

## **The politics of race, gender and class in Cape Town, South Africa, c1910: Dr Abdurahman and the African Political Organisation<sup>1\*</sup>**

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Race was determinedly malleable in turn of the twentieth century southern Africa. As recently as 1997, however, Mohamed Adhikari could stress that '[h]istorical writing on the coloured community of South Africa has tended to accept coloured identity as given and to portray it as fixed'.<sup>2</sup> He underlined the need to recognise that identity was and is at some level constructed by the people identifying as coloured, and cannot be explained away as 'something negative and undesirable', unproblematically imposed from above by a racist state, or 'natural', inbred.<sup>3</sup> He proposed, in short, a shift from analysis of racial identification to that of racial identity-formation. Moreover, the term 'the coloured community' requires elaboration, in terms not only of meanings of coloured, but also of community. And it should be noted that identity is locational; it is never fixed, even within one person. Biographical, or micro-historical, lenses are useful in this regard. Abdullah Abdurahman's life sheds light on the processes of community- and race- articulation in the first half of the twentieth century.

The politics, and the project, of race loomed large in the work and life of Dr Abdullah Abdurahman, remembered as the 'grand old man' of coloured politics in South Africa, having dominated this realm as president of the African Political Organisation (APO) from 1905 to his death in 1940. Under his guidance, or perhaps more appropriately his dictation, APO became a self-consciously coloured organisation. If Adhikari is correct that 'by the end of the 1880s, the concept of Colouredness ... was firmly entrenched in Cape society',<sup>4</sup> within an elite that looked – as did African elites – to the liberal Cape constitution and hence the British Empire for their identity, it was Dr Abdurahman who articulated a blueprint for 'colouredness' which was contingent on specific understandings of, and intersections of, gender as well as class. He manipulated the politics of culture. It was, I would suggest, a brilliant strategy, involving a monumental sleight of hand, a series of shifting reflections of shifting boundaries, which unsettled attempts to easily classify people, to disenfranchise all black men who identified as subjects of Empire. It created a problem for the South African government.

In the immediate aftermath of the South African War, it became clear that 'natives' would not be considered for enfranchisement, in the northern territories or in a unitary South African state. Although for the APO the ultimate end was a non-racial, masculine, liberal franchise, the short-term jettisoning of Africans seemed expedient. The quest for the retention, and extension, of the Cape franchise in the Union constitution involved the demonstration of coloured respectability: the 'native' vote would be sacrificed for the men of the APO. In the aftermath of the South African War, it became necessary to establish

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quite what 'coloured' meant, as opposed to 'native', described as 'barbarous' in Dr Abdurahman's first presidential speech for the APO in 1906. By 1910, he could present his constituency with a blueprint for the formation of a 'coloured' community, which would by its very nature support the political work of the APO, in demonstrating that coloured people were 'civilised' and therefore that coloured men – in terms of Rhodes's (revised) declaration that the franchise should be given to all civilised men south of the Zambezi - deserved access to the franchise in the new Union of South Africa. However, what was the meaning of 'native'? What was the meaning of 'coloured'? This paper will begin to argue that, for Abdurahman, the enfranchisement of coloured men was predicated on the cooption of coloured women, and coloured children. At the same time, the brilliance of his vision is contained in the way he defined the category of persons deserving of political rights. He sought to create a mirage, so that on the one hand the state would have to accept coloured men as civilised and therefore deserving of the franchise, while on the other he blurred the boundaries between perceptions of coloured and native. Those who wanted the vote – they had to be male, of course - had merely to mimic, or become cultural clones of, Abdurahman himself. Their families had to mimic his. Phenotype did not come into it. For a man trained in medical science at a British university, in a period in which eugenics was a topic of debate in South African as well as British medical circles, it is remarkable that Abdurahman removed science from any discursive distinction between different shades of men.

In the early years of the twentieth century, Dr Abdurahman as leader of the African Political Organisation engaged with, and, in some sense, helped create what for the South African government became 'the problem ... whether coloureds, along with the poor whites, should be uplifted to strengthen the dominant group.'<sup>5</sup> He was not only the leader of an organisation which constituted a struggle for coloured political rights – whatever its tactics, an oppositional movement. He was also entrenched within white supremacist structures of government, at the local and provincial level. He conversed – not as a humble petitioner, but as one entitled to speak, as a peer – with the political centre: with Smuts, with Hofmeyer, with Merriman. This aspect of his work, and the meanings of being at once within and in opposition to, the ruling class, require future elaboration. He was also a medical practitioner, trained in Britain. The intersections of these various aspects of his persona have not been explored in relation to his leadership of the APO, and his articulation of colouredness. I suggest that Abdurahman was successful in his part in engineering a shift in perspective among white-supremacist politicians who, at one level, before the Wilcocks Commission of the mid 1930s, came to see coloured people as a problem not because they were impoverished, but because 'they' were more 'civilised' than poor whites. In other words, it was more than an electioneering ploy; white people more 'degraded' than coloured would not do. Abdurahman himself provided a conduit through which government could see civilisation in coloured people. He also provided a conduit through which coloured people could aspire to civilisation in themselves. And to do these things, he required the active engagement of his family. His nuclear family, as it happened, was entirely female.

Gavin Lewis's *Between the wire and the wall* provides a detailed biography of the APO, viewed, of course, through the lens of 1980s apartheid South Africa. It may be useful to extend the use of close biographical analysis to the person of Abdullah Abdurahman, as it is here that his loyalties and beliefs were played out. Taking an extremely cynical, functionalist perspective, a superficial reading of Abdurahman's choices of marriage partner may nevertheless reveal something of the workings of race, gender and class in his vision for the

APO, and of his place in South African society. Dr Abdurahman married twice. In the late nineteenth century he married, by Muslim rites, a British woman, Helen (Nellie) Potter James. Around 1928, he left her (the precise nature of the leaving is under dispute, but it would seem most likely that he divorced her, again by Muslim rites). The marriage between a British woman and a Muslim Cape subject was rare, but not unique. Many British women emigrated to South Africa, in search of work and a livelihood, and many married South Africans. In the same year that Nellie Abdurahman landed in Cape Town, another 60 women did so as part of an emigration scheme of British 'gentlewomen'.<sup>6</sup> Some immigrants married Muslims, and became part of the Muslim community of Cape Town. The Abdurahman marriage was different because in a sense Abdullah sought Nellie out. He met her while studying at Glasgow University for a medical degree, and together they came to Cape Town in 1895 and settled on the margins of District Six (Castle Bridge). The marriage was unusual also in that it produced only two children. Both were female. For the period with which this paper is concerned, Dr Abdurahman's quest for 'coloured' rights had to take his daughters into account. Having no son was, I suggest, crucial, and opened up unprecedented possibilities for his daughters. In the 1920s, when Dr Abdurahman identified strongly with the challenges facing South African Indians, he left his British wife and married a Muslim woman. She bore him more children, including, finally, a son, whose picture was published in a pro-Abdurahman newspaper. Abdurahman's private life poignantly reflects his political trajectory. His first marriage was important in establishing his pro-British credentials: He was demonstrably not only a product of, but literally within the family of, Empire. In the first decade of the twentieth century, Abdullah Abdurahman envisioned for the APO, and the people he constructed as coloured, the reproduction of his own household.

The Abdurahman household in the early twentieth century was quintessentially respectable, the epitome of 'civilised'. It was a space in which a nuclear family lived among the trappings of respectability, including a piano, and a number of servants, including a cook. Mrs Abdurahman did not work outside the home; her husband was the breadwinner. Their daughters were educated with private tutors at once stage, English was the home language,<sup>7</sup> and Nellie Abdurahman gained a reputation as a redoubtable philanthropic worker as a volunteer on the boards of numerous welfare organisations in Cape Town. Part of Dr Abdurahman's task was to encourage the people who fell within the ambit of the APO to follow this example. Dr Abdurahman held court in his drawing room: people were invited in and *shown*. As one visitor 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.<sup>8</sup>

The cup of tea speaks loudly. Beyond demonstrating to coloured folk the ideal, Abdurahman's salon embraced many white intellectuals and politicians. The 'cream' of Cape Town's intellectual and artistic elite - mostly male, but including some women, including Ruth Alexander and Olive Schreiner, gathered at Albert Lodge for gatherings hosted by the Abdurahmans.<sup>9</sup> In addition to WP and other Schreiners, visitors included M K Gandhi.<sup>10</sup> Others ranged from South African politicians such as J X Merriman and J H Hofmeyr to academics like Eric Walker, liberal professor of History at the University of Cape Town.<sup>11</sup>

The Abdurahman salon and household demonstrated in the clearest manner to the white power-holders over the Constitution that people like the Abdurahmans were worthy of the vote. This more than hints of mimicry; but it is a mimicry of mastery, not of servanthood, the constitution of colonialis'd 'coloured' people as overt challenge to white supremacy. Abdurahman was calling on 'his' people to mimic him, his wife, his daughters.

Women have been excluded from histories of the African Political Organisation, or at best rendered irrelevant, as a result of an androcentric gaze from either end of the twentieth century. The APO was a self-consciously a men's organisation; in this sense the historiography accurately – unselfconsciously – reflects the politics of the day. Histories have represented coloured politics, and the APO itself as generically – unproblematically – male. The organisation was created with the purpose of pushing for the enfranchisement of black men in the former Boer Republics after the South African War; by the time that Abdurahman took over leadership, in 1905, it was gearing up for the struggle for the preservation of current franchise rights in the Cape, and the entrenchment of the liberal Cape franchise in the constitution of the new Union of South Africa. Political rights were masculine rights; no women had a vote in either local or central government. The radical concept of the enfranchisement of black women would only receive attention from the APO in the context of the enfranchisement of white women decades later; it did not engage at any serious level with such politics in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was, therefore, entirely logical that the APO should be a men's organisation. Within Cape Town in the late nineteenth century, religion played a crucial role in establishing a sense of community and identity. Islam was, I would suggest, more important in the town than Christianity in establishing a black elite, and the relationship between Muslim and coloured identity in this period requires further elaboration. Abdurahman himself, again, provides a useful vehicle for this exploration, as both Muslim and British.<sup>12</sup> In any event, at the turn of the century, according to Achmat Davids, Muslim women in Cape Town sought the veil in direct opposition to Western imperialism; yet within the APO, religious differences were deliberately elided.<sup>13</sup> The APO's membership consisted of a minority of Muslims, and a majority of Christians. In both religious traditions, patriarchal governance was implicit and women were not expected to take a leading role. Women did not sit on the executive of the APO, nor did they attend its conferences as delegates.<sup>14</sup> It was highly unusual, and considered inappropriate, for women to attend APO branch meetings. Although there was nothing in the APO constitution specifically to exclude women, those who did attend were clearly objects of concern and attracted censure.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, women helped to shape the APO, and played not insignificant roles in Cape Town's political history. Moreover, the APO's view of itself as masculine was predicated on a specific understanding of gender, which itself was profoundly class-biased. Part of Dr Abdurahman's aim, in his quest for the vote, was to use the APO as a vehicle for the transformation of the meaning of 'coloured', and this required the mobilization of gender, and the co-optation of women as well as men.

Despite her crucial role in the construction of Abdurahman's vision, Nellie Abdurahman's influence on her husband and daughters and on the broader community has been ignored in the literature, as has her political work. Gavin Lewis does not notice the existence of the APO Women's Guild, formed in 1909 with Mrs Abdurahman as president.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, only Richard van der Ross recognises her leadership in this regard, as part of his biographical note on Dr Abdurahman prefacing his collection of Abdurahman's presidential speeches.<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand, Mogamed Ajam recognised that Nellie Abdurahman influenced her husband through her passion for educational reform.<sup>18</sup> It may not be coincidental that Dr Abdurahman's work in education was greatest during his first marriage, whereas Mrs Abdurahman's passion continued to the end of her life. In addition to her philanthropic persona on the board of the Cape Town and Wynberg Board of Aid, she was active in more conventionally recognised political formations, whether in public support of her husband, leading the APO Women's Guild, or demanding educational reform, or women's enfranchisement from within the Women's Enfranchisement League.<sup>19</sup>

It was possible for earlier historians to write histories of APO politics based largely on the *APO*,<sup>20</sup> without mentioning women's work, and without reflecting on their significance for the organisation in cultural, let alone political, terms.<sup>21</sup> However, this was not due to an absence of reportage concerning women. Assuming women's significance, I focused the lens on different parts of the page to those used by other historians, specifically the 'women's columns' or 'Amusements', and found women's work which was considered of lesser value than men's, both by the creators of the newspaper, and by the historians who have used this source. One has to take seriously that which has been ignored in mainstream political histories (to my knowledge there are as yet no 'cultural' histories of the APO): the 'cultural' events and fund-raisers as well as the more overt political and ideological content of presidential speeches and editorials. The one depended on the other.

The *APO* newspaper was an important vehicle for the articulation of Dr Abdurahman's vision of the society he imagined for petit bourgeois, literate 'coloured' people who had to show that they deserved the franchise. This, of course, only applied to men, but women were to play crucial supporting roles. They, as wives and mothers, were duty-bound to contribute to the construction, and reflection, of this imagined community. Women and, particularly, girl children, appear in the pages of the *APO* as exemplars of the community's achievements, Abdurahman's relatives - including his daughters - chief among them.<sup>22</sup>

As leader of the APO, Dr Abdurahman sought to engender (in both senses of the word) a 'respectable' community. The project was to demonstrate the worthiness of coloured men for the vote through social upliftment (Abdurahman's class bias shows very clearly in his assumption that they were not yet worthy) A community, created under the umbrella of the APO, was to be projected as equivalent to the coloured 'race'. 'Coloured' was to be transformed from a label associated with slavery and post-slave poverty and 'degradation' to a pristine reflection of British respectability. It was also identified with membership of the APO. Those who came under the influence of the APO had to transform themselves and look forward to political inclusion in the new South Africa. In 1910, Dr Abdurahman laid out the role he expected women to play. In the wake of the 'Great Betrayal' of Union, when hopes of a non-racial franchise had been dashed, he set out a plan to ensure the 'civilised' status of the racial caste which had so unjustly been denied citizenship in the Union of South Africa. Dr Abdurahman constructed women as mothers of 'the race'.<sup>23</sup> He spoke first at the APO conference, which was exclusive to men, but later addressed women directly through the pages of the *APO*:

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 [sic] making it our constant endeavour to brighten our homes and regard them as the best training ground possible for our future citizens. I ... referred to the weighty influence

for good that women can exert in their homes. I trust that the members of the APO will read again and reflect on the advice therein.<sup>24</sup>

Dr Abdurahman detailed the precise responsibilities and duties of women as mothers and home-makers:

A mother's influence is incalculable. The character of children is far more dependent on that of the mother than that of the father... I must urge you women to cherish a high sense of duty. Avoid idleness, vice, and slatternliness. Keep your homes and yourselves pure and clean. Make them such that what I may call their homeliness may induce your husbands to regard their homes as their haven of rest and peace and comfort after their day's work ... If your homes are not clean and restful, your children will be morally dwarfed and deformed ... Every one of you who have the upbringing of children should so live that you ... may see in your offspring your proudest jewels. If such aims guide your actions and control your conduct, the coloured people of South Africa will become strong and enduring, and worthy of a proud place in the annals of the world. A woman's heart and life 'centred in the sphere of common duties', are an ornament to the nation, and if she instils into her children a love of work, and an overpowering sense of the dignity of labour, a love of duty, reverence for truth and virtue, and courage, she will have won the crown which never fades.<sup>25</sup>

There was a tension between this idealistic vision of gendered domesticity, with its clear class bias, and the life led by women – mostly wives and daughters of APO members – who worked outside the home, either in paid employment, or, in the APO Women's League, formed in 1909. It was not possible to confine women to the home: and there was no rigid boundary between public and private spheres. A tension existed, then, between the ability of women to engage in political debate within the house, and Dr Abdurahman's public pronouncements as president of the APO, about the appropriate role of women in the coloured community. On the other hand, women's work within the Guild fulfilled the role of public demonstration of coloured civilisation.

The APO Women's Guild was founded in Nellie Abdurahman's home in 1909.<sup>26</sup> The *APO* reported that:

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.<sup>27</sup>

The Women's Guild has not been recognised as a significant organisation in the historical literature, in terms of serious politics, if at all. R E van der Ross refers to it in the 'biographical introduction' to his compilation of Dr Abdurahman's presidential speeches, but does not discuss it in his history of black politics.<sup>28</sup> In the former, he suggests that the Women's Guild:

was 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 that time, and that many had no schooling at all, the Women's Guild no doubt became a popular and important social and educational forum for women.<sup>29</sup>

The Guild's popularity is evident from the fact that it soon expanded to over 70 branches within two years. Because no primary records exist for the organisation, it is impossible to determine the extent to which it espoused women's as opposed to Coloured rights, but it is clear through reportage in the *APO* that, even as an adjunct to the APO, it was a political organisation. This was not the intention of the APO. The women of the Guild were expected to support the men in their political endeavours by, for example, raising funds through social events. This was consistently represented as apolitical, despite the purpose behind the fund-raising.

At the Guild's inaugural meeting, Nellie Abdurahman was elected chairwoman and president. Her initial election may have been related to her husband's powerful position in the APO, as well as her relatively advanced education, but her annual re-election demonstrates the recognition of her leadership ability. The APO Women's Guild (Cape Town Branch) had three main objectives. It aimed:

to promote unity among the Coloured women of British South Africa, *and to aid and assist towards the uplifting of the race*; to obtain better and higher education for children, and to take an interest generally in all educational matters; to assist and encourage as far as possible the work carried on by the men members of the African Political Organisation.<sup>30</sup>

Membership was open to 'all coloured' women born in South Africa, or who have adopted it as their own.' The designation 'coloured' was clearly flexible, given Mrs Abdurahman's pale skin. The Abdurahman family personified the fluidity in racial identities which characterised the APO community in the early twentieth century. Adhikari points out that '[r]ecent mainstream academic writing shares the traditional premise that coloured identity is something negative and undesirable but tries to blame it on the racism of whites.'<sup>31</sup> The impact of apartheid is evident in the production of 'racialised' histories of 'coloured' and 'Indian' politics. These histories are written as if, as Adhikari suggests, racial categories were fixed and separate. The presence of Dr Abdurahman in both histories has not alerted the writers to the ambiguities and fluidity of racial identity which Adhikari underlines.<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, the lives of Nellie Abdurahman, her children Cissie and Rosie and her husband underline in the strongest terms the ambiguities of racial classification and identity within District Six in the early years of the twentieth century. Helen Potter James, a 'white' British (Scottish) woman, married Abdullah Abdurahman, a man of Indian ancestry, who came to play a crucial role in shaping a community which identified as coloured. Nellie Abdurahman was coloured when she led the African Political Organisation Women's Guild (which was restricted to female coloured membership), and white when she took tea at Stuttford's department store in the late 1940s and 1950s. Her coloured or Malay daughters could not join her for tea. Abdullah was Indian when he courted Nellie, and when he led delegations to India in the mid-1920s, but he was coloured when he led the African Political Organisation. Cissie's future husband, Abdul Hamid Gool's parents were first generation Indians, and he was coloured when he joined the APO. There was no question of excluding Indians from the APO. Crucially, however, by 1928 racial categories appear to have become more firmly entrenched in District Six. When Mrs Abdurahman was nominated to stand for election to the Cape Town City Council, she was opposed by rate-payers on two grounds: she was a woman, and she was not 'coloured'. She countered this with the claim that she saw no race: she was speaking as a turn-of-the-century District Sixer.<sup>33</sup> In the absence of available

coloured men, Mrs Abdurahman received the nomination (after the meeting had been reminded of her 30 years' work in the community). However, she did not win the seat.

Dr Abdurahman's vision of the ideal APO community was elaborated via the Women's Guild, which displayed the civilised characteristics of the community. The first mention of the Women's Guild in the *APO* is in a revealing advertisement for the 'Grand Concert' which the Guild held in aid of the Draft Constitution Fund, on the evening of 7 June 1909.<sup>34</sup> Under the heading 'Amusements', the *APO* reported that:

the great interest taken by ourselves [the men of the APO] in the promotion of the Fund for defraying the expenses incurred in fighting the Draft Constitution, is equalled by that evinced by the Ladies' Guild ... On Monday night ... they organised a concert on behalf of the Fund ... The weather was inclement in the extreme, but ... there was a large attendance. A most excellent programme was arranged.<sup>35</sup>

Nellie Abdurahman was among the vocalists. The report signifies the classification of women's activities as less important than those of men: they were 'amusements'. It also distinguished very clearly between 'us', the men of the APO, and 'them', the women of the Guild. Nevertheless, the men could not have gone to Britain without the fund-raising efforts of the women – at a practical level the Guild was crucial to the realisation of Abdurahman's goals.

Having raised funds for the all-male deputation, '[a] send-off entertainment was given to the delegates on the eve of their departure for England.'<sup>36</sup> A crowd gathered to see the deputation off at the Alfred Docks: 'The climax came on Wednesday afternoon. ... Everybody of importance was there ... Amongst the ladies ... were, of course, Mrs Abdurahman and children'.<sup>37</sup> At every major event involving the Doctor, Mrs Abdurahman could be seen, normally accompanied by her children. The Abdurahman household was always on display. Despite the fact that the deputation failed to persuade the British government to remove the 'colour bar' from the South Africa Act, the welcome home was tremendous.<sup>38</sup> The Guild organised a reception, simultaneously an important political gathering and a cultural showcase.<sup>39</sup>

As part of its agenda of 'raising' the Coloured people, the APO encouraged western cultural activities. In March 1910, the Women's Guild's continued to support the political work of the APO, by raising funds to send delegates to the APO Conference in Port Elizabeth. The Guild organised a tea party for this purpose, which was reported, again under the heading 'Amusements'. If Nellie Abdurahman were a key organiser, as president, it is not surprising that she would have run social events according to her own family's traditions.<sup>40</sup> She and Mrs Cupido 'sang two songs each while Mr Walter Wooding presided at the piano. Mrs Abdurahman also gave a short but interesting address, in which she praised the committee, and encouraged the women to assist their husbands in the social and political work.'<sup>41</sup> This combination of 'culture' and political address or discussion became the format of most fund-raisers and public meetings.

Typically, under 'Amusements', the *APO* reported on one of the 'usual six-weekly social[s] in the Temperance Hall ... There was a large gathering present, and a most enjoyable evening was spent ... Amongst the most energetic workers were Mrs Abdurahman, president of the Guild'. The APO 'men's branch' ensured that the relationship between the Guild and the APO was always clear. The Guild was there to support; the APO to lead and patronise



and do the important political work. The senior vice-president of the APO 'said a few encouraging words to the Guild', while the chairman of the Cape Town Branch 'also spoke a few words, saying that he thought that women could be a great assistance to their husbands.' Mrs Abdurahman thanked them for their 'sympathetic remarks,' but then went on to explain that the purpose of the Guild was not merely to support the men:

She explained that the object of the Guild was two-fold, namely, to uplift coloured womanhood, and to help the men.<sup>42</sup>

In 1911, the Cape Town branch of the Women's Guild planned to convene a conference, and also decided to hold a bazaar, 'in order to provide funds for [a] proposed Industrial Exhibition of women's work.'<sup>43</sup> This was a departure for the Guild from fund-raising to support the men's work. WP Schreiner gave the opening address, on Saturday, 11 March. He pointed out the difference between the APO and the Guild. The latter was apolitical: it 'deals only with social problems affecting the coloured people of South Africa.' He went on to say that whereas the APO, as a political body 'was not supposed to be a friend of everybody', this was not so for the Guild:

The Women's Guild aimed at raising the women and children - taking them in hand - and it aimed at the social and moral welfare of the Coloured people. Therefore it was an organisation which everybody should welcome (Applause).<sup>44</sup>

Using information presumably provided by the Guild, Schreiner stated that there were between 60 and 70 branches, 'and one of its most cherished ambitions is to raise sufficient money to build a hostel for Coloured girls and women in the city.' Thus the Guild envisaged work that went far beyond support of the men's branches of the APO. The aim of the bazaar was to begin to raise funds for this project. There was no mention of the industrial exhibition for which the Guild had originally planned to raise funds.<sup>45</sup> Schreiner also pointed to the Guild's educational work among children:

Everybody should show their sympathy by giving it their support. It was already teaching many children in a practical way, under the auspices of Mrs Abdurahman. The prime object was to get hold of the children, and that was what the women were doing.<sup>46</sup>

The stalls were decked out in the Guild's colours, mauve and yellow. Mr and Mrs Schreiner were 'very pleased to see, not only the useful, but the beautiful things exhibited. Bazaars of this kind encouraged the talent of people: to develop a taste for things that are beautiful was one of the truest methods of educating people.... The educational influence of such work was very great.' As usual, the *APO* provided a lengthy report on the speeches of the men, Schreiner and Abdurahman, but summarised Mrs Abdurahman's response in one sentence: 'Mrs Abdurahman thanked Mr and Mrs Schreiner for their kindness, and spoke on the importance of the work of the Guild.'<sup>47</sup>

The bazaar did not only generate educational influence, but £40 profit. Having been opened at mid-day, it went on into the night, when the Guild members changed into fancy-dress costumes.<sup>48</sup> Typically, the Western Province Amateur Musical Society band provided the entertainment for the evening. The festivities seemed to underline Schreiner's characterisation of the Guild as apolitical. However, the line between 'social' (in the social welfare sense) and 'political' blurred easily.<sup>49</sup> For the purposes of this paper, the Guild excelled in its role of performing civilisation.

The APO held regular public debates which preceded monthly APO business meetings. A lecture would be followed by some form of cultural entertainment, often recitation of poetry or a song, followed by a debate. The public part of the evening would end with more music, generally, and back-patting speeches. Then the public and the members of the Women's Guild would leave, and the business meeting of the APO commence. In 1912, the meetings, which had been held on Thursdays, were rearranged for Tuesday evenings, when the Women's Guild used to hold its own 'social' meetings.<sup>50</sup> As the APO put it:

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. This, it was thought, would entice the young men to the meetings.<sup>51</sup>

The first such meeting was declared a great success.<sup>52</sup> From then on, the Cape Town branch only rarely published reports in the 'Women's Column'; more regularly, a report of the joint meeting seemed sufficient to sum up the Guild's activities.<sup>53</sup> From time to time, women delivered a lecture.<sup>54</sup> For example, Nellie Abdurahman presented a lecture in which she informed her audience of the revolutionary work in primary education of the Montessori School.<sup>55</sup>

In its heyday, the Women's Guild had played a role in providing the APO community with a grounding in respectability and 'high culture'. There were other members of the APO community who participated in this endeavour, in particular, Walter Wooding. Wooding played a significant role in encouraging the musical talents of District Six, of both children and adults. He ran a piano school, where he taught youngsters both theoretical and practical skills. He also founded the Western Province Amateur Musical Society in 1909, of which Nellie Abdurahman was a patron, teaching the theory and practice of the pianoforte. Among his pupils were the Abdurahman children, who learned to sing and play the piano firmly within a western European cultural tradition.<sup>56</sup>

The first reference in the *APO* to the musical talents of the children was a performance by the Western Province Amateur Musical Society in April, 1910. The Abdurahmans' elder daughter, Waradea (known as Rosie) sang 'Queen of the Night'.<sup>57</sup> By the following year, both Rosie and her younger sister Cissie (Zainonesa) had developed their skills at the piano such that they were ready to perform publicly, in fund-raising concerts organised by the APO:

... Mrs Abdurahman ... sang in excellent style ... the Misses Abdurahman and Mr R Wooding took part in pianoforte duets.<sup>58</sup>

On this occasion, Nellie Abdurahman sang three songs, ranging from high opera to Edwardian popular culture: from Tancredi's 'Overture' to 'Under the Deodar', and 'Gondola Dreams', while the girls' piano duet was reported as Valse's 'Maimez-Vous'. The audience was entertained with Mendelsohn, but never with anything that did not derive from western Europe.

Part of the 'civilising mission' of the APO was to fight for educational reform, and to encourage those who excelled educationally. It is clear that one of the key concerns of the APO, and of Abdullah and Nellie Abdurahman, was the fight for black children's right to education. Soon after their arrival in Cape Town at the end of the nineteenth century, they

had witnessed the Cape government's attempts to legislate educational segregation. However, the South African war had intervened, and it was only in 1905 that the Cape Government's Minister for Education, Dr Muir, saw the School Board Act through the Cape Parliament.<sup>59</sup> With this Act, primary and secondary education in the Cape was segregated racially, with massive resources allocated to White education, now compulsory. The government attempted to leave black education to the Mission schools, which provided poor education, and then only to Standard IV.<sup>60</sup> The Act proposed curriculum changes which would provide Coloured children with 'technical' rather than intellectual education.<sup>61</sup> Dr Abdurahman spear-headed the APO's campaign against the School Board Bill, which had profound implications for the education of his own children.

One of Dr Abdurahman's early public interventions was to protest against this Bill. In late February 1905, he led a meeting of more than 500 people:

Extraordinary interest in the subject of education was displayed last night at a mass meeting of coloured people held in Clifton school, in District 6.

Abdurahman was 'received with loud cheering'. He declared:

Two schools at which I received my education have closed their doors to other coloured children, and nothing has been substituted to take their place ... accomplished men and women can only be produced by education...<sup>62</sup>

He explained the implications of the Bill, noting that it placed "almost insurmountable obstacles" in the way of compulsory education or in the establishment of non-denominational schools for Coloureds, since they were not eligible for state aid...<sup>63</sup>

Abdurahman led a deputation to government, which had a limited degree of success. As he had requested, two-thirds of the School Board members would be elected by rate payers. The APO would try to mobilise voters to make use of this, and elect Board members who would represent the Coloured people.

Nellie Abdurahman gave an interview decades later, in which she reflected on her early years in the country:

What had impressed Mrs Abdurahman 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 by, the question of schooling for her own two daughters presented a problem.<sup>64</sup>

The Abdurahman girls were of an age to be educated around the time that the School Board Act came into force. No public school in Cape Town offered education to matriculation standard for black children.

Thus far, within the family (both Abdullah's father's and mother's sides), it was the boys who had been educated professionally. As males, they were also the ones to receive Islamic education in Cairo. As Ajam notes:

The 'respectable class of Moslems' with independent sources of income and autonomous in the means of its income had the means to ensure a satisfactory education for their sons [sic] in Mecca, Cairo or London.<sup>65</sup>

In the new context, Abdullah and Nellie Abdurahman's quest for universal education recognised the importance of educating girls as well as boys. The fact that they had only daughters made such an endeavour personal.

In 1907, Mrs Abdurahman fought to have Rosie and Cissie accepted into the Good Hope Seminary School in Cape Town. They were denied access, so in an action reflecting her belief in the active participation of women in public matters, Nellie Abdurahman demanded a response from the Minister for Education in the Cape Parliament. He promised to 'make some inquiry into the probable attitude of the School Board in the matter.' After some time, she received a reply:

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.<sup>66</sup>

For the time being, the children had to be tutored at home. This household could afford to pay.

The Guild's concern for education has already been alluded to in its mission statements. In April, 1911, the School Board decided to remove from 'European' schools any children who were not 'pure' white, by establishing a third-class school in District Six 'for slightly tinged [sic] children'.<sup>67</sup> On 27 June, Nellie Abdurahman presided over a Women's Guild meeting. Children's education was considered to be the province of women as well as men, and it provided the Guild with the opportunity to engage, as equals, with the men of the APO.<sup>68</sup> In fact, a number of 'men's branches' were reprimanded for not supporting the educational work of the women.<sup>69</sup> The Cape Town branch of the Guild, whose members attended the meeting en masse, discussed this issue, which it condemned unanimously:

[A]s an immoral and unchristian step. Furthermore, the branch has made investigations, and has found that there has been no desire on the part of the inhabitants of the district for the establishment of such a school.<sup>70</sup>

The branch resolved to 'send a protest to the School Board', to set up a petition against opening such a school, and 'to ask for a 3A school for coloured children without regard to the degree of colour in their skin.'<sup>71</sup> In an editorial, the *APO* condemned the proposal on grounds of unworkability and complication, rather than on moral grounds, although it clearly agreed with the Women's Guild's stand. The *APO* reported on a deputation of men that interviewed the School Board. It is unclear whether the women sent a deputation of their own, but the School Board resolved:

[t]hat 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.<sup>72</sup>

The previous year, the *APO* had announced the imminent opening of a '2nd Class Public School for Coloured Children'.<sup>73</sup> The subject had been discussed at the APO Congress:

The President told of the experience of the people of Cape Town. After much agitation they had got an A2 [secondary, ie, to Standard 8] school. But it started with only thirteen pupils, and they in Cape Town were now doing their best to increase the number of pupils and make the school a success.<sup>74</sup>

The school, which was ultimately named Trafalgar, was initially run in a small building in Chapel Street. Abdurahman recalled that '[a]t first it was a hard uphill struggle to even procure the required number of children to keep the school open.' Matt Fredericks, Secretary of the APO, apparently sent his five-year old son, and paid fees for him and two other children just to keep the school open.<sup>75</sup> According to one source, '[s]even of its first class of eleven students were Gools', and, almost certainly, two of them were the daughters of Nellie and Abdullah Abdurahman.<sup>76</sup> Part of the problem with educating the children of District Six, of course, was poverty which prevented parents from affording school fees, and which required the work of children to supplement family incomes.

On 1 July 1911, 'an influential deputation from the Cape Town's men's branch waited upon the members of the local Ladies' [sic] Guild.'<sup>77</sup> The deputation's objective was to:

beg the assistance of the ladies in establishing an education fund, by means of which intelligent Coloured boys and girls might be assisted in obtaining education ... Mr Cressy ... dwelt on the strong need that had been felt for a few such leaders among the women as the men had. He thought that the scheme proposed to support an equal number of boys and girls, [and] by advancing the scheme the Guild would do much towards giving the coloured women of South Africa what they so urgently desired.'<sup>78</sup>

The Guild later agreed to participate on this committee, and, by fits and starts, it was eventually established, with Mrs Abdurahman a member.<sup>79</sup>

At the end of 1912, the *APO* held an essay and poetry competition for children, divided into age categories. Contestants had to submit their entries under pseudonyms. The quality of the Abdurahman girls' education, and their intelligence, was reflected in the fact that both Rosie and Cissie won in their categories. As the *APO* noted, 'It is significant ... That Miss Z Abdurahman annexed the two prizes under sixteen for the best story, and the best poem.'<sup>80</sup> It is striking that although pseudonyms were required, presumably to prevent nepotism, Cissie had already recited her poem to great acclaim at an APO-organised public meeting in August 1911. It would have been clear to the judges that the writer of this poem was a daughter of Dr Abdurahman (this is not to say that the poem did not deserve the prize).<sup>81</sup>

In the meantime, Walter Wooding continued to educate his pupils in the skills of the pianoforte, and gave piano recitals, featuring their achievements. The first was held in February, 1913:

The Recital was opened with the overture "Ruy Blas" (Mendelssohn) on two pianos, Misses Lotter and Cissie Abdurahman playing the first piano and Misses Rosie Abdurahman and Arendse the second piano ... The pupils played with much confidence and grace ... the manner in which the difficult passages were executed, showed the thoroughness of their training.

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.<sup>82</sup>

The Abdurahman girls' hard work at learning difficult pieces was apparent, as was their talent in performing them. At this stage of their lives, Rosie's achievements overshadowed Cissie's. Her educational accomplishments would be praised in the pages of the *APO*, as a Muslim girl who had overcome great obstacles.

1913 opened with many educational accolades in the pages of the *APO*, in addition to the general praise heaped on Dr Abdurahman for the showpiece of the Essay competition. He had sent copies of the *APO* Christmas number to every influential person he could think of, and almost all wrote glowing praise for the standard of the essays and poems, including Olive Schreiner.<sup>83</sup> In addition, the *APO* congratulated three pupil-teachers working at Trafalgar, who had passed their examinations. Harold Cressy had passed higher educational examinations, and in addition, three young Muslim women, all related to Abdurahman, were singled out for their achievements.

The year 1913 will probably never be forgotten by the Moslems of the Cape, because of the distinction gained by three Moslem girls. Miss Rukea Dollie, a cousin to Dr Abdurahman, is the first Moslem girl to gain the Cape T3 Certificate... Miss Hawa Effendi, a niece of the Doctor, has just passed the London Matric in French, Latin, Mathematics and History... The third Moslem girl to distinguish herself is Miss Waradea, daughter of our President. She obtained the Cape Junior Certificate.<sup>84</sup>

The fact that all three young women were in some way related to Dr Abdurahman is significant. 'Ru' and 'Ro' (Rukea and Rosie) were good friends, and pushed each other to excel; as the elder child, Rosie may have felt more pressure in this regard than did Cissie.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, among black Capetonians, Muslim girls seem to have been better educated, thanks partly to Abdurahman's influence, than were Christians.<sup>86</sup>

Then Rosie was fêted for her educational achievement:

The Trafalgar Second Class Public School has achieved a unique distinction by passing the first Coloured girl through the University Junior Certificate Examination (the old School Higher). Miss Rosie Waradea Abdurahman ... has been successful in passing the Junior Certificate Examination of the Cape University. Miss Abdurahman's success will be greeted with satisfaction by the coloured population, for she has gained the distinction of being the first coloured girl from a coloured school to pass this examination and because she triumphed in spite of the many insults she and her parents have had to face in their attempts to place her into a properly equipped secondary school... Miss Abdurahman, with her sister Cissie, who figured so prominently in the Essay Competition, has already set an example to the rest of the coloured girls of South Africa by doing what so few coloured girls do, namely by passing the seventh standard, which she and her sister did at the Annual Inspection of the School twelve months ago ... We trust that Miss Abdurahman will continue her educational successes, and maintain the family name, and add honour to her people.<sup>87</sup>

Educational achievements, then, whether scholarly or more broadly 'cultural', were very highly regarded by Dr Abdurahman and the *APO*. Children, as well as their mothers, had crucial roles to play in 'raising the race'. The *APO* showcased such achievements, and those who excelled were fêted, irrespective of their age or gender. After all, they reflected the Doctor's ideal community.

By 1914, the 'coloured people' could be described by the leader of the ruling party in government as 'civilised'. The *APO* had positioned itself so clearly as 'coloured' in contradistinction to 'native', that Botha could expect sympathy when explaining to a delegation of the *APO* that the best way to preserve the franchise of these men, coloured men, men like Abdurahman, would be to sacrifice African voters.<sup>88</sup> However, as Hermann Giliomee put it, '[t]he fate of the coloured people would be determined not by their racial

identity but by the political interests of the ruling political party.'<sup>89</sup> We are left with the question whether Dr Abdurahman's project contributed, in its very success, to the highlighting of the Poor White problem and the disenfranchisement of black men as part of the state's attempt to salvage whites.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This paper draws on material from my thesis, 'Not only Dr Abdurahman's younger daughter': A feminist exploration of early influences on the political development of Cissie Gool, University of Cape Town, 2002. I would like to thank Deborah Gaitskell, Anna Davin, Kate Darian-Smith, Bill Nasson, Mohamed Adhikari, Helen Bradford and Jane Bennett for useful comments on the thesis. I would also like to thank the communities of Emory University and the Georgia Tech for comments on presentations of some of this material in 2004. I acknowledge the financial support of the Centre for Science Development and the University of Cape Town.

<sup>2</sup> M Adhikari, 'The product of civilization in its most repellent manifestation': Ambiguities in the racial perceptions of the APO (*African Political Organization*), 1909-23. *Journal of African History* 38, 1997, 283.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 284-5.

<sup>4</sup> M Adhikari, 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, 1, 1994, 102.

<sup>5</sup> H. Giliomee, The non-racial franchise and Afrikaner and coloured identities, 1910-1994, *African Affairs* 94, 375, Apr 1995, 203.

<sup>6</sup> J J Van-Helten and K Williams, 'The crying need of South Africa': The emigration of single British women to the Transvaal, 1901-10, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 10, 1, Oct 1983, 20, Table 1. see also Lady Rockley, Women settlers in South Africa, *Journal of the Royal African Society* 33, 131, Apr 1934, 123-129.

<sup>7</sup> APO 15 August 1910.

<sup>8</sup> *Cape Standard*, 27 February 1940.

<sup>9</sup> Cissie Abdurahman would take this tradition into her new home when she married; Ruth Alexander similarly opened her home. Hirson suggests that Cissie and her husband took over this tradition from Ruth, but in fact Albert Lodge, and Nellie Abdurahman as much as Abdullah, led the way (Hirson, *The Cape Town intellectuals*, 170).

<sup>10</sup> Everett claims that 'Mahatma Gandhi stayed with the [Abdurahman] family when he visited South Africa' (Zainunnissa (Cissie) Gool, 2).

<sup>11</sup> See, for instance, APO, 6 May 1911.

<sup>12</sup> This issue is explored in some detail in my work-in-progress, Searching for "Abdul Jemaalee and his wife Betsy", participants in the making of a Muslim elite in Cape Town, South Africa, in the nineteenth century. See also V Bickford-Smith, . *Ethnic pride and racial prejudice in Victorian Cape Town: group identity and social practice, 1875 - 1902*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995 and V Bickford-Smith, Meanings of freedom: social position and identity among ex-slaves and their descendants in Cape Town, 1875-1910. In N Worden and C Crais, eds. *Breaking the chains: slavery and its legacy in the nineteenth-century Cape colony*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University press, 1994; Y Da Costa, and A Davids. *Pages from Cape Muslim history*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter, 1994.

<sup>13</sup> Davids; M Yegenoglu, *Veiled fantasites: cultural and sexual difference in the discourse of orientalism*, in *Feminist postcolonial theory: a reader*, eds. R Lewis and S Mills, Routledge: New York, 2003, 557.

<sup>14</sup> It was only in 1928, in the context of calls for the enfranchisement of women, that the organisation agreed to permit women to attend conferences and to vote for, and stand for, the executive (*Cape Times*, 13 April 1928: 'Feminists win through'). Only one male delegate to the APO conference 'refused to sit in the same room with women'.

<sup>15</sup> One unnamed woman insisted on accompanying her husband to all meetings. This uncomfortable fact was pointed out in the *APO*, which noted with relief that she would be able to join the soon-to-be-formed Women's Guild - and stop coming to the men's meetings (*APO*, 17 July 1909).

<sup>16</sup> G Lewis, *Between the wire and the wall: a history of South African 'Coloured' politics*. Cape Town: David Philip, 1987.

<sup>17</sup> R E Van der Ross, *Say it out loud. The APO presidential addresses and other major political speeches 1906-1940 of Dr Abdullah Abdurahman*. Bellville: Western Cape Institute for Historical Research, University of the Western Cape, 1990, 9.

<sup>18</sup> 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 thesis, University of Cape Town, 1986, 191.

<sup>19</sup> University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives (hereafter UCT M&A) BCZA 83/30-35, Abdurahman family collection.

<sup>20</sup> The *APO* is the only source I have located for the Women's Guild. I have found no evidence of it in the Abdurahman family archives; most of Nellie's material deposited there concerns other aspects of her work. UCT M&A: BCZA 83/30-35: Abdurahman family papers (microfilm, five reels); BCZA 85/21-23: Abdullah Abdurahman papers (microfilm, three reels).

<sup>21</sup> G Lewis, *Between the wire and the wall*. This is the major history of APO politics, and 'Coloured' politics more broadly, focusing on the pre-apartheid era (although the final chapter does discuss this). A less well-known work which covers similar ground is R E van der Ross, *The rise and decline of apartheid. A study of political movements among the Coloured people of South Africa, 1880-1985*. Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1986.

<sup>22</sup> See P van der Spuy, *Not only "Dr Abdurahman's younger daughter": A feminist exploration of early influences on the political development of Cissie Gool*. PhD, University of Cape Town, 2002, Chapter 2 and 3 for details on the role of children in articulating this vision.

<sup>23</sup> C Hall, J Lewis, K McClelland and J Rendall, Introduction to Special issue on gender, nationalisms and national identities, *Gender and History* 5, 2 (Summer 1993), 159 - 164. See Terreblanche for a discussion of the way in which Afrikaans magazines constructed Afrikaans women as mothers of the race (H. Terre Blanche, *Mothers of the nation: Afrikaans women's magazine advertisements in the 1940s*, *Kleio*, 28, (1996)

<sup>24</sup> *APO*, 4 June 1910.

<sup>25</sup> R E van der Ross, *Say it out loud*, 34 -5.

<sup>26</sup> Richard van der Ross mistakenly dates the establishment of the Guild to 1911 (van der Ross, *Say it out loud*, 11).

<sup>27</sup> *APO*, 7 May 1910.

<sup>28</sup> R E van der Ross, *The rise and decline of apartheid. A study of political movements among the Coloured people of South Africa, 1880-1985*. Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1986.

<sup>29</sup> Van der Ross, *Say it out loud*, 11 - 12.



<sup>30</sup>APO, 21 May 1910. emphasis added.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 285.

<sup>32</sup>See, for instance, Lewis, *Between the wire and the wall*; S Bhana, and B Pachai, *A documentary history of Indian South Africans, 1862 - 1982*. Cape Town: David Philip, 1984; B Pachai, *The international aspects of the South African Indian Question 1860-1971*. Cape Town: C Struik, 1971.

<sup>33</sup>Van der Spuy, Cissie Gool, chapter 5.

<sup>34</sup>APO, 5 June 1909.

<sup>35</sup>APO, 19 June 1909.

<sup>36</sup>APO, 7 May 1910.

<sup>37</sup>APO, 19 June 1909.

<sup>38</sup>For details of the campaign, see, for instance, Lewis, *Between the wire and the wall*, chapter 2.

<sup>39</sup>APO, 7 May 1910.

<sup>40</sup>The ritual of Christmas Dinner is just one example: see Selim Gool, interviewed on videotape by Gairoonisa Paleker, University of Cape Town Centre for Popular Memory, nd.

<sup>41</sup>APO, 26 Mar 1910.

<sup>42</sup>APO, 3 July 1909.

<sup>43</sup>APO, 3 December 1910.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>The Guild eventually held a sale of members' work, in 1913, which was poorly attended (APO, 20 September 1913).

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>APO, 25 March 1911. See also M Adhikari, ed. *Straat-praatjies. Language, politics and popular culture in Cape Town, 1909-1922*. Cape Town: buchu books, 1996, 92 - 3.

<sup>49</sup>See van der Spuy, Cissie Gool, chapter 3 and 4 for a discussion of Walter Wooding and the musical culture of the APO.

<sup>50</sup>APO, 3 February 1912.

<sup>51</sup>APO, 24 February 1912.

<sup>52</sup>APO, 23 March 1912. See also APO, 1 June 1912, when Nellie presided over a meeting where A H Gool gave a lecture.

<sup>53</sup>See, for instance, APO, 24 August 1912.

<sup>54</sup>Mrs Wooding, for example, articulated a conservative, if not reactionary, view of women. Speaking in August 1912, she argued for a return to the values of 'fifty years ago', and stressed the importance of self-respect, practical education instead of too much intellectual stimulation ('we should make our homes attractive') and good manners. She did, however, urge action: 'Women of today, South Africa's daughters, who have so much to do, rise up then, and let us be up and doing' (Ibid).

<sup>55</sup>APO, 21 September 1912, 19 October 1912.

<sup>56</sup>*Cape Standard*, 27 February 1940.

<sup>57</sup>This is the first confirmation that Waradea was known as Rosie by this time.

<sup>58</sup>APO, 21 October 1911.

<sup>59</sup>Lewis, *Between the wire and the wall*, 30 - 34.

<sup>60</sup>As the report for the Superintendent General of Education (1914) noted: 'it may be said that the education of European children is the chief duty of the School Boards, and the schooling of Non-Europeans is chiefly attended to by missionary churches on a voluntary basis' (cited in Ajam, *Raison d'etre*, 179).

<sup>61</sup>A separate syllabus was introduced in 1921. It was 'a cross between the primary syllabus for European schools and that for Native schools' (The Superintendent-General of Education, cited in M Horrell, *The education of the Coloured community in South Africa, 1652 - 1970*. Johannesburg: South African Institute for Race Relations, 1970, 41). This proved unworkable and was abolished after 'about a decade' (Ibid).

<sup>62</sup>UCT M&A: BCZA 83/30, Abdurahman family collection, microfilm, reel 1.

<sup>63</sup>Lewis, *Between the wire and the wall*, 33.

<sup>64</sup>Nellie Abdurahman, interviewed by Zelda Friedlander, *Spotlight* 12 March 1948, copy in UCT M&A: BC 580, Zelda Friedlander papers. Everett mistakenly attributes this to Abdullah, not Nellie: 'Although he had been educated in Scotland, Dr Abdurahman was determined that his daughters should not be educated abroad. When the question of their education arose, Dr Abdurahman said that they were South Africans and would be educated in South Africa' (Everett, Zainunnissa (Cissie) Gool, 2).

<sup>65</sup>Ajam, *Raison d'etre*, 172.

<sup>66</sup>UCT M&A: BC 506, Waradea Abdurahman collection, A1.1, Letter from Department of Public Education, Cape Town, to Mrs Abdurahman, 25 October 1907.

<sup>67</sup>*APO*, 1 July 1911.

<sup>68</sup>See, for instance, *APO*, 9 September 1911, where Mr Ficks, the secretary of the men's branch in Hopefield gave a speech to the local Women's Guild. He stated that, 'he thought that one of the first things which required the attention of the Guild was that of education.'

<sup>69</sup>See, for instance, *APO*, 23 September 1911: 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.' A similar complaint was made of Zeekoeivlei (*APO*, 12 August 1911).

<sup>70</sup>*APO*, 1 July 1911.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>*APO*, 15 July 1911, 12 August 1911.

<sup>73</sup>*APO*, 15 January 1910 (emphasis in original).

<sup>74</sup>*APO*, 9 April 1910.

<sup>75</sup>*Sun*, 6 July 1934.

<sup>76</sup>Everett, Zainunnissa (Cissie) Gool, 2 - 3; A Drew, *Discordant comrades. Identities and loyalties on the South African Left*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000, 141.

<sup>77</sup>*APO*, 12 August 1911.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>In February 1913, Dr Abdurahman said that 'he regretted to see our Education Scheme had not yet come to a finality' (*APO*, 22 February 1913).

<sup>80</sup>*APO*, 21 December 1912.

<sup>81</sup>See van der Spuy, Younger daughter, chapter 3 for the poem, and my reflections on it and the short stories.

<sup>82</sup>*APO*, 8 March 1913.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>*APO*, 25 January 1913. Earlier, she was referred to as 'Ruthea'. See *APO*, 18 June 1910.

<sup>85</sup>Apparently, Rukea Dollie later married Dr Abdurahman's brother Ismail (Letter, A Adams to the *Cape Times*, 14 August 1993).

<sup>86</sup>Ajam, *Raison d'etre*, 209 - 213.

<sup>87</sup>*APO*, 25 January 1913.

<sup>88</sup>cited in Giliomee, *The non-racial franchise*, 205

<sup>89</sup>Giliomee, *The non-racial franchise*, 202.