities were in an uproar and ‘Cissie’ drew further away from her more conservative father ... There can be no doubt that the children of the Gool’s and Abdurahman’s grew up differently and possibly with always having the envious eyes of others fixed on them and were therefore in the public eye. In fact, it became like a drug. Having the spotlight cast on you also makes you aware of the viewers and you respond in like manner’.⁵¹⁰ In an annotation, Selim adds that B. G. was subject to ‘mood-swings’ and took to drinking. Moreover, while in London, he fathered an illegitimate son but did not keep in contact after returning to Cape Town in 1911.⁵¹¹ Some of these rumours seem to bear truth. In an anecdote by Cissie’s son Rustum, B. G. was once reprimanded by his congregation for using alcohol in his medical tinctures. When forced to choose between medicine and the mosque, B. G. never attended mosque

⁵⁰² S.Y. Gool, ‘The Gools of Cape Town’, 5.

⁵⁰³ Amina ‘Minnie’ Gool, cited in S.Y. Gool, ‘The Gools of Cape Town - A Family Memoir A South African Muslim family in search of radical modernity’ (Unpublished manuscript, n.d.), 5.

⁵⁰⁴ Y. Rassool writes that Gandhi wanted B. G. to go into politics, but while B. G. was the leader of the South African Indian Congress for a while, he decided to focus on his medical career instead of a politician (Rassool, *District Six*, 26-28).

⁵⁰⁵ Rassool, *District Six*, 22.

⁵⁰⁶ A. Gool, interviewed on videotape by Gairoonisa Paleker, University of Cape Town Centre for Popular Memory, n. d.

⁵⁰⁷ See Appendix K: Nellie and her uncles Ismail and Ebrahim witnessed her marriage certificate but Abdullah is absent.

⁵⁰⁸ A. Gool, interviewed on videotape by Gairoonisa Paleker, University of Cape Town Centre for Popular Memory, n. d.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁵¹⁰ S. Gool, ‘The Gools of Cape Town - A Family Memoir: A South African Muslim family in search of radical modernity’, (Unpublished manuscript, n.d.).

⁵¹¹ Ibid, 22.

again.⁵¹² Based on the intimation that B. G. also drank, perhaps B. G. did not 'choose' to forego mosque. Cissie may have held a grudge against Abdullah for his disapproval. Moreover, the old chestnut that the moral outrage over her father's affair with Maggie is unreasonable, given that Cissie herself left B. G. for another man. Cissie later said she admired her mother and other women like her who had courage, broke convention, and married across racial lines.⁵¹³ This has been used to support the argument that Cissie 'sided' with her mother in her parents' separation. However, considering her affair with Jewish lawyer Sam Kahn, she could easily have been obliquely complimenting herself. Given other evidence of Cissie and Abdullah's enduring affection, loyalty, and collaborative political efforts, their antipathy was not wholly political or wholly personal.

The Councillors Abdurahman

Cissie's first public speech was in 1930 alongside her father and the APO to discuss the women's enfranchisement. It was her first declaration of her departure from her father's moderate politics and diplomatic approach in favour of the socialism of her university classmates. Despite their political differences, her father publicly endorsed Cissie's 1938 campaign against the advice of his friends and allies, even his political opponents. 'Another mistake, in my opinion', said Raynard, 'was the support of Mrs. Z. Gool ... I then made the Doctor understand that I did not trust the political sincerity of Mrs. Gool and her European allies'.⁵¹⁴ Endorsements, by their nature, cannot be correctly quantified, but Cissie's victory was unlikely without her father's supporters. Although Cissie was nominated in 1937 by her own political organisation, the National Liberation League,⁵¹⁵ she was disciplined by the organisation in September on an unspecified matter, 'relieved of her office and suspended from all political activity under the auspices of the National Liberation League until the next Congress of the Organization when the matter will be reviewed'.⁵¹⁶ It cannot be established to what extent these two incidents may be connected, but just three days prior, Abdullah had sent a curt note to Cissie, 'with regard to [her] inquiry re the rumour that Mr. Dollie pledged himself to support me'. Abdullah then said, 'I herewith enclose a copy of his letter to me which speaks for itself', then added in a handwritten addendum, 'The letter was shown to Mr. MacCallum before it was posted to me'. Based on the context and related commentary from Raynard, Cissie accused Abdullah of an unknown betrayal or behind-the-scenes shenanigans at a cost to her. She was reinstated to the National Liberation League on 26 November after she submitted a written application and pledge to

⁵¹² Rustum Gool, cited in van der Spuy, "'Not only 'the younger daughter'", 85.

⁵¹³ P. Podbrey, interviewed on videotape by Gairoonisa Paleker, University of Cape Town Centre for Popular Memory, n. d.

⁵¹⁴ J. H. Raynard, *Dr. Abdurahman, A biographical memoir*, M. Adhikari, ed (Cape Town: Friends of the National Library of South Africa in association with the District Six Museum, 2002), 34.

⁵¹⁵ The National Liberation League was founded in December of 1935 by herself, a member of the South African Communist Party and her brother-in-law, Dr. Goolam Gool, a Trotskyist (University of Cape Town, Special Collections, Manuscripts and Archives (hereafter UCT MA): A3 The National Liberation League of South Africa, 1935-1941. Cissie was President at the time of her nomination.

⁵¹⁶ UCT MA: A3.15 Letter to Cissie from LaGuma, 10 September 1937. As to the source of the dispute, the only hints are in Simons' *Class and Colour*, described an internal matter sometime in 1939, which may have had origins earlier in the incident with Cissie in 1937 and is suggested to have arisen from Abdullah's endorsement of Cissie's campaign: 'La Guma wished to debar whites from holding office in the League. The Coloured, he argued, should lead their own organisations and encourage young people to take their place in the van. Dr. Gool said that he objected not to the presence of whites in the leadership but to 'the present reactionary and reformist policy' of the communists, who sacrificed the League's principles to the aim of winning elections. La Guma's motion was defeated at the League's third annual conference. He and others withdrew, took possession of the books, and claimed to represent the League. This then expelled La Guma, Gool, A. Brown and Miss Hawa Ahmed for 'unauthorised activities', and took them to court, which ordered them to return the books and to refrain from collecting money in the name of the League', (502).

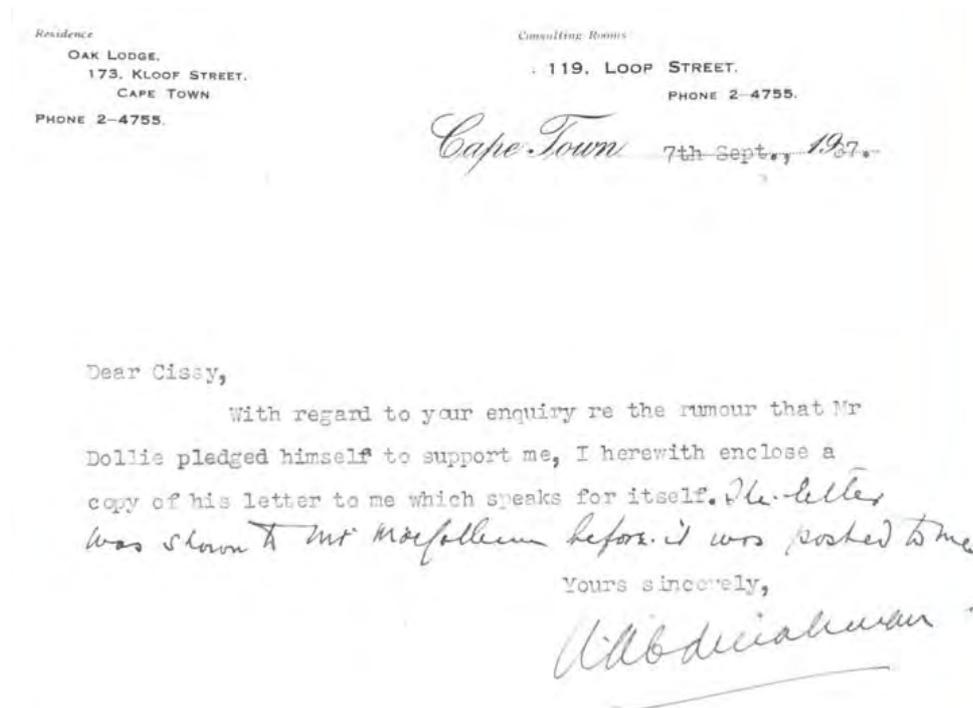


Fig. 16, Letter
ENQUIRY INTO DOLLIE'S SUPPORT OF ABDULLAH FROM CISSIE (1933)

'uphold the discipline of the League and carry on constructive work'.⁵¹⁷ If this scandal had been kept quiet before the 1938 elections, perhaps she could have won without Abdullah's support, but this seems unlikely. Thirteen days before 5 September 1938, Election Day, the *Cape Standard* published an anonymous letter that pulled back the curtain on this incident, portraying Cissie as a flip-flopper on her politics and that she had gained the presidency of the National Liberation League through dishonest means.⁵¹⁸ A week later, on the 30 August, Cissie's response was published. In it, she was predictably outraged, lambasting the letter as 'nothing but a pack of lies, deliberately fabricated to discredit me and the National Liberation League in the eyes of your readers. His letter deliberately creates the impression that the career of its President has been opportunistic and chequered by expulsions and resignations from various organisations, that by underhand and disagreeable methods I drove Dr. Gool⁵¹⁹ from the presidency. I am prepared to give 100 pounds to any non-European charity if your correspondent can prove that he is a municipal voter in Ward 7. Secondly I offer a further 100 pounds if he or anyone can prove that I have ever been expelled or have resigned from any organisation or party'.⁵²⁰ Unfortunately for her, of course, the latter was true. Moreover, Cissie was a controversial figure in the Cape Muslim community. Abdullah and his family were well-known for their faith. Abdullah proudly displayed his devotion by donning the fez since the early 1920's,

⁵¹⁷ UCT MA: A3.18 Letter to Cissie from LaGuma, 26 November 1937.

⁵¹⁸ *Cape Standard* 23 August 1938.

⁵¹⁹ Cissie's enmity with her brother-in-law, Dr. Goolam Gool, is about as well-documented as the enmity between herself and her father. Cissie was a divisive figure, coaxing as many loyal supporters as stubborn adversaries. See University of Cape Town's Centre for Popular Memory (CPM)'s series of interviews by G. Paleker (videotapes), excerpts also available via *Sunday Times*' Heritage Project' at sthp.saha.org.za/multimedia.htm (Accessed 05 March 2015).

⁵²⁰ *Cape Standard* 30 August 1938.

but Cissie and Rosie were considered by the other Muslims of Cape Town to be Christian.⁵²¹ In one instance, Cissie was seen drinking water from a public tap during the day during Ramadan.⁵²² Her affair with a Jewish man⁵²³ while still married to her husband Dr. A. H. 'B. G'. Gool, a man well-known to the community and a son of the prominent Gool family, could not have helped her public image and in turn, her 'electability'.

These examples cement the adversarial relationship between father and daughter. Various hypotheses have been offered for this antipathy in recent years: Cissie's childhood disappointments at her father's frequent absences compounded by the betrayal of Nellie when her father married Maggie,⁵²⁴ Abdullah's liberal and elitist politics *contra* her communism,⁵²⁵ and Abdullah's disapproval to her marriage with B. G. or even that he was disappointed Cissie was not a son has even been suggested as additional wedge issues.⁵²⁶ Even with all these ill feelings, Abdullah and Nellie actively served on her campaign and spoke on her behalf at rallies.⁵²⁷ Abdullah supported Cissie, even though she had accused him of tampering with her campaign and regularly berated him publicly for his politics. Bernhard Herzberg was a guest at one of Cissie's Saturdays open house, a tradition she inherited from Albert Lodge (and her father) since the new Mrs. Abdurahman was private and did not seem to allow Abdullah such use of Oak Lodge. These gatherings under Cissie, of course, diverged from her father's gatherings towards a distinct communist and socialist flavour. Herzberg later recalled his first attendance there in 1934⁵²⁸:

Assembled there was a veritable League of Nations⁵²⁹ ... Cissy presided over this gathering with her husband. She was sitting next to her father, Dr. Abdurahman, the leader of the Cape Malay community and the only Non-White member of the Cape Provincial Council. Cissy was busy berating him, calling him an Uncle Tom for his lack of radical opposition to the prevailing political and social system in Cape Town. I spotted an African intellectual, Isaac Tabata, a prominent member of the Trotskyite Spartacist Club [and leader of the Non-European Unity Movement], in earnest conversation with Dr. Eddie Roux, a botanist and organiser of Black trade unions ...⁵³⁰

⁵²¹ G. Paleker's series of interviews (videotaped) of Amina Gool, Centre for Popular Memory, University of Cape Town.

⁵²² I. Taliip, 'Coloured or Muslim?: Aspects of the Political Dilemma of the Cape Muslims, 1925-1956', B.A. Honours thesis, University of Cape Town, 1982, 6).

⁵²³ G. Paleker's series of interviews (videotaped) of Amina Gool, Centre for Popular Memory, University of Cape Town.

⁵²⁴ See E. Everett, 'Zainunnissa (Cissie) Gool 1897-1963: A biography'. (B.A. Honours thesis, University of Cape Town, 1978) and P. van der Spuy, "'Not only 'the younger daughter of Dr. Abdurahman'": A feminist exploration of early influences on the political development of Cissie Gool' (PhD Dissertation, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 2002).

⁵²⁵ For example, G. Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall: A history of South African 'Coloured' politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987) and R. E. van der Ross, 'A Political and Social History of the Cape Coloured People, 1870-1970', 4 vols, unpublished typescript, 1976 (available at the University of Cape Town).

⁵²⁶ A. Gool, interviewed on videotape by Gairoonisa Paleker, University of Cape Town Centre for Popular Memory, n. d.

⁵²⁷ See, for example, UCT MA: BC506 A5.10 Form letter to Cissie's supporters and BC506 A5.4 Municipal Elections Sept 5th 1938 (Ward 7) Public Meeting, also listed as NZD 87/89 and BZD 95/5 5A, 6A).

⁵²⁸ Herzberg was introduced to B. G. through a mutual German friend, Eva. B. G. was an ardent fan of classical music and regularly attended the Thursday symphony series at City Hall despite the fact that segregated seats meant he had to sit alone. Eva moved to sit with B. G. She later said of her decision that she had had enough of segregated seating in Berlin (See B. Herzberg, *Otherness: The Story of a Very Long Life*, London: published privately, 1998 and repeated in Y. S. Rassool, *District Six*, 6).

⁵²⁹ Herzberg lists: 'We met a university professor of German Language, Dr. Frederick Bodmer, a Swiss national and an ardent Trotskyite. Next to him sat Sam Kahn, a leading Stalinist Communist. Painters were there too: Gregoire Boonzaaier, the son of a Die Burger cartoonist, (inventor of the Hoggenheimer image, an anti-semitic concept denoted by a bloated Jewish visage); and Frieda Locke, a painter of note, reputedly mistress of the good doctor'.

⁵³⁰ Herzberg, *Otherness*, 77.



F. 17, Poster
PORTRAIT OF ABDULLAH FROM THE 'PROVINCIAL COUNCILLORS OF THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA,
ELECTED 1923' POSTER. (1924/5)

This thesis does not believe that the public dissent and even heated debate dissolved the relationship between father and daughter, at least not from Abdullah's side. Abdullah was a man accustomed to dissent and debate within his family and close social circles; from his father's shift to *Hanafi* practises, his 21 Club debates, and his relationship with wide and diverse circle throughout his life, there was often affection and even respect despite differences of opinion and politics. For example, John Henry Raynard has been Abdullah's adversary, ally, and all the shades in between throughout their acquaintance. Nonetheless, given the memorial articles written, a sincere affection and friendship persisted throughout. Likewise, Abdullah's friendship with John Xavier Merriman was forged despite Merriman's original assessment of Abdullah as 'pathetic'. Other, more personal snippets of information, further confirm his continuing closeness with Cissie, despite all the optics. On 22 October 1937, when Abdullah was bed-stricken with grave illness, it was Cissie who rushed over in the early morning hours to care for her father,

not Rosie, the doctor.⁵³¹ In another instance, when B. G. and Cissie wanted to buy a beach cottage on Camps Bay, it was made possible by the efforts of her father. In *Umsebenzi*,⁵³² it was suggested that the 'communist' Cissie co-opted her father's influence to push through a loophole and procure herself a bungalow in exclusive, white Camps Bay.⁵³³ Abdullah, of course, being chairperson of the all-important Streets and Drainage Committee, knew that the property was up for sale and that it fell directly into a loophole making it possible for them to purchase. The property was owned by Abdullah, Nellie, and Cissie. B. G. was unmentioned.⁵³⁴ Since Cissie and Nellie did not draw an income, Abdullah financed its purchase. As Abdullah was already married to Maggie, this expresses the enduring closeness and affection between Nellie and Abdullah. Abdullah did not seem to hold much ill-will against his daughter simply due to political disagreement. The rifts in ideology and public criticism of one another did not seem to change the alliance and partnership in the Council between father and daughter. For the nearly two years that the two served together, as a rule, they supported and seconded each other's motions.⁵³⁵

After Cissie was elected to the council in 1938, there was an incident on 27 March 1939 when the Non-European United Front, another organisation that Cissie presided over, with her mother and Rosie⁵³⁶ members, held a meeting and, 'after the speeches, the people marched on parliament, led by Cissie on the lorry'.⁵³⁷ The protest turned violent as police attacked demonstrators outside Parliament and continued with assaults on the residents of District Six and the Bo-Kaap until the wee hours of the morning. Abdullah responded that, for himself, his choice is for peaceful dissent and negotiations instead of force and threats.⁵³⁸ Abdullah had been affected too much throughout his life by war. War wrought early absence of his father and the intensification of segregation, poverty, disease, and the first forced removals in South Africa. When the first World War broke out, the APO ceased active politicisation and protest. The African National Congress also halted their agitation against the loathed 1913 Land Act.⁵³⁹ Abdullah's guest and ally, Plaatje, declared that Africans were eager to serve. Through these actions, both Plaatje and Abdurahman hoped to prove themselves as loyal patriots and as Abdurahman states, 'not less worthy than any other sons of the British Empire'.⁵⁴⁰ But when Walter Rubusana offered the Secretary of Defence a force of 5,000 men, the reply was negative to the point of crudeness.⁵⁴¹ A significant number of Africans nonetheless contributed to the Allied cause and as many as 74,000 African served in France, Southern

⁵³¹ UCLA: 2051 Ralph J. Bunche papers: Fieldwork notebooks: Capetown, Bastoland, Fort Hare, Thaba 'Nachu 1937 (Box 20, Folder 3): Entry, 22 October.

⁵³² *Umsebenzi* 4 July 1930.

⁵³³ UCLA: 2051 Ralph J. Bunche papers: Fieldwork notebooks: Capetown, Bastoland, Fort Hare, Thaba 'Nachu 1937 (Box 20, Folder 3): Entry, 1 October.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁵ For example, one such incident was in November of 1938 when Abdullah motioned for a one-penny increase for unskilled labour wages based on skills and service duration. Cissie seconded this. The two often tag-teamed motions and seconds. For more, see City of Cape Town Proceedings of Council for the Mayoral Year September 1938-August 1939, Vol. 97, N.S. 8.

⁵³⁶ Rosie appears to only been a member nominally to support her sister and mother, at least publicly. Her entire childhood shows a shyness and reluctance of the spotlight and her adult life was not much different. This did not mean a lack of interest of passion however, after all, the manuscript collection *does* come into the archives through Rosie.

⁵³⁷ *Grassroots* April 1983

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁹ B. Nasson, *World War I and the People of South Africa* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2014), 42.

⁵⁴⁰ Nasson, *World War I*, 46.

⁵⁴¹ A. Grundlingh, *Fighting Their Own War: South African Blacks and the First World War* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987), 39.

Africa, and East Africa, often as labourers. Coloured people, however, were permitted to carry arms and the Cape Corps came into being. They served in East Africa, Egypt, Palestine, and Turkey. Abdullah regarded himself as 'the father of the Cape Corps'.⁵⁴² For a doctor sworn to protect life, his role in sending young men to the front lines likely weighed on his conscience, leading to his later criticism of the Non-European United Front's tactics on 27 March 1939 under Cissie.⁵⁴³ This reluctance for more radical tactics has often been criticised as the consequence of a toothless liberal ideology. However, when viewed through the lens that young Abdullah was motivated at a young age by American Transcendentalism precipitated by idealistic New England women from the Seminary, this 'soft' strategy takes on greater nuance. While Abdullah was still in London as a member of Schreiner's deputation, Gandhi wrote to his Earls Court address on 23 August 1909. 'One may derive whatever satisfaction', said Gandhi, 'is to be had from the fact of almost every member having regretted the insertion of a racial bar in an Imperial Statute-book ... I promised to send you Thoreau's *Duty of Civil Disobedience* ... I am writing for it to-day and hope to send it before you are off. All I can add is a prayer that you may have the strength for it and ability to continue the work in South Africa along internal reform, and, therefore, passive resistance, even though, in the beginning, you may be only a handful'.⁵⁴⁴ Henry David Thoreau, an American Transcendentalist and his *Civil Disobedience* had inspired the political strategies and philosophies of Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Jr., and of course, the *Satyagraha* of Mohandas Gandhi. There was a moral optimism to the political philosophies of these men, tempered by a degree of what some have called elitism. 'The best among us,' Abdullah said, 'the elite and the intellectual from whom so much might have been expected, cannot and will not co-operate. They know, and if they do not know, they ought not to assume the role of leaders and spokesmen on behalf of the people, that we cannot achieve anything of an enduring nature in their ever-changing and uncertain age as long as the elite, the progressives, split themselves into bitterly irreconcilable camps expending all their powers actual and potential upon useless and futile controversy. We refuse to fight like one man as the Cape Corps did for the regeneration of our people.'⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴² NWU/AFP: 'Speeches Written by Dr. Abdurahman, (Incomplete), n.d'. (Box 1, Folder 8): 'Conclusion', Untitled speech, 'It is with some diffidence and reluctance.'

⁵⁴³ *Guardian* 31 March 1939.

⁵⁴⁴ M. K. Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* vol. 10 (Bombay: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1958), 40-41.

⁵⁴⁵ NWU/AFP: 'Speeches Written by Dr. Abdurahman, (Incomplete), n.d'. (Box 1, Folder 8): 'Conclusion', Untitled speech, 'It is with some diffidence and reluctance.'

PART III
Chapter Five
BEING ABDULLAH ABDURAHMAN
Identities in Contest: Between India, Malay, and Islam

In 1923, the South African Prime Minister declared the 'Indian Problem' a domestic affair. 'No outside influence would be tolerated'.⁵⁴⁶ In January of 1924, the government further announced it would 'proceed with legislation in the form of the Class Areas Bill to provide for the compulsory trading and residential segregation of Indians'.⁵⁴⁷ This latter Bill gave carte blanche to local authorities to geographically confine Indian trading activity and the rights to acquire property to pre-defined 'Indian' areas.⁵⁴⁸ Gandhi, in a statement issued from India, called the Bill 'a breach of the compromise of 1914'.⁵⁴⁹ At these developments, the Natal Indian Congress reached out to Sarojini Naidu (née Chattopadhyay, bearer of the sobriquet 'Nightingale of India'), a member (and later President) of the India National Congress for assistance.⁵⁵⁰ Naidu was a political activist in the Indian national movement, spurred to action by the partition of Bengal in 1905.⁵⁵¹ In addition to his family connections to Bengal, Abdullah must have seen the parallels between situation there and in South Africa. '[Abdullah] immediately grasped the situation in a nutshell. The repression and economic destruction of the Indian community ... in South Africa, if successful, was but to be the prelude to the total enslavement of all other sections of the non-Europeans'.⁵⁵² He took part in the actions of the Indian organisations to protest the legislation. Through Abdurahman's political status, the Cape British Indian Council, the Natal Indian Congress, and the Transvaal British Indian Association gained an audience with the Minister, but to no avail. The South Indian Congress reports: 'Dr. Abdurahman, MPC of the Cape Province, introduced the deputation with a spirited speech. The Minister gave the deputation a sympathetic hearing and denied that it was intended to degrade, ruin or oppress the Indians; on the contrary to provide them separate [areas] where they can reasonably live and trade according to their best ideas and develop according to their own lines and civilisation'.⁵⁵³ Sarojini Naidu dropped anchor, as promised, at the end of February.

⁵⁴⁶ B. Pachai, *The International Aspects of the South African Indian Question: 1860-1971* (Cape Town: C. Struik, 1971), 106.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ *Hansard* House of Lords Debate 24 February 1926 vol 63 cc263-84 and 19 May 1926 vol 64 cc231-42.

⁵⁴⁹ S. Bhana and B. Pachai. *A documentary history of Indian South Africans* Vol. 310 (Claremont, South Africa: David Phillips Publishers, 1984), 153.

⁵⁵⁰ S. Bhana and B. Pachai. *A documentary history of Indian South Africans* Vol. 310 (Claremont, South Africa: David Phillips Publishers, 1984), 153, 155.

⁵⁵¹ Born on 13 February 1879 in Hyderabad to Aghore Nath Chattopadhyay and Barada Sundari Devi, Naidu joined the Indian national movement to end the British East India Company and Raj rule. Between 1915-8, she travelled throughout India giving lectures on women's rights, Indian nationalism, and social welfare. Her family home was in Bikrampur in today's Bangladesh. Her father held a doctorate in science from the University of Edinburgh and founded Hyderabad College (later Nizam's College). Her mother was a Bengali poet. After passing her matriculation examination from the University of Madras, Naidu took a break from her studies until a scholarship made it possible for her to study at King's College, London and later Girton College, Cambridge. (For further reading, see P. S. Sengupta, *Sarojini Naidu: a biography* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1966).

⁵⁵² J. H. Raynard, *Dr. Abdurahman, A biographical memoir*, M. Adhikari, ed (Cape Town: Friends of the National Library of South Africa in association with the District Six Museum, 2002), 34.

⁵⁵³ S. Bhana and B. Pachai. *A documentary history of Indian South Africans* Vol. 310 (Claremont, South Africa: David Phillips Publishers, 1984), 153.

This chapter is not a narrative of the 'Indian Problem' and its resolutions throughout the 1920's. Many excellent accounts exist on Indian politics in South Africa.⁵⁵⁴ Instead, it draws on Abdullah and Cissie's involvement resisting the legislation and how their experiences and interactions with Sarojini Naidu reshaped and inspired changes to their politics. Plus, exploring the criticisms of Abdullah's involvement brings forward themes on how his being and his identities have been conceptualised and politicised. Abdullah had certainly faced his fair share of criticism throughout his career, but as the century tilted past the first quarter, his identity and its 'authenticity' as qualifications for his right to represent came to the fore in criticisms. But it was his activism on behalf of Indian civil rights that whipped up a confederation of detractors. Abdullah's role in Indian politics has not undergone much inquiry since coloured histories side-lined Indian affairs as it was not 'coloured' politics. In scholarship on Indian South African politics, Abdullah is identified as coloured, sometimes as Malay, but rarely identified as an Indian even though Abdullah had identified himself to the press as an Indian. This was unusual. Slaves of Indian origin did not typically retain an Indian identity. After the war, the colony had strong anti-Indian sentiments and it became disadvantageous to be Indian. Because of this context, at least one author suggested that Abdullah's sudden interest in Indian politics was related to his divorce from Nellie and marrying Maggie, who was a Muslim and probably of Indian descent.⁵⁵⁵ These questions of identity, authenticity, and 'right' to represent leads this chapter into a brief sketch of women's enfranchisement and the puzzles surrounding subject, citizenship, personhood, and franchise that emerge from them. As internal fractures continued to solidify identities of difference and fracture the unity that Abdullah envisioned, he turned towards the last project of his life - Schotsche Kloof, which Abdullah envisioned as a residential mixed-education institute at the foothills of the Tana Baru.

The Nightingale Lands in South Africa

When Naidu left Natal for the Cape, she had assumed that, like her compatriot and ally Gandhi, she would be hosted at the 'number seven beauty-single'. Instead, at Cissie's absolute insistence, Naidu found herself a two-month guest at Cissie and B. G.'s home at 46 Searle Street at the western edge of Woodstock.⁵⁵⁶ Cissie enjoyed hosting prominent guests in her home.⁵⁵⁷ In addition to the practical benefits of increased social capital and political influence, the vestiges of her childhood hunger for attention and the spotlight that she inherited from her mother may have underpinned her hospitality. Social popularity mattered to Cissie. B. G. also seemed to enjoy the prestige they bequeathed upon him as well, and of course, he was accustomed to the mixed-use 'salon' and *madrasah* of the lounge and tearoom. After all, his family hosted Gandhi, and he was a frequent guest at Albert Lodge in the 1910's. B. G.'s nephew, Y. S. Rassool later wrote that Cissie's open Saturday parties were 'a place where all the leading luminaries in the political and

⁵⁵⁴ For further reading, see B. Pachai, *The International Aspects of the South African Indian Question: 1860-1971* (Cape Town: C. Struik, 1971) and R. A. Huttenback, *Gandhi in South Africa: British imperialism and the Indian question, 1860-1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971)

⁵⁵⁵ R. E. van der Ross, cf E. Everett, 'Zainunnissa (Cissie) Gool 1897-1963: A biography'. (B.A. Honours thesis, University of Cape Town, 1978), 14.

⁵⁵⁶ Amina Gool as cited in P. van der Spuy, "'Not only 'the younger daughter of Dr. Abdurahman': A feminist exploration of early influences on the political development of Cissie Gool' (PhD Dissertation, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 2002), 132.

⁵⁵⁷ In addition to insisting on hosting Naidu and Bunche, she also hosted a Mr. Bajpai, a member of an Indian delegation to South Africa, none were friends and all of the guests were politically inclined or prominent in some way.

cultural arena would foregather for [B. G.] to enjoy their verbal squabbles while they caroused till the cock crew'.⁵⁵⁸ Indeed, Naidu's arrival roughly coincided with the beginning of the Saturday night parties and 'the guests began to include a variety of educationalists, musicians, artists and even a few politicians'.⁵⁵⁹ It did not take long for the Gool's parties to become *the* fashionable social events on the calendar. Cissie was 'hostess to the stream of visitors who came either to stay or to attend their glittering parties ... anybody who was anybody wanted to know the Gools and hoped to be invited to one of their parties'.⁵⁶⁰ Abdullah was a frequent presence at these events, which were, in some ways, a continuation of his own regular gatherings at Albert Lodge.⁵⁶¹ In the past, when guests lodged with the Abdurahmans, they stayed at Abdullah's Loop Street address. As mentioned in chapter three, when Sol Plaatje was in Cape Town in 1912 to lobby for the repeal of the Land Act of 1913, he lodged at 119 Loop Street and political cross-pollination occurred. Plaatje wrote a chapter on Abdullah in his *Native Life in South Africa* and Abdullah spoke fiercely against infringements on Native rights.⁵⁶² This also highlights how Abdullah's personal life was one of unity and diversity - his friendships found common ground, spanning racial and religious differences at a time when this was remarkable and uncommon.

Naidu did not pattern her political activities after the example of Nellie and Cissie. Instead, her work on fighting the Class Areas Bills was direct. She interviewed political leaders and attended Parliamentary meetings on the Bill. While active on this matter, she gained the respect and admiration of local Indians and was elected President of the South African Indian Congress in November of 1925.⁵⁶³ Sarojini was the first woman to lead a national political organisation in South Africa. For Cissie, Naidu presented a different model than Nellie of a political woman. Cissie greatly admired Naidu.⁵⁶⁴ Perhaps Naidu did for Cissie what Ataulhah had done for Abdullah. Likewise, Naidu and the Indian situation had a marked impact on the redefinition of Abdullah's political thought. Abdullah must have felt Naidu a kindred spirit. Like Abdullah, Sarojini had 'been for a long time past one of the principal leaders in the municipal affairs of [Bombay] and a member of the Bombay Municipal Council'.⁵⁶⁵ Inspired by his interactions with Sarojini, Abdullah in the late 1920's broadened his political vision beyond coloured affairs at the Cape. As Gavin Lewis writes, 'Black unity became the pivot of the APO's efforts to fight the Pact government's legislation

⁵⁵⁸ Y. S. Rassool, *District Six - Lest we forget. Recapturing subjugated cultural histories of Cape Town (1897-1956)*, Bellville: University of the Western Cape, 2000, 6.

⁵⁵⁹ Rustum Gool as cited in P. van der Spuy, "'Not only 'the younger daughter of Dr. Abdurahman': A feminist exploration of early influences on the political development of Cissie Gool' (PhD Dissertation, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 2002), 132. Also see UCT MA: BC 856: Lippy Lipshitz collection.

⁵⁶⁰ E. Everett, 'Zainunnissa (Cissie) Gool 1897-1963: A biography'. (B.A. Honours thesis., University of Cape Town, 1978), 4.

⁵⁶¹ See, for example, B. Herzberg, *Otherness: The Story of a Very Long Life* (London: published privately, 1998), cf R. A. Edgar, ed, *An African American in South Africa: The Travel Notes of Ralph J. Bunche 28 September 1937 - 1 January 1938* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992) and UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library (hereafter UCLA): 2051 Ralph J. Bunche papers: Fieldwork notebooks: Capetown, Bastoland, Fort Hare, Thaba 'Nachu 1937 (Box 20, Folder 3) where many entries after Saturday includes notes of political discussions with local figures, *Cape Times* 12 January 1927.

⁵⁶² See chapter x in S. T. Plaatje, *Native Life in South Africa: Before and Since the European War and the Boer Rebellion* (Johannesburg: PS King & Son, 1916). It is beyond the scope of this thesis but, considering that Sol Plaatje, Mohandas Gandhi, Abdullah Abdurahman and possibly John Dube were all contemporaries, there is a tantalising possibility for further study and analysis on the importance of place, "moral character" and interactions between the political ideologies of these four figures.

⁵⁶³ B. Pachai, *The International Aspects of the South African Indian Question: 1860-1971* (Cape Town: C. Struik, 1971), 108.

⁵⁶⁴ After her death, her friend Zelda Friedlander, a journalist, wrote in the *Cape Times*, 'In many respects, [Cissie] was not unlike Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the Indian poet, for Cissie possessed her drive, her delightful way of injecting humour into every situation'. *Cape Times* 12 July 1963.

⁵⁶⁵ *The Star* 7 October 1926 in UCT M&A: BCZA 85/21, Abdullah Abdurahman collection, microfilm, reel 1.

... Encouraged by the visit to South Africa of Mrs. S. Naidu, a leading figure in the All-Indian National Congress, Abdurahman in 1924 established a consultative committee consisting of representatives from the APO, the Cape Indian Council and the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) to lay the groundwork for closer co-operation'.⁵⁶⁶ As an interviewee reported to Zohra Dawood in 1989, 'I don't know about all this political stuff, I remember now and then something will happen and these people have meetings and all that ... I also remember in the early days, this chap Abdurahman, he was a doctor you know, he used to speak at these meetings and tell all the coloured people that they must have unity and all that, but we different, coloured people's problems was different from our people's'.⁵⁶⁷ Abdullah obviously wanted to close the gap between different groups underneath the 'coloured' umbrella. 'Coloured', in Abdullah's conceptualisation, was already understood as a political and social identity forged through shared social and historic forces, but inclusive of much diversity. In his 1929 APO Presidential Address, Abdullah defined 'coloured' thus: 'The definition of a Coloured person is interesting, but will lead to many disappointments as well as a reduction in the number of Coloured voters in the Cape Province. A 'Coloured person' means a person resident in the Union who is not a European, or a Native, or an Asiatic, or a member of an aboriginal race or tribe of a country outside Africa, but includes Cape Malays, St. Helenians and Mauritians, and a person born before the commencement of the Act whose father or mother is or was a Native and whose other parent is or was a European or Coloured person. Any one [sic] who looks too much like a Hottentot, Bushman, Griqua or Koranna [sic] will be regarded as a Coloured person, provided he lives like a Coloured person or a European, associates with Coloured persons or Europeans and has a 'standard of life in conformity with European civilisation'.⁵⁶⁸

In the 1925 conference of the Congress, they 'resolved to ask [Abdullah] to head the deputation to India so that your wishes and hopes are realised and I will now be able to safeguard, not only the interests of the Mohammedan merchants, but also of the Indian Muslims in general besides, of course, the Indian community as a whole'.⁵⁶⁹ The goal of this deputation was to appeal to the Viceroy to intervene on behalf of Indian South Africans. While in India, Abdullah attended Naidu's inauguration as President of the All-India National Congress. Naidu's address gave the impression that it was extemporaneous and unplanned, but Abdullah, or 'Abdur Rahman' as he was known in the Indian press, knew that this was by design. Naidu trusted Abdullah's judgement enough that she had given him an advanced copy and asked him to be the one to introduce her on this occasion. In his remarks, Abdullah joked that the 'Deputation was presenting to one of the greatest women of the world her photo. The South African Indians had given India the greatest living man, 'Mahatma belongs to us. You will have to give us at least one of the two to go to Africa and fight our battle,' Abdullah joked, 'If we take the greatest woman of India, we are leaving behind her photograph'.⁵⁷⁰ In India, Abdullah mimicked Naidu's strategy, seeking audiences with local authorities, and

⁵⁶⁶ G. Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall: A history of South African 'Coloured' politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987) 135-136.

⁵⁶⁷ Z. Dawood, 'Making a Community: Indians in Cape Town, Circa 1900-1980's', (MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, 1993), 140.

⁵⁶⁸ R. E. van der Ross, *Say it out loud: The APO Presidential Addresses and other major political speeches 1906-1940 of Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman* (Cape Town: Western Cape Institute for Historical Research, 1990), 29-30.

⁵⁶⁹ Northwestern University, Melville J. Herskovits Library of Africana Studies, 001 Abdurahman Family Papers (hereafter NWU/AFP): General Correspondence 1919-1938 (Box 1, Folder 5): 'Letter to Mr. Covaadia, 12 November 1925'.

⁵⁷⁰ *Hindustan Times* 28 December 1925, in UCT M&A: BCZA 85/21, Abdurahman collection, reel 1.



Fig.18, Newspaper Clipping.

DR ABDURAHMAN, WITH MEMBERS OF THE INDIAN DEPUTATION

→ Upon their departure to India to discuss Indians' position in South Africa with the National Congress and the Viceroy.

'addressed meetings at almost every important centre in the various provinces, including a gathering of 16,000 at the National Congress in Cawnpore, and important assemblies at the congresses of the Khahiat [sic] and the Moslem League. In addition to my public engagements, I addressed dozens of private meetings attended by judges and other high officials and influential citizens debarred from a public appearance. I met with a sympathetic reception everywhere ... I have good reason to believe that resolution of protest were passed by that assembly'.⁵⁷¹ After the deputation's return, Abdullah spoke to the home press, he said,

I can only think that South Africa has gone mad on this colour question. They don't appreciate the feelings of non-Europeans in South Africa. If this is the spirit in which they are going to legislate, then I am convinced they are storing up a tremendous amount of trouble for themselves in the very near future. The native, Indian and coloured races of this country are rapidly advancing, and their higher aspirations and ambitions must be accepted as legitimate and be given scope for realisation. But the present trend of legislation can only give rise to serious misgivings and grave inter-Imperial reactions.⁵⁷²

During this same time, an Indian deputation was sent to South Africa. The Indian delegation to South Africa hoped to persuade the South African government to set aside the Asiatic Bills until after India and South Africa had the opportunity to convene formally on the matter. One of the members, a Mr. Bajpai, was a guest at Cissie and B. G.'s. On 22 April 1926, Abdullah confided to Sarojini. As a rule, none of his correspondences, even the few that can be identified as personal, contain personal remarks or opinions

⁵⁷¹ Natal Advertiser 24 March 1926

⁵⁷² Natal Advertiser 24 March 1926

about family members. No negative public statement exists. Even when Cissie was publicly lambasting him, he spoke of her with great praise.⁵⁷³ This letter not only reveals the depth of Abdullah's regard for Naidu, but also reflects a rare and uncensored moment. Remarking on Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai, the secretary of the Indian delegation to South Africa and a houseguest at 46 Searle, Abdullah wrote, 'Mr. Bajhpai [sic] lived with Cissy and I am afraid she was not intellectual enough to impress him ... So the Indians will probably get a very depressing tale. What a pity'.⁵⁷⁴

Later, when the formal South African delegation arrived in India to commence negotiations with the Indian government, it was Naidu who headed the welcoming committee. The *Cape Times* reported on 5 November 1926, 'The Deputation was to have been taken round Bombay Harbour in a steam launch on that afternoon, [...] but instead of this, Mrs. Naidu invited the whole of the Deputation to her own room to tea to meet Mr. Gandhi, and for over two hours the conversation went on in a very lively fashion'. Perhaps Naidu's change in tactics was suggested or influenced by Abdullah and his long-running front-parlour political cups of tea with people. Over the course of his career, Abdullah surely found that allowing his opponents to relax and settle into a hot cup and a chat seemed more successful in brokering deals than all the best arguments in board rooms. Raynard claims '[Abdullah] was instrumental in bringing about the appointment of an Agent-General for South Africa' to monitor the 1927 Cape Town Agreement, which made some small concessions to the Indians of South Africa.⁵⁷⁵ Although the gains were small, that an international collaboration between Abdullah and his associates were able to pressurise the South African government to hold a round-table conference with India is no small feat. At the conclusion of the Cape Town Agreement accords, Cissie, on behalf of the Cape British Indian Council, organised a celebratory social for the delegates. Abdullah 'chiefly concerned with welcoming the guests and with the arrangements generally' and gave the farewell speech at the end of the evening.⁵⁷⁶ This experience with Naidu and the different ways women can politicise impacted Cissie greatly. She began to see more possibilities than simply hosting parties and began to take a more aggressive role in politics. The daughter did not seem to want to grow up to become her mother.

Controversy Over Abdullah's Involvement

At home, Abdullah's participation with the deputation met with fierce controversy. A news clipping from 1925 describes that tensions over the South African deputation to India in protest of anti-Asiatic legislation had reached such heights that 'even Mr. Gandhi, who usually contrives to keep his head on these occasions, has joined in the frenzy. Forgetting his own creed of non-violence and his own teachings of the folly of force, he even urges the British Government to declare war on the Union. All this must be meat and drink to Dr. Abdurahman. Himself the most excitable of men and easily intoxicated by his own eloquence, he,

⁵⁷³ See, for example, Abdullah's speech 'Franchise Rights and Wrongs' in NWU/AFP: Published Speeches Written by Dr. Abdurahman, 1904-1931 (Box 1, Folder 6).

⁵⁷⁴ UCT M&W: BCZA 85/21, draft of letter, 22 April 1926. The fact that it is in this collection certainly means that Abdullah never mailed it. Odder yet is that it exists in the Maurice Collection - how Dr. E. L. Maurice have gotten such a personal item in his possession?

⁵⁷⁵ Raynard, *Dr. Abdurahman*, 36-40. For more about the agreement, see E. Corbett, 'A Study of the Cape Town Agreement', (MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, 1947 and B. Pachai, 'The emergence of the Question of the South African Indian as an International Issue, 1860-1961' (PhD Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1967). Because few other sources mention Abdullah in the appointment of the Agent-General, Raynard may have overstated Abdullah's role.

⁵⁷⁶ *Cape Times* 12 January 1927.



Fig. 19, Photograph.

NEWSPAPER CARTOON OF ABDULLAH (1925)

too, has been led into saying some inexpressibly foolish things ... South Africans, too, know their Dr. Abdurahman, and are fully aware that he does not represent the Indians of the Union but only a section of them ... Dr. Abdurahman, of course, is incapable of representing the case fairly. Perhaps fairness is hardly to be expected of a non-Indian anxious to be more Indian than the Indians'.⁵⁷⁷ The idea of seeking international pressure on domestic affairs seemed to incur intense rancour from some, who seem to feel it a betrayal of sorts upon South African loyalty to South Africa.⁵⁷⁸ Another anonymous letter expressing an opinion on the deputation, this time from a self-identified Christian coloured man, wrote:

How [Abdurahman], a South African, born and bred, could go to a foreign country and sling mud and opprobrium against our white fellow countrymen, who have educated him and made him what he is, is beyond my understanding. He says that the non-Europeans are persecuted in this country by a handful of whites. Why, he himself is a living contradiction to his own statement. If the white people of this country had been persecuting us, as Dr. Abdurahman alleges, would it be possible to produce coloured men like himself? ... Ever right-minded coloured man must condemn the doctor for his latest exploit. We coloured people have everything to be thankful for. As a working-class community we have obtained more freedom and liberty in fifty years than the British working classes have in a hundred before democratic ideas took hold in England. I sincerely pray that our Christian coloured brethren [sic] will arise as one man and call a public meeting to protest against this campaign of the doctor'.⁵⁷⁹

Some even accused him of acting against Indian interests, 'Dr. Abdurahman's Mission [is] Not Approved by Cape Indian Union', read one headline. 'A large majority of responsible Indians are against it. They believe the only result will be to raise the racial issue in an acute form. The aim of moderate minded Indians in this country is to sink racialism and to have confidence in the justness of the Union government in dealing with the interests of the Indian citizens of the Union'.⁵⁸⁰ In another, a 'Cape Malay' wrote to the editor of the *Cape Times*,

This representative meeting of Cape Malays strongly condemns the action of Dr. Abdurahman in black-guarding the white people of his own country in a purely non-European country, such as India ... This meeting hereby resolves that Dr. Abdurahman does not represent the Malay people, and desires to acquaint the Government and all public bodies that the Cape Malay Association is the official organisation of the Cape Malays ... The past failures of deputations across the seas ought to have served a good lesson to such impetuous politician as Dr. Abdurahman, but apparently that gentleman did not care whether he represented the coloured man, the Malay, or the Indian as long as he could show up in the limelight. The speaker felt certain that Dr. Abdurahman would be perfectly willing to represent the Esquimeux [sic], provided he could obtain the publicity that his insatiable political vanity craved for.⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁷ BC506 Abdurahman Papers: Folder B2: Newspaper Clippings: Loose clipping undated, unsourced

⁵⁷⁸ For example, in Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*: 'As leader of the A.P.O., Abdurahman spent much of the next five years in an unsuccessful attempt to vindicate his faith in British democracy', (118); as a class elitist: '[Abdullah] denounced racial segregation yet resented class organizations that cut across the colour line', (226-7); the Nationalist Party's coloured supporters put out a pamphlet that read: 'Abdurahman and the APO were said to be 'politically bankrupt'. They had 'achieved nothing better our condition' because they pinned their hopes on Britain, the Unionists and Smuts. Yet Britain, once the world's greatest slave trader, showed beyond all doubt that she would never 'interfere on our behalf in the internal affairs' of South Africa', (247-8).

⁵⁷⁹ *Cape Times* 28 December 1925.

⁵⁸⁰ BC506 Abdurahman Papers: Folder B2: Newspaper Clippings: Loose clipping undated, unsourced.

⁵⁸¹ *Cape Times* 14 November 1925.

The 2 January 1926 *Moslem Outlook* printed an editorial extending this argument, calling Abdullah's legitimacy in representing the Cape Malays into question, insinuating that as the descendant of a Bengali, who married a European, he was not even an authentic 'Malay'.

This was not the first time that Abdullah found his Muslim identity and integrity challenged. 'One recalls', wrote Raynard, 'the opposition that the Doctor met with from a section of the Moslem community when, in 1913, he opened the first Moslem school [Rahmaniyeh]⁵⁸² in Aspeling Street. So intense was this hostility that a protest, signed by a large number of imaums, was published in the Cape Times. These imaums publicly disassociated themselves from the Dr. Abdurahman in establishing a school for educating Moslem children on "western lines"'.⁵⁸³ Later, these "imaums" were made to sit down for slices of humble pie. The schools were an appealing compromise for Muslim parents who did not want their children enrolled in Christian schools but desperately wanted higher education for their children. A Department-recognised curriculum meant the students could bridge their primary education to a secular high school like Trafalgar or Livingstone without Christian proselytism. The demand resulted in at least eight other schools, patterned after the Rahmaniyeh Institute's Department-of-Education-approved curriculum, supplemented by religious training. Abdullah had successfully convinced City Council to approve Arabic as a language of instruction, along with Dutch and English. The Council's approval meant that the city would partially subsidise the costs of an Arabic teaching post.⁵⁸⁴ But that was a matter of imamate politics; this was a matter of rejecting Abdullah's heritage and identity. The Cape Malay Association's rejection of Abdullah's Malay identity deeply affected Abdullah.⁵⁸⁵ It is roughly around this time that Abdullah began to don the fez publicly in almost every official or press photograph (see figure 19). Three years later, he established the Moslem Association of South Africa. At the center of the Association was the Muslim Lad's Brigade.⁵⁸⁶ Abdullah hoped the Brigade would foster wholesome activities for youth to develop "moral character" and to keep them out of 'skollyism' or hooliganism. Many of these young men later formed the initial relay in Abdullah's funeral cortège as pallbearers, making for one of the most striking visuals.

This was emerging as a primary theme throughout this period. Just as Nellie's whiteness called into question her ability to represent 'the ward in which I have lived for 32 years', so too was Ataulah's Turkish roots used to disqualify him from being South African enough to serve on the Provincial Council. Abdullah himself had always lived between worlds. Highlighted in every biographical sketch from twenty

⁵⁸² The -iyeh suffix in Arabic denote different things in different contexts: a demonymic, locative, and sometimes possessive marker. Regardless, the root is clearly an homage to Abdullah's family name, Rahman.

⁵⁸³ Raynard, *Dr. Abdurahman*, 28-29.

⁵⁸⁴ See M. Ajam, 'The raison d'être of the Muslim Mission Primary School in Cape Town and environs from 1860 to 1980 with special reference to the role of Dr. A Abdurahman in the modernisation of Islam-oriented schools' (PhD Dissertation, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1986), 201-218.

⁵⁸⁵ Due to the inclusive unification of 'coloured' people, along with a more recent influx of Indians into the Cape, Muslims found their number in proportion to 'coloureds' – from 40% in 1875 to 22% in 1904 and as low as 6.15% in 1910. (Statistics from H. Matthee, *Muslim Identities and Political Strategies: A Case Study of Muslims in the Greater Cape Town area of South Africa 1994-2000*, Kassel, Germany: Unidruckerei, University of Kassel, 2008, 88). Some Cape Malays, notably those belonging to the Cape Malay Association (founded in 1922 by Abdullah's long-time adversary, Mogamat Arshad Gamiet), reacted to the twin forces of Indian migration and their loss of power by claiming a distinct, exclusive Cape Malay racial and ethnic identity socially and religiously superior to other non-whites (See I. Taliep, 'Coloured or Muslim?: Aspects of the political dilemma of the Cape Muslims, 1925-1956', B.A. Honours thesis, University of Cape Town, 1982, 33). Taliep argues that it is through this process that for the first time at the Cape, 'Muslim' and 'Malay' became synonymous terms.

⁵⁸⁶ *Moslem Outlook* 21 August 1926, 5 February 1927.



Fig. 20, Photograph
 RED-FEZZED PALLBEARERS AT ABDULLAH'S FUNERAL PROCESSION.
 → Many of the from the Muslim Lads' Brigade.

to two thousand words, has been how Abdullah navigated the dual worlds of white and colour. But Abdullah's social worlds continued to refract: Muslim instead of Christian, elite and educated instead of the majority coloured working class, *Hanafi* instead of *Shafi*, Malay or Indian; or Malay *and* Indian, depending on the perceiver. Abdullah, the boy who found shared spiritual and religious values across geography and culture and formed a strong political movement for a cohesive 'coloured' platform of franchise and education, began to find himself more and more constrained by the persona other people believed him to be. There is no question that Abdullah identified as an Indian. Abdullah himself never hid his Indian roots.⁵⁸⁷ When Abdullah was proposing marriage to Nellie, his first concern was not about their religious differences, but of her marrying an Indian. He did not describe himself to her as Malay. But neither did he ever disavow his Malay heritage or his devotion to Islam. Cissie, in conversation with her visitor, Ralph Bunche, said Abdullah was 'part Indian, and part Malay'.⁵⁸⁸ Certainly, Gandhi typically refers to Abdurahman as a Cape Malay⁵⁸⁹ but explains in his piece discussing support of the deputation in *Young India*, 'Dr. Abdur Rahman, the head of the deputation, is South African born, as for that matter are some others. The worthy doctor is popularly known as a Malay doctor. But he has Indian blood in him. The Malays are an integral part of the South African community. They are without exception Mussalmans. Malay women freely marry Indian Mussalmans [sic]; The unions are happy and the children born of such

⁵⁸⁷ Abdullah's family continued to have connections to India even after Old Abdol. Abdullah's niece, another daughter of Mohsena and Ataullah was Khadijah, probably named for their mother, who went to marry an Indian prince and move to Karachi where she became the first Muslim women justice in India (A. Uçar, *140 yıllık miras: Güney Afrika'da Osmanlılar*. Tez Yayınları, 2000, 362).

⁵⁸⁸ UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library (hereafter UCLA): 2051 Ralph J. Bunche papers: Fieldwork notebooks: Capetown, Bastoland, Fort Hare, Thaba 'Nachu 1937 (Box 20, Folder 3): Entry, 5 October.

⁵⁸⁹ See, for example, M. K. Gandhi to L. W. Ritch, 7 April 1911 in M. K. Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* vol. 9 (Bombay: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1958), 408.



Fig. 21, Photograph
FROM THIS POINT HE TYPICALLY WEARS A FEZ IN PHOTOS (1925)

mixtures are some of them highly educated. Dr. Abdur Rahman belongs to that distinguished category'.⁵⁹⁰ The fetish of identity politics meant Abdullah's activity in this respect and the way it impacted his relationship with Cissie and the influence of Naidu upon both father and daughter has been overlooked. Scholar Enuga Sreenivasulu Reddy argues La Guma (and others)'s discussion of Abdullah has been coloured by a colour *perception* of Abdullah's race. In other words, historian interest in essentialised identities meant that 'There has been no study of African-Indian relations or Coloured-Indian relations' even when 'some of the leaders of the Coloured community were of Indian ancestry – notably Dr. Abdulla Abdurahman'.⁵⁹¹ Reddy stresses '[Abdullah] was helpful to the Indian community. He was a friend of Gandhiji [sic] who was aware of his Indian ancestry. He was chosen to lead the delegation of the South African Indian Congress in 1925 to India where he addressed the Kanpur Congress and was received by the Viceroy, Lord Reading'.⁵⁹²

⁵⁹⁰ *Young India* 10 December 1925.

⁵⁹¹ E.S. Reddy. *India and South Africa* (Occasional Papers No. 1, University of Durban – Westville, 1991), 4.

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*

More recently, scholars suggested the Abdurahman family was set apart from the rest of the Cape Muslim community, having strayed from their cultural and religious traditions due to their education.⁵⁹³ This contest as to Abdullah's 'proper' identification and how representative he was of that body politic is better suited for another thesis on political motives and contests of reconsidering historical identities, but it suffices here to say that Abdullah, in public statements, rarely discuss himself as either Malay or Indian, and rarer still as Muslim. In personal clues left by those who knew him, he espoused a modern sense of singular plurality. Abdullah switched between his multiple identities fluidly and easily without seeming to display any sense of cognitive dissonance. He held memberships both with his Moslem Association and the South African Indian Congress. The criticism lobbed against him better reflect the rising bitterness from a section of the Cape Malays seeking to increase their political influence by asserting Malay as a distinct and exclusive race. This is again reflected in a piece by Cissie in the 1928 edition of the *Cape Times Annual* entitled, 'The Cape Malays: A Picturesque People'. In this article, Cissie took an insider author positionality to describe the population but also exhibits a certain bitterness at the growing exclusivity of the Cape Malay population and distanced herself from them, writing: 'Economic competition and colour bars are responsible for a large class of unemployed. Here we find poverty, ignorance and hooliganism and many of the Malays have a reputation for being adept thieves'.⁵⁹⁴ The growing visibility of Abdullah's Muslim and Indian identification through his work with Naidu against the Class Areas Bill and the choice to begin wearing the fez led some scholars to hypothesise that his estrangement from Nellie and marriage to Maggie was another example of this growing religiosity and conservatism.

The Contestable Colour of Margaret May 'Maggie' Stansfield Abdurahman

As with many other details and dates about the family's life, there is confusion and speculation as to when the separation or divorce occurred and when the second marriage to Margaret May 'Maggie' (née Stansfield) took place.⁵⁹⁵ Maggie's daughter Begum told her son that Abdullah and Maggie were married under Muslim rites in Cape Town in the early 1920's by Sheik Abduragiem, even though Nellie did not want to grant a divorce.⁵⁹⁶ Some formal separation might have occurred between Nellie and Abdullah. However, when Abdullah left to live with Maggie, he gave Nellie Albert Lodge and their investments. Robert Edgar, a biographer of Ralph Bunche, an American visitor who had lodged with Cissie and B.G. in 1937, wrote that Abdullah's marriage to Maggie occurred before leaving Nellie.⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹³ See, for example, I. Taliép, 'Coloured or Muslim?: Aspects of the Political Dilemma of the Cape Muslims, 1925-1956', (B.A. Honours thesis, University of Cape Town, 1982), 6) and cf. M. Ajam, 'The raison d'être of the Muslim Mission Primary School in Cape Town and environs from 1860 to 1980 with special reference to the role of Dr. A Abdurahman in the modernisation of Islam-oriented schools' (PhD Dissertation, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1986).

⁵⁹⁴ *Cape Times Annual* 1928, 181.

⁵⁹⁵ The secondary literature identifies the separation as transpiring in 1923 and the second marriage in 1925. These all seem to stem from the entry for Abdullah in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography where the second marriage is dated 16 November 1925 and divorce from Nellie is declared definitively. (B. Nasson, 'Abdurahman, Abdullah (1872 – 1940)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. First published 2004; online edn, May 2006. dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/73214). The source for these dates, however, is not identified and cannot be verified. The registers are likewise useless – there are no registrations of Abdullah, Nellie, or Margaret in South Africa or abroad for marriage, divorce, or entries of plural marriage.

⁵⁹⁶ UOL/ICS2: Dr. Hendrickse's Notes, 4.

⁵⁹⁷ R. Bunche, *An African American in South Africa: the travel notes of Ralph J. Bunche, 28 September 1937- 1 January 1938* ed. R. R. Edgar (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1992), 335.



Fig. 22, Photograph
MAGGIE, UNDATED
→ *Possibly when Abdullah and Maggie married?*

Margaret May Stansfield's grandchildren report she was born in Somerset West⁵⁹⁸ to Edward Stansfield of Bolton, England who immigrated to South Africa sometime in the late 1800's. She had at least one sibling, Albert, although it is unknown if they were both born from the same mother.⁵⁹⁹ If there is little known or discussed about Nellie, there is even less about Maggie.⁶⁰⁰ Maggie's death record (see Appendix G) reports she was born in Cape Town on 31 December 1899 and passed away near Vancouver on 16 April 1974 at 9:30 am from heart failure.⁶⁰¹ The person who filled out her paperwork at her passing, probably her son

⁵⁹⁸ Granddaughter Amanda Abdurahman via Keith Stansfield, in email correspondence with the author, 26 February 2016.

⁵⁹⁹ Grandson William Hendrickse in email correspondence with the author, 9 March 2016.

⁶⁰⁰ I have scoured through the censuses, passenger, baptism and military lists (in case Edward came to South Africa during the Boer War); birth, marriage and death registers for South Africa and England from 1850 to 1900. I have come up empty. There was an Edward and Rhonda Stansfield during this time frame, but while they registered a child, there was no Albert or Margaret, and they never lived in the Cape. The only Stansfields (or similar names) in the Cape were in Muizenburg, and again the details do not match. Margaret, in short, emerged out of nowhere, occasionally blipped in the press with her husband's activities, and then disappeared again.

⁶⁰¹ British Columbia, Department of Health, Division of Vital Statistics: #74-09-006170, Margaret Abdurahman 16 April 1974.

Nizamodien, who also resided in the greater Vancouver area, was unable to give any information about Maggie's parents. Even details about her marriage to Abdullah, perhaps because they were married under Muslim rites or possibly because he had already passed, are missing from the certificate. Maggie had eluded Cape records her whole life. Other a few brief items in the British record and her death certificate, there is nothing. Maggie proved reserved and unwilling to speak about her family to her children and grandchildren later in her life so family reports are also thin. Maggie was a private person who did not seem keen for public life, whereas Nellie was herself fond of the limelight and social parties. On 1 November 1937, Cissie's guest, American political scientist Ralph Bunche had a visit with Mr. and Mrs. Desmore (Mr. Desmore was a member of the APO). Just a little over a week ago, 'The Doctor' had fallen sick, 'hovering between life and death because he chose to serve before he chose to guard his health ... Everywhere [Bunche went] people are discussing Dr. Abdurahman's prospects of recovery. [Dr. Francis H.] Gow⁶⁰² says he had undoubtedly done a great deal for the colored people, even though it may be said that he has been a selfish political leader'.⁶⁰³ During Bunche's visit with the Desmores, they 'were speculating as to how the press would treat the delicate 'widows' problem if Dr. Abdurahman should die. Which wife would be recognized as the 'widow' – the white or the colored'.⁶⁰⁴ Occasionally in news clippings, Maggie was referred to as a Muslim or coloured woman.⁶⁰⁵ In nearly all the literature, the details of her race are omitted. I contacted her grandson, who declared, 'My grandmother Margaret Stansfield was definitely white. She did not convert to Islam'.⁶⁰⁶ This created a puzzling contradiction. Maggie's photographs are ambiguous – if she were coloured, she could have passed. When considered in conjunction with the gossip from Bunche, the grandson's declaration and the news clippings, the case harkens to Halim Gençoğlu's research into the Effendis. Gençoğlu argues that, despite being fair-skinned and sometimes categorised as 'white' because of their Turkish and therefore European origin, the family's religious affiliation alone caused their death records to classify them as Asiatic or Malay.⁶⁰⁷ If religion alone was sufficient to render the Effendis 'coloured' or Asiatic, perhaps Maggie's marriage was enough to reclassify her in the popular imagination as 'coloured'. And yet Nellie never experienced this racial reassignment as a result of her marriage to Abdullah. This was made explicit in the press coverage discussing Nellie's election nomination.

⁶⁰² Dr. Francis H. Gow is a South African born to Jamaican parents. Gow studied in the United States at the Tuskegee Institute, was principal of the Wilberforce Institute, and later served as the African Methodist Episcopal Church's first South African bishop (D.-C. Martin, 'Chronicles of the Kaapse Klopse with some documents on the sources of their music', (Unpublished manuscript, Sciences Po, the French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA), the French Institute for Southern Africa (IFAS), 2007), 49. Also see Letter from Francis H. Gow to W. E. B. Du Bois, December 16, 1924. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

⁶⁰³ UCLA: 2051 Ralph J. Bunche papers: Fieldwork notebooks: Capetown, Bastoland, Fort Hare, Thaba 'Nachu 1937 (Box 20, Folder 3): Entry, 23 October and 24 October.

⁶⁰⁴ The somewhat mean-spirited gossip and titter of the Desmores towards an ailing man could best be explained thus: 'Desmore says he fell out with Dr. Abdurahman back in the early 20's, when as an A.P.O. man, he was standing for election to the Prov. Council. Said he and his supporters came to Abdurahman for his backing and he told them bluntly: 'If there are any plums to be handed out I'm handing them to my lieutenants'. R. A. Edgar, ed, *An African American in South Africa: The Travel Notes of Ralph J. Bunche 28 September 1937 - 1 January 1938* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992), 96. Apparently, the original entry was annotated by R. A. Edgar to 'clarify': 'the white, under Wes. law, or the colored, under Moslem law'. (See original UCLA: 2051 Ralph J. Bunche papers: Fieldwork notebooks: Capetown, Bastoland, Fort Hare, Thaba 'Nachu 1937 (Box 20, Folder 3): Entry, 1 November). Seeing as how Nellie was never *technically* married to Abdullah, this is speculation on the part of Edgar. In reality, it meant exactly what it says - Nellie, the white wife or Maggie the coloured one.

⁶⁰⁵ NWU/AFP: Loose News Clippings, 1909-1943 [Many undated and publications unknown] (Box 1, Folder 2); Also consult UCT MA: BCZA85/21-23.

⁶⁰⁶ Grandson William Hendrickse in email correspondence with the author, 9 March 2016.

⁶⁰⁷ 'New evidence on first black medical doctors at UCT & in South African history', *University of Cape Town: Faculty of Health Sciences*, 1 March 2016. Accessed 10 March 2016. <http://bit.ly/1RCOQvc>



Fig. 23, Newspaper Clipping.

ABDULLAH WITH MAGGIE AND THE FAMILY AT THEIR HOME, OAK LODGE, AT 173 KLOOF AND ARTHUR (TODAY IVANHOE) STREETS.

→ The children, L to R: Abdullah Dara Shikoh, Begum Jehanara Gadija, and Nizamodien Ebrahim Stansfield.

Maggie's grandson explained that marrying Abdullah caused major rifts in Maggie's family. Begum, Maggie's eldest daughter, told him once a story of how she met celebrity Gracie Fields (née Stansfield) at a party while she was touring South Africa between 1934 and 1935. During this trip, she met a great many of her cousins and South African relations. Begum was about 8 or 9-years-old at the time. She recalled Gracie's introduction to Maggie as her cousin and believed Edward was a brother of Gracie's father.⁶⁰⁸ Later, Maggie told Begum that Gracie was uncomfortable about the introduction because 'Gracie was not happy to acknowledge the family-tie with Margaret because Margaret was as the wife of Abdullah Abdurahman who was 'colored' and regard [sic] as a 'black' man by Gracie Fields and her immediate

⁶⁰⁸ Keith Stansfield, who has been studying the genealogy of the Stansfield family of Lancashire and neighbouring counties (of which Bolton is in) reports that 'Gracie Fields (Stansfield) father Fred was illegitimate and appears to have been an only child. He had an uncle, William who had a large family, some of whom emigrated to Canada and are well represented in Alberta, but none of them are called Edward or indeed, Albert. These forenames don't appear to be common in Gracie's family'. Further searching in the censuses still yielded no suitable possibilities. The only is perhaps 'an uncle of Fred that I can't account for after 1871 census; this is John Stansfield shown erroneously as 26-years-old in 1871. He is also shown as suffering from 'fits' and it's because of this that I assumed he died before 1881, but he could have emigrated'.

family'.⁶⁰⁹ Moreover, Begum was unable to say much about Maggie's family as 'she has very few memories of seeing her maternal grandfather because his daughter Margaret had married a 'black' man and so he effectively cut her out of his life. One of the few and only times Begum recalls seeing her grandfather was 'weeks' before his death when he visited Margaret '... to make his peace before he died'.⁶¹⁰ Her grandson William, who has been exploring his family history for a few years now, says that even he does 'not know anything about my great grandmother (Margaret's mother). My mother did not have any contact with her grandparents and was unable to tell us anything about her mother's side of the family. I tried to find out more about Edward Stansfield but was not able to get any information'.⁶¹¹ Since no information is known by the family about Margaret's mother, another possibility might be that her mother was *not* white, and Margaret and Albert were presented by their father as white. If this was the case, it might also explain the absences of records for the family and the intense responses from the Stansfield family to Maggie's marriage. Considering how public Nellie and Abdullah were as a couple, the gossip circulating surrounding their separation and his marriage to Maggie – especially with the timing of Maggie's pregnancy and the birth of Begum – Maggie kept herself and her children out of the press. What is clear from Abdullah's marriage with Maggie, in comparison with Nellie and her activities, is that he deferred to his wife when it comes to domestic affairs. When mapped over the stories and letters from Cissie and Rosie, it is a sound conclusion that the public lives of Abdullah's daughters were influenced more by Nellie than Abdullah. Given his support of Cissie's election campaign as well as his interactions with other women like Olive Schreiner and Sarojini Naidu, it becomes clear that Abdullah had a nuanced, but a relatively progressive view of women for his time.

The Women's Vote and the Coloured Franchise

Because Abdullah never spoke explicitly on the matter of women's suffrage for most of his career, it is impossible to say if he favoured extending the franchise to women or not; or perhaps, he never thought about it at all. Abdurahman only began to speak about the women's suffrage after the Women's Suffrage Act passed in 1930. On this occasion, it was in tandem with Cissie's first public speech and her launch into more visible politics.⁶¹² The enfranchisement of women presented Abdullah and the APO with a unique problem. Abdullah began his political career on the platform of the Cape non-racial qualified franchise. First, he rallied to extend the vote into the other colonies, then to decry its growing limitations and raised restrictions only to watch it wither and erode over the decades. When the Women's Suffrage Act was initially introduced in the 1927-8 Parliamentary session, it was a non-racial legislation. Several members, on the grounds of the Cape's liberal non-racial tradition, refused to vote for a Bill that only enfranchised white women and others, fearing full, unqualified franchise of non-whites, flatly refused to support a Bill that extended suffrage beyond white women. Qualifying the female vote was an impossible solution. As most white women were Christian, legally married, and therefore unable to own property, a qualified franchise was effectively granting suffrage exclusively to non-white and Muslim petty bourgeois women.

⁶⁰⁹ 'My Genealogy Home Page', Genealogy.com. Accessed 2014-2016. <http://www.genealogy.com/ftm/h/e/n/William-A-Hendrickse/index.html> [Membership required for some access]

⁶¹⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹¹ Grandson William Hendrickse in email correspondence with the author, 9 March 2016.

⁶¹² NWU/AFP: Published Speeches Written by Dr. Abdurahman, 1904-1931 (Box 1, Folder 6): 'Franchise Rights and Wrongs'.

Finally, when the Bill did pass, it had been amended to apply only to white women.⁶¹³ When it became clear women's suffrage would only pass for white women, some APO branches began to publicise demands for a non-racial enfranchisement of women.⁶¹⁴ Yet neither white suffragists nor the APO demanded universal suffrage. In his speech against the colour bar in the Women's Suffrage Act, Abdullah said: 'There is no blinking the fact: the white woman shall have the vote, but not the coloured woman. Here you have a coloured lady (Mrs. Gool) and I say it not because she is my daughter, whom you have heard speak, and she speaks better than 99 percent of white women in this country. Not only does she speak better, but she has more brains than the majority of the white women in South Africa. There she sits and yet by this Act she is put down lower than the ordinary uneducated white domestic scullery maid'. It is here that we begin to see Abdullah's philosophy regarding the relationships between education, franchise, "moral character" and citizenship begin to emerge: 'Furthermore, I ask you to bear in mind that there are 143,000 whites in this country who are either mental defectives of on the border line, besides 100,000 poor whites. So, out of a population of 1,750,000 whites you have some 250,000 people who should never be permitted to have the vote. Yet that lady sitting on the platform, and others just as highly endowed and with equally high cultural attainments, shall not have the vote, while mental defectives and poor whites are now fully enfranchised citizens'.⁶¹⁵

A New Vision for Muslim Coloured Youth

Although most of the scholarship on Abdullah has centred around his APO activities, he is best remembered locally for many of his improvements to the daily lives of coloured people through small-scale efforts. Over his long 36-year career on the City Council, he served on many municipal committees, including the Finance, Public Works, Markets and Gardens, Electric Light, Waterworks and Fire Brigade, and the Public Works and Depot. He served as Chairperson of the Public Health Committee (1906) and the Streets and Drainage Committee (1923 - 1937).⁶¹⁶ At one time, he served on 14 committees simultaneously.⁶¹⁷ Abdullah was a powerful and commanding councillor. 'For service in City Council should have been Mayor of Cape Town', his daughter Begum told her son. 'He virtually ruled the City Council'.⁶¹⁸ With this power, Cissie told her guest that 'He fought chiefly for more municipal jobs for coloured, more clinics, etc ... One of [Abdullah's] main achievements was to get about seventy-five per cent of the street improvements' labor for coloureds'.⁶¹⁹ The working-class coloured people loved Abdullah. When he was ill in 1937, visitor Bunche journaled, 'The colored workmen putting down the pavement on Exner Avenue all speak to me genially and never fail to ask how Dr. Abdurahman is getting along ... The city has roped off the streets all around his [Kloof Street] estate, guards are stationed nearby

⁶¹³ For further reading, see C. Walker, *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, Claremont, Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1990, 313-346.

⁶¹⁴ *Cape Times* 11 April 1928

⁶¹⁵ NWU/AFP: Published Speeches Written by Dr. Abdurahman, 1904-1931 (Box 1, Folder 6): 'Franchise Rights and Wrongs'.

⁶¹⁶ In 1937, he was pushed out of the Street and Drainage Committee by the New Reform Party. UCLA: 2051 Ralph J. Bunche papers: Fieldwork notebooks: Capetown, Bastoland, Fort Hare, Thaba 'Nachu 1937 (Box 20, Folder 3): Entry, 5 October.

⁶¹⁷ NWU/AFP: Cape Town. City Council - Committee Lists, 1926-1932; Minutes, Memos, Motions & Notes, 1921-34 (Box 2, Folders 1-2).

⁶¹⁸ University of London, Senate House Libraries, Institute of Commonwealth Studies: ICS2 Abdullah Abdurahman Papers (hereafter UOL/ICS2): Dr. Hendrickse's Notes, n.d., 5.

⁶¹⁹ UCLA: 2051 Ralph J. Bunche papers: Fieldwork notebooks: Capetown, Bastoland, Fort Hare, Thaba 'Nachu 1937 (Box 20, Folder 3): Entry, 5 October and 22 October. (Also see, for example, his presence as Chairperson at road openings - Appendix L).

to caution 'hooters', etc'.⁶²⁰ This treatment simply because a City Councillor is ill is monumental. The popular affection for Abdullah stands in sharp contrast to the scorn of his political opponents. It was also noted by Bunche that Abdullah was criticised for often supporting white rather than coloured candidates. This was a common criticism against Abdullah and led to hypotheses that he was an Uncle Tom or assimilationist. However, as revealed through Raynard's articles, this was a Party division and not a racial one.⁶²¹ It seems, at least from the black perspective, this nuance was understood. When Bunche travelled to Thaba 'Nchu and Mafeking, he spoke with Dr. James Sebe Moroka⁶²² who said that 'All of the educated Africans seem hep [sic] to the folly of native-coloured divisions and see the white man as cunning in his many efforts to foster and encourage it. But Dr. Moroka pointed out that the colored have developed no great men and received little education; being content to train themselves to become skilled artisans. He likes Dr. Abdurahman and Goolam Gool because they have identified native and colored interests in their speeches'.⁶²³

Another instance showing Abdullah's cunning intellect and his continuing protection of coloured people was in 1921 when the Cape looked towards increasing cheaper black labour at the cost of coloured livelihoods. Abdullah filed a petition to the Railways and Harbours Board and won his claim. This could be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, 800 African dock workers lost their jobs, on the other, coloured workers were given back their jobs.⁶²⁴ In another instance, the new tramways in Cape Town, ran by City Tramways, had come to realise around 1926 that the danger of bus competition was a legitimate threat.⁶²⁵ Then, representatives of the Cape Electric Tramway Company arranged for hearings for the 'Regulation of Street Traffic' on 20 May 1926 and 16 June 1926 with the Streets and Drainage Subcommittee. Abdullah presided. At both meetings Tramways impressed how difficult improvements were if they were not secured protection from competition by Ordinance. They proposed a solution based on the English model, where bus licences were denied if routes were already serviced by existing service. Abdullah rejected their proposal.⁶²⁶ Abdullah's remarks show he was cognisant that bus service would be of most use to the working classes. Moreover, when buses did roll into Cape Town, he demanded quality service: set routes, timetables, and punctuality; with fares to be approved by the Council. The bus operators resented these requirements and complained to the Traffic Advisory Board. Abdullah was chairperson and met them with little sympathy: 'The Council will not lay down your time table ... You must run your buses from Mondays to Sundays at certain hours and adhere to these hours. Frankly, the

⁶²⁰ Ralph J. Bunche papers: Fieldwork notebooks: Capetown, Bastoland, Fort Hare, Thaba 'Nachu 1937 (Box 20, Folder 3): Entry, 22 October; 23 October.

⁶²¹ Abdullah would not support a Labour candidate. Learning that the Labour Party, while posturing a non-racial class platform, sent a cablegram to England to support of the colour bar in the Act of Union, Abdullah held a grudge and was forever suspicious of the Party (van der Ross, *Say it Loud*, 48). As for the Nationalists, he believed they were in the business of hoodwinking coloured people; and raked them publicly for their racism against black people, (van der Ross, *Say it Loud*, 59).

⁶²² James Sebe Moroka (b. 16 March 1891 – d. 10 November 1985) was a medical doctor the president of the African National Congress from 1949 – 1952, elected through the support of the African National Congress Youth League's leaders Walter Sisulu and Nelson Mandela. It was during Moroka's presidency that the ANC began to implement a more militant approach towards combating apartheid. Also see fn. 275.

⁶²³ UCLA: 2051 Ralph J. Bunche papers: Fieldwork notebooks: Capetown, Bastoland, Fort Hare, Thaba 'Nachu 1937 (Box 20, Folder 3): Entry, 15 October.

⁶²⁴ I. Goldin, *Making race: The politics and economics of coloured identity in South Africa* (Boston: Addison-Wesley, 1987), 41.

⁶²⁵ KAB: Cape Town Municipality. Traffic Advisory Board. Minutes 22/9/27. Letter from w. F. Long to the City Engineer.

⁶²⁶ NWU/AFP: Cape Town. City Council - Minutes, Memos, Motions & Notes, 1921-34 (Box 2, Folders 2).

object is that you shall not run your buses on ordinary days and then on holidays take the bus off and run it to Newlands and leave the public in the lurch. The matter cannot be left to the bus owner's discretion ... The public, however, must not only get facilities but regular facilities'.⁶²⁷ Abdullah's dominance of these committees reaped other benefits. The Public Health and the Streets and Drainage committees gave councillors access to confidential information regarding the particulars and prospects of property purchases in the municipality; especially when buildings became uninhabitable or failed to comply with sanitation standards. It even allowed for privileged information when streets were laid in previously unpaved and unserved areas. This empowered Abdullah to help secure property ownership (and hence, franchise qualification) for his allies and friends. It also helped him procure property for schools. Trafalgar is one such instance, as are the Muslim institutes - especially in the case of the first, the Rahmaniyyeh Institute.⁶²⁸ It is also likely how he learned that the city intended to sell a sizeable lot of unused land. In 1924, Abdullah persuaded the president of the Indian Relief Fund, Mohamed Halim, to contribute £200 towards the purchase of Schotsche Kloof from the late William Cavanagh's estate. The land was sold for £5,020; the Deed of Transfer was signed on 25 March 1924.⁶²⁹

As with his partnership with B. G. to found the Moslem Education League and Rahmaniyyeh Institute, Abdullah's vision for Schotsche Kloof also a family affair. B. G., Ganiefa Harris, Khan Gool, and benefactor Halim became the trustees of the Schotsche Kloof Institute with Abdullah. The project, however, was slow-moving. It was only in 1931 when Abdullah's nephew, Mohamed Ashram Abdurahman, came on board as principal.⁶³⁰ As manager of the Schotsche Kloof Institution, Abdullah may have had an ulterior motive for appointing family members – the notarial deed of the agreement set by the trustees almost a decade ago in 1923 was outlined specifically to exclude the Institution from public and Council control and instead are only answerable to subscribers.⁶³¹ Given the rising tensions with the Malay-ism of the Cape Malay Association, these documents were possibly written specifically to thwart them from attempts to control or influence the Schotsche Kloof Institute. Doors opened in 1931 to 156 children. Some had been enrolled in nearby Christian mission schools but withdrew them to avail their children of a Muslim-oriented education instead.⁶³² The Schotsche Kloof Moslem Primary School was the only Islamic school in a predominantly Muslim area. The need for the school was undeniably great. Expanding classroom facilities was necessary almost the moment the school doors opened. Fortunately, Abdullah had purchased a large allotment of land – the primary school was only the first step in a much larger vision.⁶³³ At around this time, the City Council had declared a large portion of Bo-Kaap a slum.⁶³⁴

⁶²⁷ KAB: Cape Town Municipality. Traffic Advisory Board. Minutes 22 September 27. Chairman Councillor Dr. A. Abdurahman.

⁶²⁸ For more about this and the role of Abdullah, see M. Ajam, 'The raison d'être of the Muslim Mission Primary School in Cape Town and environs from 1860 to 1980 with special reference to the role of Dr. A. Abdurahman in the modernisation of Islam-oriented schools'. PhD Dissertation, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1986.

⁶²⁹ Western Cape Archives and Records, Cape Archives, State Archives Depot, Cape Town (hereafter KAB): Registrar of Deeds, Cape Town, Ltd. Co (hereafter LC): Deed of transfer No. 5944, 25 March, 1924

⁶³⁰ Mohamed's brother was a principal at Talfallah Institute in Claremont, also founded by Abdullah.

⁶³¹ KAB/LC: Notarial Deeds of Agreement, Schotsche Kloof Institution, 23 December, 1923 and 15 November, 1955

⁶³² Schotsche Kloof Primary School Records & Archives: Admissions Register, 1931.

⁶³³ Ajam argues that he believes the name itself for the school and the oversized vacant land for a small primary school are evidences that Dr. Abdurahman intended to grow the school in phases from primary to secondary and possibly even tertiary education. M. Ajam, 'Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman – Benefactor of the Bo-Kaap', p. 54.

⁶³⁴ I. D. du Plessis, *The Cape Malays*, (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1947), 81.

Evictions and demolitions ensued. Unsurprisingly, the rest of the Council's officers might cast an eye at the large tract of land taken by the Schotsche Kloof Institution, of which Abdullah was Chairperson and his family members were the Principal and fellow trustee. It could also be suggested that Abdullah's role as City Councillor gave him an awareness of the Schotsche Kloof land's increasing value. With the slums cleared, the City's Deputy Engineer recommended that the land owned by the Schotsche Kloof Institute be purchased for the development of new flats.⁶³⁵ Abdullah, as a physician, needed little proof that the new flats scheme meant improvements in health, jobs for the building of the flats, and the economy receiving a much-needed stimulus in its recovery from depression. He was in no fear losing re-election. But Abdullah refused to sell the land. At the City Council's Proceedings on 31 January 1937, the trustees' resolve not to sell was made explicit, and with finality. 'We have already indicated in our letter of 11 June 1936 the conditions on which Schotsche was purchased, as well as the aims and objects of the [management] board and that it was never contemplated to sell any part of the land'.⁶³⁶

This refusal to sell suggests Abdullah had a grand vision, a final legacy to leave behind. The City Council found themselves at a stalemate. The normal bits of political slight-of-hand did not work with a seasoned politician. The Council then sought to utilise the application of the Slums Act No. 53 (1934) and apply expropriation of land as applicable to the Schotsche Kloof land. Further, it then sought permission from the Minister of Health to proceed with the alienation of the property, compelling the Board of Management to negotiate directly with the City Council. By this time, most of Abdullah's career and health was in decline. But he arrived at the table holding two crucial commitments. They seemed to contradict each other. First, Abdullah strongly desired to further the cause of education. Second, since 1927, Abdullah had voiced in the committees of City Council a strong advocacy for new housing schemes where the poor might be more comfortably accommodated.⁶³⁷ The negotiations, held on 4 November 1938 in City Hall, resolved the property would be (a) used by the Cape Town City Council to build housing for working-class tenancy; (b) of which the Council would pay the Board £8,000 per annum; (c) one acre would be set aside for a school building to be constructed by the Council; and perhaps most importantly, (d) this school would be for Moslem children as there was no public school in the area and the other schools were Christian and gave preference of admission to Christian children.⁶³⁸ Given the great difficulties with Trafalgar and Livingstone High Schools, this, in retrospect, was a coup for Abdullah. He managed to get the Cape Town Municipality to build not just a Coloured, but a Muslim school, despite the Act of Union and the 1910 Constitution's allocation of all school provisions under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Court. Therefore, if necessary, it would be the municipal coffers, not the Provincial ones, that would be used to obtain land and bear costs of building a school. Sadly, Abdullah did not live to see this school. It was only in 1952 that the school building was completed and released to the control of the trustees.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁵ *City of Cape Town Proceedings of Council* 20 October 1936.

⁶³⁶ *Minutes of the Housing and Estates Committee*: 31 Jan. 1937, Letter RE: Schotsche Kloof.

⁶³⁷ R. E. van der Ross, 'Political and Social History of the Cape Coloured People, 1880 to 1970'. Unpublished manuscript, Cape Town: University of Cape Town 1974, 532.

⁶³⁸ NWU/AFP: Cape Town. City Council - Minutes, Memos, Motions, & Notes, 1921-1934 (Box 2, Folder 2): Secretary of Health, Letter to Town Clerk, Cape Town, Records Department, 12 July 1937.

⁶³⁹ KAB/LC: Notarial Deed of Agreement, Schotsche Kloof Institution, 23 Nov. 1923 and 15 Nov. 1955.

Abdullah walked to that negotiating table with the full force of four decades of council experience behind him. He faced his opponents with insider knowledge of City Council's machinations and tactics. The extent of his knowledge and political "friendships" all but assured him a win, but the extent of his victory was unprecedented. Tragically, his vision on what Schotsche Kloof was to accomplish and why, had he had his own resources, remains a mystery. He never made his intentions public and no records have come to light of what they might have been. All evidence, however, points to a social upliftment, education, and other provisioning scheme of some sort to safeguard the future of the Cape Malay community. Indeed, even the results of his negotiations show that Abdullah envisioned the school to be the heart of a greater plan. In a letter written to the Town Clerk of Cape Town on 11 June 1936, Abdullah confided: 'the property was purchased for the Moslem community of Cape Town for the purpose of establishing a school, which, in the process of time, it is hoped, will have developed into a large industrial school'.⁶⁴⁰ Sadly, surviving documents do not give greater detail for his envisioned 'industrial school'. But some inferences as to this 'industrial school' are possible if the Wilcocks Commission's Report is taken into account. Other than a few predictable notes at the end of the section on education, Abdullah had been rendered relatively mute in the report. However, as to the 'industrial school', it is worthwhile to note that one of the major findings of the Commission was that teacher training was limited, but not absent. Similarly, there were opportunities for secondary education and further onward to university, however slim. That such programmes and resources were present was emphasised even as the authors conceded that they were rare and limited. Any other vocational training, however, for those not on an academic path was non-existent. When contrasted with 'the large number of Coloured boys and girls [who] leave school at about the age of 12 and 13, to become workers on farms, domestic servants and handymen in towns and villages ... these youths should receive some special training for the jobs which seem to be specially reserved for them at the present time, and which they now enter at an immature age and without any training of a specialised nature'.⁶⁴¹ Emboldened, the report recommends that vocational courses be made available for coloured youth as (elsewhere in the report) they make up the vast majority of young coloured people and the objective assessment of their potential futures. Moreover, 'After careful consideration of the question of the higher education of Coloured students, the Commission is convinced that under the social conditions existing to-day there is little opportunity for a Coloured student to enter fully into the corporate life of any existing university'. The report suggested a separate college be made available to train university administration and management staff, not future academic faculty. A footnote here is inserted from Abdullah, which notes that he disagrees with this notion of a separate college in place of possible admission to regular universities such as the University of Cape Town.

The future of the coloured, as well as the Muslim people, must have preoccupied his mind in his last years. In recent years, Abdullah saw in-fighting and the internal splintering of the unity he had worked so hard to achieve. Abdullah had to regroup and plan a new course forward. Attempts to gain political influence through forging coloured unity was successful in some regards and unsuccessful in others. Efforts to build a unified non-white identity were definitely unsuccessful. Into this zeitgeist, opportunities for coloured youth were fast dwindling. With the process and censure in the writing of the Wilcocks report must have

⁶⁴⁰ *Minutes of the Housing and Estates Committee*, Letter, 11 June 1936

⁶⁴¹ *Report of the Commission on Coloured Population of the Union*, UG54-1937 (Cape Town: Government Printer), 1937, 197.

made it plain to Abdullah that further shrinking of what the plainly racist government would allow was on the horizon. Perhaps this 'industrial school' he was in the process of building was his best solution under the circumstances, as he was ever pragmatic. As I. D. Du Plessis remarked, 'There was a time when the Malays enjoyed the monopoly of skilled trades, but today they are losing ground in every industrial field. Property owners, without commercial foresight, allowed themselves to be bought out of good business stands. They did not anticipate economic competition and gave them no educational equipment'.⁶⁴² In the end, perhaps there is no puzzle at all. Perhaps Abdullah's institutes were envisioned to emerge as 'industrial schools', which were to be paddles in a rowboat against the rushing tide. The promulgation of an umbrella Coloured identity to maximise numbers had been unable to staunch the loss of rights and the deepening of segregation. Demonstrating a certain prescience, Abdullah potentially saw a need to prepare young Muslims for not just a potential liberal arts or science education and the 'three R's', but for skilled trades in industry in a rapidly changing South Africa. Given how favourable the results of the Schotsche Kloof agreement was, Abdullah must have walked to that table like a lion.

⁶⁴² I. D. du Plessis, *The Cape Malays*, 85.

Coda

'MY WORK IS TO EDUCATE THE PEOPLE'

This thesis hoped to demonstrate that an individual life and the connective tissue between individuals, friends, and families are as vital to understanding the times someone lived in as a list of events or a mere narration of actions. Moreover, it tries to peel through some of the layers to make some suggestions about a person's psychology and ways of being when materials of this kind are thin, occluded, or contradictory. Family biographies give an invaluable means through which trans-generational histories and the social and cultural transmissions and changes can be explored. In the case of Abdullah and his family, changing relations between races, religions, ethnicities and other social difference are revealed. The family's achievements and struggles can also be read to help understand the limits and extent of segregation in Cape Town from the time of 'Old Abdol' in the mid-1800's through to the end of Abdullah's life in 1940. Relying on an episodic and biographical approach to Abdullah's life history, it began with a man who died with great pomp and circumstance to recede into shadows. Curiosity leads to a closed set of named collections that contain precious details and hints but remain mostly secondary in nature. There is little directly from Abdullah himself. The search to better understand the networks of epistemologies, knowledge, influences and their interwoven nature took this thesis from Southeast Asia to Africa to Europe to the Americas and back again. The deep connection and flows of ideas and thought come to the fore in exploring Abdullah's life.

There is much more that could be done if this project were to be expanded. Greater attention could be given to the bilateral consciousness that ebbed and flowed from Abdullah as a community leader to his stalwart community. More depth could be used to explore Abdurahman's tactics in politics at the local level. One anecdote from the Moslem Education Committee Letter Book (No. 225, 26 March 1913) describes Abdullah's friend and former Prime Minister John Xavier Merriman 'accidentally' interrupting a meeting between Abdullah and the Superintendent-General of Education. This 'accident' was surreptitiously included in a letter from Abdullah to the Education Department persuading them to his side of things regarding Arabic instruction at the Rahmanyeh Institute. This project hopes to have opened a dialogue on the nature of society, questions of nationalism and belonging, through small-scale approaches of excavating individual lives and their political socialisations, moral development, and the importance of the children we were in the adults we become. As for Abdullah, an unfinished piece of writing lives in his collection that indicates he, too, was ruminating on these matters towards the end of his life.

The current zeitgeist in modern democracies is the principle of 'one man, one vote'. This is a sharp departure from the ideologies of earlier times, when most political participation was qualified in some way through requisites of literacy and property. Somewhere along the line, the notion of the vote morphed from an honour and a responsibility to a 'human right' and, almost, an option. This has often been investigated through the political framework of the British liberal tradition of 'respectability'. As argued earlier in this thesis, Abdullah's conceptualisation of 'respectability' seems to have been overemphasised. Throughout

his speeches and other statements, although the word ‘respect’ often repeated, it was rarely been used within the context of a ‘respectability’ rhetoric. And ‘civility’ is even less frequently used. Writings painting Abdullah’s politics thus seem to have only emerged through his detractors and critics as a way to differentiate their radicalised politics from the moderate and more conservative political organisations of the previous generation. The rising radicalism meant that many now considered the soft caste system of ‘respectability’, not colour, the root of inequality in South Africa. Abdullah’s status was recast along class sensibilities. At least one historian concluded that ‘He was a particularly wealthy member of the tiny urban coloured élite which he embodied so well, his income enabling him to accumulate a large house, expensive cars, a yacht, and a holiday cottage. Abdurahman was a fine vindication of those who believed in the assimilation of respectable, English-speaking coloured people into a common middle-class society, thereby diluting a white-dominated South Africa’.⁶⁴³ This is grossly exaggerated. Contrary to this representation, Abdullah’s qualification for the voter rolls in 1902 was listed at a relatively modest £1000.⁶⁴⁴ It did not help that his daughter led the rising tide of criticisms. But in fact, Abdullah spoke out specifically against the rhetoric of civility in the case of ‘civilised labour’ in the 1934 *Report of Commission of Inquiry Regarding Cape Coloured Population of the Union*: ‘There appears to be a doubt in the minds of many people in regard to the use and application of the term ‘civilised’. In evidence the implication has been made that this term should be used relatively; it is accepted by many people that every European, no matter what his standard of living may be, is *ipso facto* civilised, but in the case of the non-European the onus is placed upon him to prove it’.⁶⁴⁵ Framing his theory of “moral character” as if the British liberal ‘respectability’ is equally askew. This thesis argues that while ‘respectability’ centres around secular notions of assimilation and class, “moral character” was rooted in religion and humanist ethics. As Tocqueville once observed of New England society and this seems to have been impressed into Abdullah’s early political socialisation, ‘Religion must be regarded as the first of [his] political institutions’.

In some ways, the question of Abdullah’s support for women’s suffrage and gender equality is the wrong question. Upon a closer examination of a small section of his papers that seems to have escaped scholarship in the past, the better question as to franchise seems to be whether Abdullah supported universal suffrage. And it appears he does not. Abdullah criticises that, ‘People forgot what kind of civilisation they desire; and the relations between freedom, equality and happiness’. Echoing his comments in his 1930 speech regarding the women’s vote and his indignation about the exclusion of the vote from an educated woman like Cissie but granting full citizenship rights for ‘mental defectives’, Abdullah continued, ‘One man, one vote, votes for women, for lodgers, except lodgers in the lunatic asylum and prison, on these democrats concentrated their attention. They imagined quite foolishly that the more the voters the more democratic the State, and so when democracy showed signs of weakening, democrats pressed into the political framework more democracy by giving the votes to lodgers; when they found that there was not enough they dragged the women into the political arena and gave the votes also, relying

⁶⁴³ B. Nasson, ‘Abdurahman, Abdullah (1872 – 1940)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. First published 2004; online edn, May 2006. dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/73214

⁶⁴⁴ South Africa Voter Indexes, 1902.

⁶⁴⁵ As well as Messrs. Buchanan and Fowler (R. W. Wilcocks, A. Abdurahman, D. M. Buchanan, J. P. de Villiers, H. C. Fowler, W. de vos Malan, and N. J. Eddy. *Report of commission of inquiry regarding Cape coloured population of the Union*. (Pretoria: Government of the Union of South Africa (1937), 41.

upon them to save democracy'.⁶⁴⁶ Abdullah's contention is an ideological one. His criticism had to do with the way votes were distributed. If all individuals were empowered with the vote, Abdullah alluded that politicians would feel less responsibility to ensure the welfare of their constituents or using their education and knowledge to protect those poor or uneducated in their community. While this had strong tones of paternalism and elitism, the notion that an unlearned mass might overtake the whole posed a danger to society is an old one. In 1835, in Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, a sociological study of how democracy worked in America one hundred years after Revolution, he cautions against 'the tyranny of the majority' in a democracy. Abdullah's draft reflects these fears. He said.

All that I am entitled to ask you is to ponder the question for what purpose the vote is given to any one, and whether the average voter or even some of the best informed, excluding no class of intellectuals, has the knowledge to pass an intelligent opinion on some of the perplexing problems confronting the world ... I am a democrat but at present when the world is confronted with such perplexing problems, when the average man lacks the intelligence and educational training to grasp the meaning and implications of these problems, the conviction is gaining ground that a synthesis of theoretical democracy and absolute authoritarianism is essential until such a time when the existing peoples have shown themselves 'capable of attaining a modest average of intelligence and morality, and of producing in fair numbers men and women of such great natural endowments as to enable them to play the part of the creative role of leaders'.⁶⁴⁷

Finally, some of Abdullah's thoughts become elucidated and the relationships between his lifelong passion for education, his lofty ideals of a non-racial democracy, and his amorphous "moral character" become more explicit'. I do not believe that giving one vote to every adult without qualification is an essential part of democracy', he said. 'Because men, although they are equal as individuals, and therefore of equal social value, are unequally endowed by nature physically, mentally and morally. The day may come when all men and women will share in the highest functions of the State. That day is not at hand'.⁶⁴⁸ Having lived through several wars and seeing the deplorable conditions of education and poverty, Abdullah is in some ways both an optimist and as ever, a pragmatist. He saw what was happening in Germany with Hitler, the rising segregation from the Nationalist party, and he feared the idea of an unqualified, universal suffrage. Knowing full well that decisions made by voters can send people to death, create Petrie dishes of disease and legislate differences, Abdullah felt some mechanism had to be in place to protect society from itself. Politicians, Abdullah declared, 'cared little or nothing whether the people whom they enfranchised were able to use their vote intelligently. They never took into consideration the possible danger that the greater the number of votes in the present low educational and intellectual attainments of the average voter, the greater might be the danger to democracy, and the further the ideal moves away'.⁶⁴⁹ In some ways, these are old political questions regarding the *responsibility* of citizenship as contrasted against the *right* to citizenship. An optimist and a humanist, he believed it was not class or the acquisition of social approval *vis-a-vis* 'respectability' that entitled an individual to a vote, but "moral character" instead. That a person could reasonably be counted upon to show reasonable judgement and understand the responsibility of charity and care for his community, his neighbours, his city, and his country. In some ways, this takes us

⁶⁴⁶ NWU/AFP: Speeches Written by Dr. Abdurahman (Incomplete), n.d. (Box 1 Folder 8): Untitled speech.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid.

back to Khadijah trying to keep the girls' school open; his father doing his moral duty and serving to protect fellow Muslims, Abdullah's first instincts as a healthcare professional, and his base revulsion for ego-oriented public servants. In some ways, these are also pertinent concerns today. Although modern democracy is typically a one-man-one-vote model, societies across the globe are experiencing an increase in questions and challenges to the conceptualisation of an unqualified vote as a 'human right' when the votes being cast create poor outcomes that work against the citizenry's own interests and health and welfare. The social contract and the tensions between the common will and the common good have arisen again to the fore. What are the limits of democracy? How inclusive can a democracy allow before crumbling from majority-tyranny, splintering into discrete pluralities, or facing other problems?⁶⁵⁰ Abdullah battled with these conundrums on equality, liberty, and governance.

Abdullah saw that "equality" sometimes cloaked ideologies of sameness that eventually silences the voices of the minority through a shrinking of identity and experience.

We find that wherever democracy has appeared it has been followed by suppression of individuality. Standardization has taken place so that today everyone wears the same clothes, lives in the same kind of house, whistles the same tunes, reads the same kind of books, – the State has standardized us in the womb, the cradle, the school, workshop, and with a standardized old age pension, sends us to the grave. This dangerous system of uniformity and suppression of individuality is the universal accompaniment of democratic psychology and institutions. It should be noted that democracy and the industrialization which accompanied it have given enormous opportunity for the production of the sheep-like mind. This is having a profound change on the original democratic attitude on freedom and individuality. It is a dangerous change which early democrats of course did not foresee.⁶⁵¹

When managed poorly, a nationalist movement tries to render every individual identically, without variation. That, Abdurahman argues leads to social unhappiness, the opposite of democracy. Abdullah's thoughts, still roughly articulated in a handful of pages that he was reworking over and over, were attempts to communicate his trepidations and speak to the innate psychological violence and dangers of a muscular nationalism. 'Nationalism is authoritarianism, and it cuts right across democracy', Abdurahman declared. 'The nation is being magnified into a communal god, but different from a Divine God. The allegiance which was once given to the Divine God is now transferred to this entity which we call a nation. He who betrays the national god is either shot or hanged. The authority of the nation is more severe than the Divine God. The authority embodied in that State is being used to suppress not only individuals but others of racial minorities. The democratic nationalist's psychology, like that of the democratic patriot, is made up of two conflicting, inconsistent elements, Imperialism is only an extension of the psychology of nationalism, and like it[,] it is based on authority'.⁶⁵² Abdullah hints at mental fractures and identity crises when nationalism suppresses democracy and disallows variation. Scholars have only recently begun to ruminate on the same dilemmas. Liah Greenfeld, for example, argues in *Mind, Modernity, Madness*⁶⁵³ something

⁶⁵⁰ See, for example, I. Chipkin, *Do South Africans Exist? Nationalism, Democracy and the Identity of the People* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2007); also S. J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Do 'Africans' exist? Genealogies and paradoxes of African identities and the discourses of nativism and xenophobia'. *African identities* 8, no. 3 (2010): 281-295.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid, emphases in original.

⁶⁵² Ibid.

⁶⁵³ L. Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

similar – that nationalism creates the social conditions that ferment mental disorders. Nationalism, *vis-a-vis* democracy is seen by Greenfeld as a form of consciousness. Abdullah would have agreed. He wrote that it is a psychological state, and 'A thorough study of the changes brought about in the psychology of so-called civilised men is interesting [as] democracy is not a branch of science or metaphysics: it is primarily a psychological matrix, an attitude of mind towards human government, a conviction as to the just end the reasonable method for determining the social position and political rights of man as an individual in a community'.⁶⁵⁴ As such, an education is essential to developing a moral character and for communities to produce proper citizens with whom the lives of many and the 'happiness'⁶⁵⁵ of all can be entrusted. For Abdullah, the development of mind and character must be developed to *practise* democracy. As Raynard writes after Abdullah's death, 'He outlined the position to me thus: "How can the mass of non-Europeans, unlettered and imperfectly civilised, ever hope to attain full citizen rights in their present condition? My job is to educate the people"'.⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁵ Abdullah defines democracy as roughly equal access or opportunity to attain the heights of an equal 'happiness', not in terms of identical legal rights.

⁶⁵⁶ J. H. Raynard, Dr. Abdurahman, A biographical memoir, M. Adhikari, ed (Cape Town: Friends of the National Library of South Africa in association with the District Six Museum, 2002), 27

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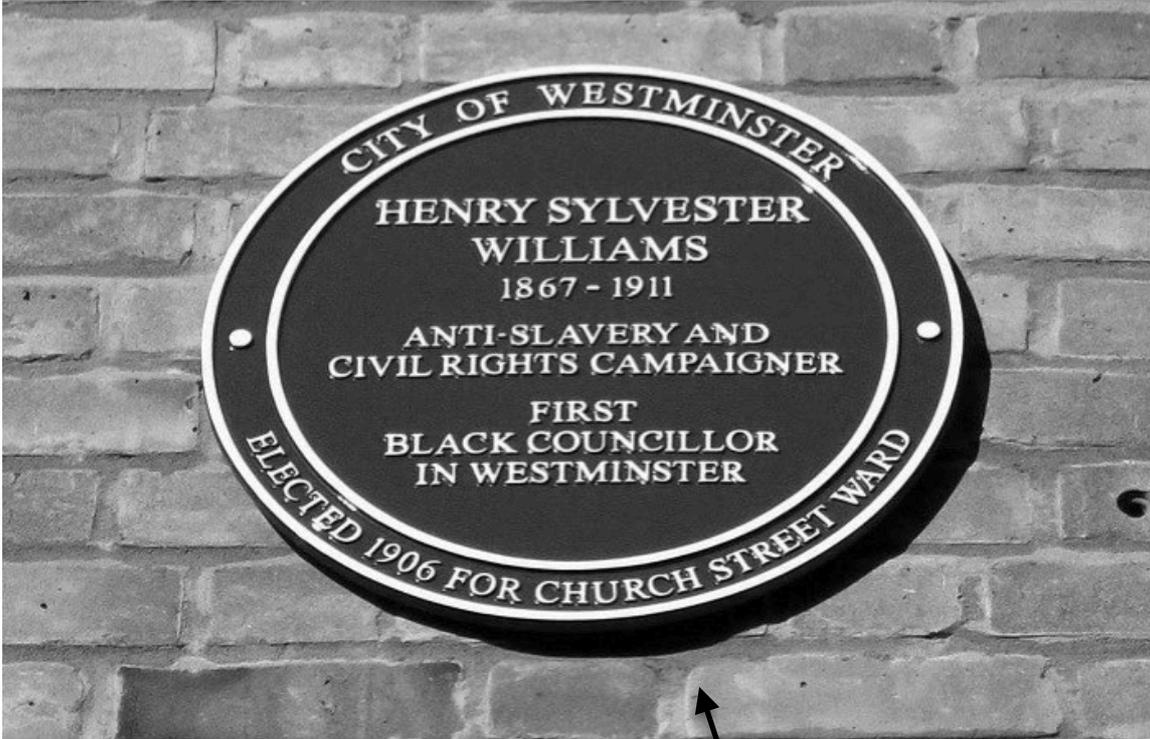
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX D:

Henry Sylvester Williams Commemoration Plaque, London

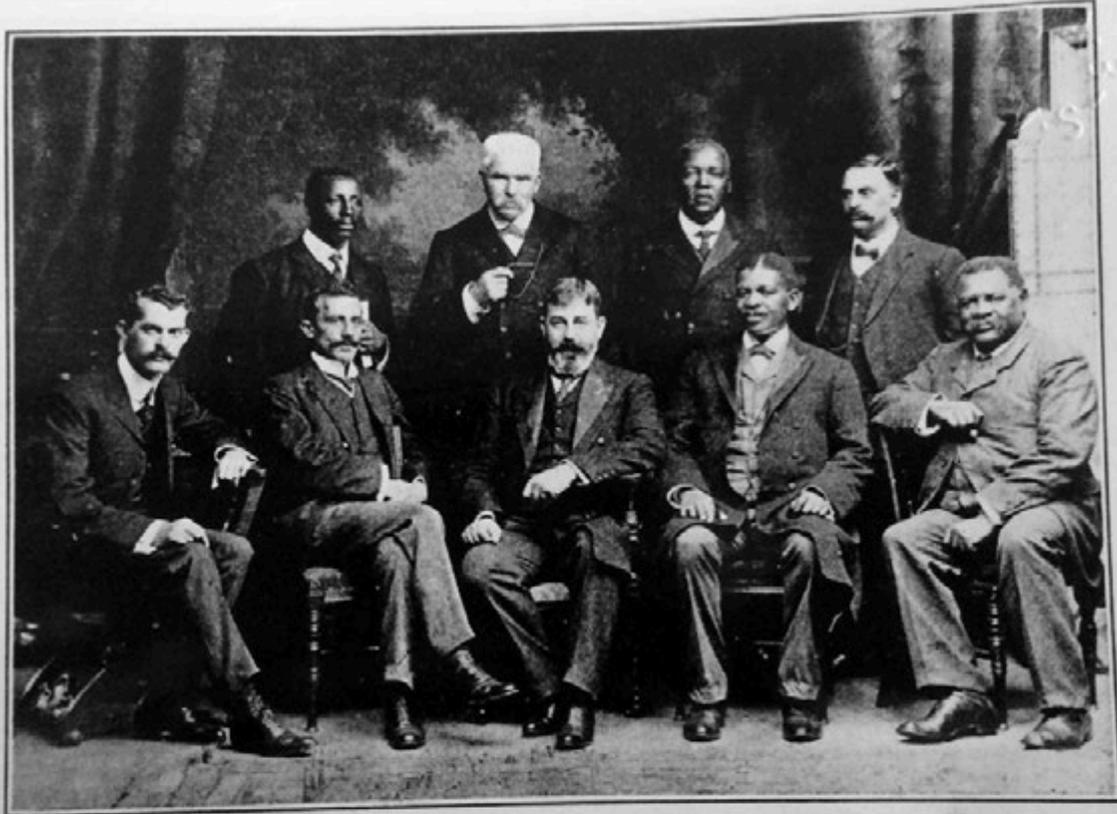
City of Westminster commemorative wall plaque (38 Church Street, Lisson Grove, London NW8)



APPENDIX E:

1909 South African Deputation to London

National Library of South Africa at Cape Town, Cape Town Pictures Collection, ALBUM 111: APO Album #11807



THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIVE AND COLOURED PEOPLE'S DELEGATES IN LONDON, 1909.

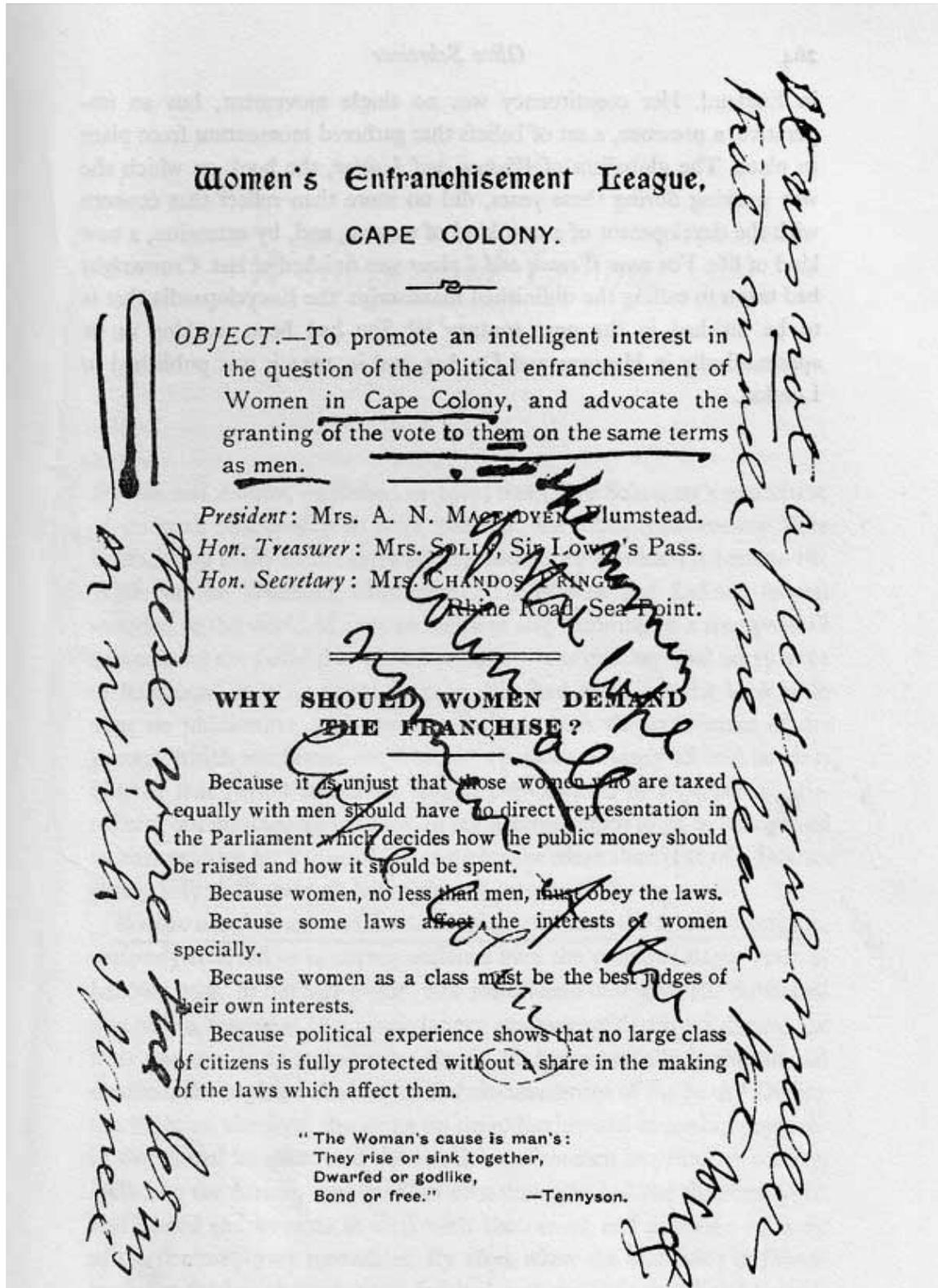
The names of the Delegates shown in this photograph are as follows: In the front row, from left to right—Mr. Mait. J. Fredericks, General Secretary of the African Political Organisation; Dr. A. Abdurahman, President of the African Political Organisation; the Hon. W. P. Schreiner, K.C., C.M.G., M.L.A., Ex-Prime Minister of the Cape Colony; the Rev. Dr. W. B. Rubusana, Ph.D., President of the South African Native Convention; and Mr. Tengo-Jabavu, Editor of "Imvo" and President of the King William's Town Native Association. In the back row, from right to left, are Mr. D. J. Lenders (Kimberley), Vice-President of the African Political Organisation; Mr. Daniel Dwanva, Agent-at-Law and Representative of the 5th African Native Convention; Mr. J. Gerrans, representing Bechuanaland Protectorate; and Mr. Thos. M. Mapikela, General Secretary of the Orange River Colony Native Congress.

1909 SOUTH AFRICAN DEPUTATION TO LONDON

National Library of South Africa at Cape Town, Cape Town Pictures Collection, ALBUM 111: APO Album #11807

Schreiner's handwritten comments over a WEL leaflet

First, R and Scott, A. *Olive Schreiner*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1980, 263 and National Library of South Africa, Special Collections, Cape Town: Olive Schreiner collection (Ruth Alexander's donation): MSC 26/2.1.29 Jan to Mar 1912.



Margaret May Stansfield Abdurahman's Death Certificate, British Columbia

British Columbia, Department of Health, Division of Vital Statistics: #74-09-006170, Margaret Abdurahman 16 April 1974

FORM 6
43-57

Religion: None

15-043
Registration No. (Department use only)
74-09-006170

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (Canada)
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Division of Vital Statistics

REGISTRATION OF DEATH

NAME OF DECEASED	1. Surname of deceased (print or type) ABDURAHMAN		2. SEX	Female
PLACE OF DEATH	3. Name of hospital or institution (otherwise give exact location where death occurred) Valleyview Hospital City: COCULAM Essondale, B.C.			
USUAL RESIDENCE	4. Complete street address: If rural give exact location (not Post Office or Rural Route address) 8670 - 168th Street City, town or other place (by name) Surrey, B.C.		Inside municipal limits? (State Yes or No) yes	Province (or country) B.C.
MARITAL STATUS	5. Single, married, widowed, or divorced (Specify) Widowed	6. If married, widowed, or divorced, give full name of husband or full maiden name of wife not known		
OCCUPATION	7. Kind of work done during most of working life housewife		8. Kind of business or industry in which worked	
BIRTHDATE	9. Month (by name), day, year of birth 31 December, 1899	10. AGE (years)	74	(Months) (Days) (Hours) (Minutes)
BIRTHPLACE	11. City or place Province (or country) of birth Capetown, South Africa	12. Native Indian? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If "yes" state name of band		
FATHER	13. Surname and given names of father (print or type) not known	14. BIRTHPLACE - City or place, Province (or country) not known		
MOTHER	15. Maiden surname and given names of mother (print or type) not known	16. BIRTHPLACE - City or place, Province (or country) not known		
INFORMANT	17. Signature of informant Signed [Redacted]		18. Relationship to deceased Medical Records Supervisor	
DISPOSITION	19. Address of informant Valleyview Hospital, Essondale, B.C.		20. Date signed - Month, day, year April 16th, 1974	
FUNERAL DIRECTOR	21. Burial, cremation or other disposition (specify) Cremation			
	22. Date of burial or disposition (month, day, year) April 22/74			
	23. Name and address of cemetery, crematorium or place of disposition Vancouver Crematorium - Mt. View Cemetery, Vancouver, B.C.			
	24. Name and address of funeral director (or person in charge of remains) (print or type) Columbia Funeral Service Ltd., New Westminster, B.C.			

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

DATE OF DEATH	25. Month (by name), day, year of death April 16th, 1974 @ 0930 hours		Approx. interval between onset & death
CAUSE OF DEATH	26. Part I #109 Immediate cause of death (a) Acute Myocardial Failure due to, or as a consequence of (b) Coronary Artery Thrombosis (c) Arteriosclerotic Heart Disease Part II Other significant conditions contributing to the death but not causally related to the immediate cause (a) above		
AUTOPSY PARTIALS	27. Autopsy being held? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	28. Does the cause of death stated above take account of autopsy findings? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	29. May further information relating to the cause of death be available later? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
ACCIDENT OR VIOLENCE (if applicable)	30. If accident, suicide, homicide or undetermined (specify)		
SURGICAL OPERATION	31. Place of injury (e.g. home, farm, highway, etc.)		
CERTIFICATION	32. Date of injury (Month (by name), day, year)		
	33. How did injury occur? (describe circumstances)		
	34. If there was a recent surgical operation give date of operation		
	35. State operative findings		
	36. I certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief the above-named person died on the date and from the causes stated herein: X Signed [Redacted] Attending physician <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Physician examining body after death <input type="checkbox"/> Coroner <input type="checkbox"/>		
	37. Name of physician or coroner (print or type) W. Abraham Address Valleyview Hospital, Essondale, B.C. Date: Month, day, year April 16, 1974		

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - OFFICE USE ONLY

Notations:

X

CERTIFICATION OF DISTRICT REGISTRAR

I certify this return was accepted by me on this date at -
District Registration No. **983**
Date: Month (by name), day, year
April 18, 1974
New Westminster B.C.
Signed [Redacted]
District Registrar

4-2302-3,14 26-9-73

Rosie's Marriage Certificate (1929)

Cape Archives Depot: Archives of the Register of Marriages, Births and Deaths (MRG) No. 95/29

B.M.D. 3 (Revis.)

**ORIGINAL MARRIAGE REGISTER.
ORIGINEEL HUWELIKSREGISTER.**

No. 95 of 1929 Indian
 Husband.....
 Man Malay
 Wife.....
 V.F.O.R.W.

MARRIAGE SOLEMNIZED AT.....
 Huwelik Bevestiging te.....
Wynberg District.....
Cape Province.....

Date of Marriage Datum van Huwelik	Full Names of Persons Vols. Noms van Oorlogende	Country of Birth Gesindeerland	Personal Status Persoonlike Sitt.	Occupation Beroep	Residence at date of Marriage Woonplaat van het Huwelik	Name of Special Marriage License No. of Special Marriage License	With or Without Assent of Consanguine Relatives Met of sonder toestemming van verwante	EMERALD OFFICIAL
<u>8th</u> <u>November</u> <u>1929.</u>	<u>Ebrahim Abdul 23</u> <u>Kader</u>	<u>South</u> <u>Africa.</u>	<u>Bachelor</u>	<u>Bookkeeper</u>	<u>Tenant</u> <u>Street</u> <u>Cape Town</u>	<u>Special</u> <u>License</u> <u>No</u> <u>23721</u>		
	<u>Warodea 28</u> <u>Abdurahman</u>	<u>South</u> <u>Africa.</u>			<u>Porter</u> <u>Street</u> <u>Cape Town</u>			

This Marriage was solemnized by me on this the
 Dit Huwelik is bevestigd door mij op besdien de
8th day of November 1929
 dag van

This Marriage was contracted
 by us
 Dit Huwelik is voltrokken
 tusson ons

..... Minister.—Predikant.

1...
 Signed
 Signed
 Signed

Colonel Crewe vs. Dr Abdurahman (1905)

The Owl (17 March 1905)



APPENDIX J:

Cissie Gool, 'His Mother's Boy' (Prize poem in December 1912 *APO*)

APO 21 December 1912

His eyes were bright, his hair was fair,
He was his mother's boy;
He was her pride, her only child,
Her only loving Roy.

Around his neck in flaxen folds
His golden ringlets fell;
His cheek was like the crimson rose,
His eyes like the blue-bell.

She loved her child as life and death,
No sweeter child could find.
Oft in the eve when all was still,
She would instruct his mind.

They lived within a cottage small,
Upon the lonely moor.
Both were proud, and spoke to none
Yet both were very poor.

When children sought his company
On any summer's day;
She'd proudly check the little mites,
And lead him then away.

None saw the boy, he, too, was proud.
He was his mother's boy.
None but her proud and selfish self,
His presence could enjoy.

A sad day dawned, and the happy lad
Lay sick upon his bed;
His crimson cheeks, not turned white,
His curls tangled on his head.

Both day and night she guarded him
With deep maternal care;
She now looked on a faded flower,
Once radiant, rich and fair.

She promised to give her boy to the world,
If ever he recover;
But one winter's night the hour came,
Twixt life and death he hovered.

She knelt beside the pining child
With anxious, tearful eyes.
Oh, God! her boy was sinking fast,
Perhaps would never rise.

Lo! next day when the sun arose
O'er snow-white clouds above,
An angel clad in heavenly robes,
Descended crowned with love.

He smiled, and pointed to the bed,
Where lay the dying boy:
'Your God, he sends me', he gently said,
'To claim your only boy'.

All things seemed hushed at the voice of death:
The angel shone with light.
He clasped his hands and gazed above,
Then vanished out of sight.

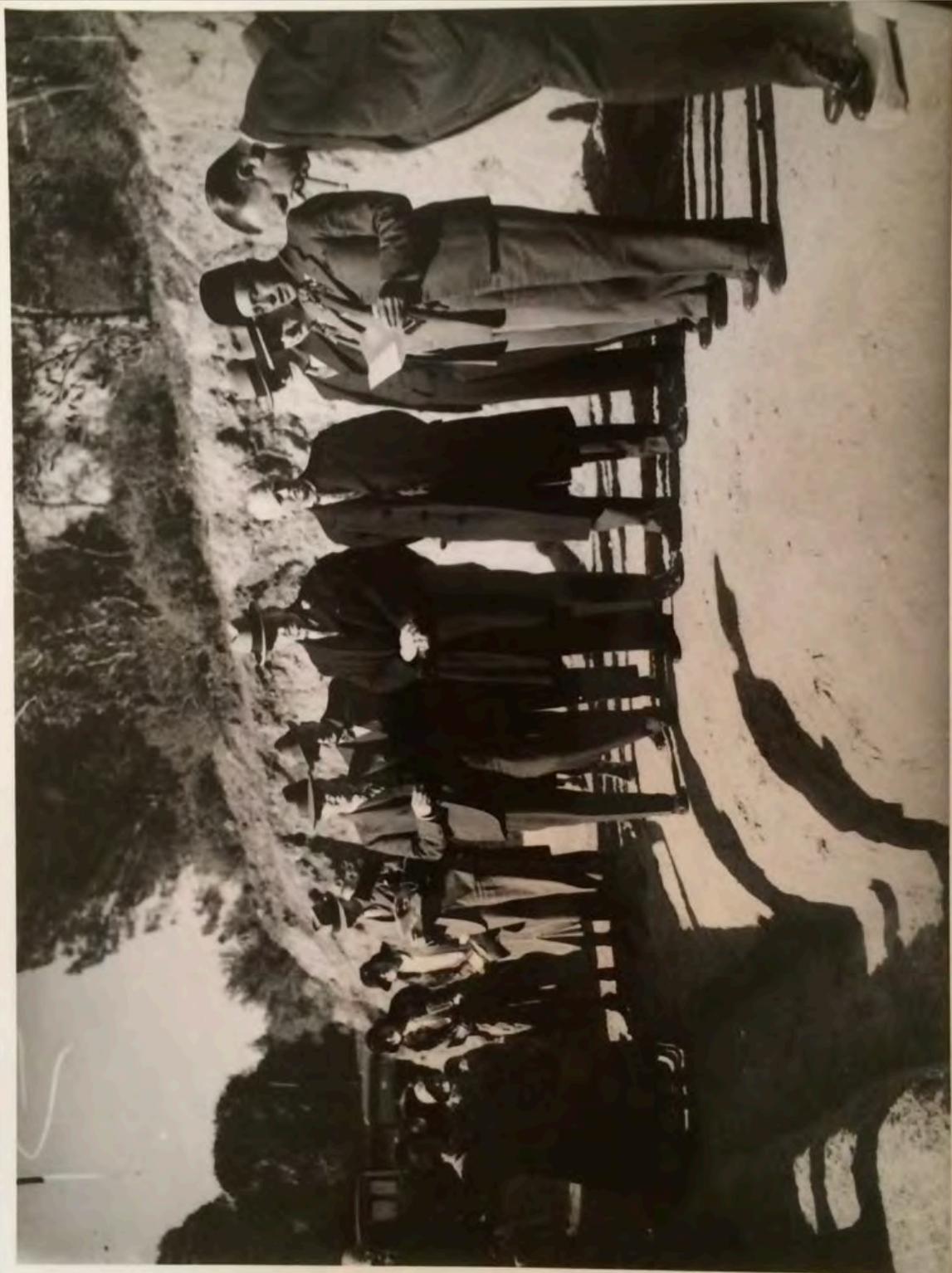
She gazed upon her child's death-bed.
Where God's gold light once shone;
His soul had passed from death to live [sic],
And she was left alone.

She bowed her head before the Lord.
And yielded up her child;
Gone was her haughty, selfish spirit,
She was humbled, meek and mild.

APPENDIX L:

The Opening of Camps Bay Drive, Opening Address by Abdullah

National Library of South Africa at Cape Town, Cape Town Pictures Collection PHA 1348



APPENDIX M:

Portrait of Abdullah 1940

Cape Standard (27 February 1940)

