

CLASS ROOTS OF RACIALISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

The abrogation of racial discrimination in our legislation in the 1990s did nothing to change the material conditions of the (mainly non-white) working poor of this country. This should not be surprising, given that “race” and “capitalism” have always gone hand-in-hand, and that the 1994 settlement was all about securing the future of capitalism, not about eliminating poverty.¹

1994 was a shift away from totalitarian rule towards liberal- or bourgeois democracy. It was not about eliminating poverty and inequality in society. Thus, its impact on the racial dimensions of poverty was always going to be marginal. Apart from some spectacular overnight changes in the fortunes of various individual beneficiaries of the ANC government’s BEE policies,² the mass of the (overridingly non-white) working class remain where they were pre-1994, with little or no prospect of transformation under the existing dispensation.

The more things change, the more they stay the same!

Racial prejudice – or more trenchantly, racism or race hatred – has many causes, but in the context of South African history, certainly the most significant of them would be the economic system. That is to say, *racial discrimination*, *black poverty* and *capitalism* are all indissolubly linked. This is how our history has unfolded and how our history will continue to unfold – unless we can put our economics onto a new trajectory, in other words: onto the road to socialism.

AN “ENCLAVE ECONOMY”³

It is not disputed that SA was incorporated into the global capitalist system as an enclave economy (that is, as one which was developed not for the needs of its people, but to serve the interests of the imperialist rulers) for the exploitation of its mineral wealth, chiefly gold and diamonds. What is also not disputed is that the industry, and in turn, the country’s entire economy, was based on forced “ultra-cheap,” “ultra-exploitable” (to use the terminology of F A Johnstone⁴) non-white labour.

The wars of dispossession against the indigenous tribal formations in this country in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were part of the process of worldwide capitalist expansion – that is, part of the process of primitive accumulation known as “colonialism.” In South Africa, the land grabs and enslavement of local people were followed by a yet more devastating process – one of social upheaval to serve the needs of mining capital from the late nineteenth-century onwards. Like a vast numbers of territories in Latin America, the rest of Africa and in Asia, South Africa was incorporated into the world economy as an enclave economy. As already mentioned, this was as one whose sole purpose was to supply the conquering, imperialist centres with never-ending supplies of cheaply-produced raw materials. It was never the intention of imperialism to *develop* the SA economy, only to exploit it. In this regard (and with an eye to locating the formative roots of racialism within the SA historical picture) the following factors⁵ are important to note:

- The viability of the mining industry in this country (especially the gold mining industry) was critically dependent on ongoing flows of *ultra-cheap, ultra-exploitable* labour power. Without this, there would have been no mining industry, as production costs would have been prohibitive.
- In order to secure the necessary *ultra-cheap, ultra-exploitable* labour power, imperialism turned its attention to the indigenous (black) masses, and set in train a further process of land grabs and proletarianisation. This included poll taxes and Land Acts designed to break the peoples’ independence and force them to turn to wage-labour as a means of survival. Among the additional factors which ensured their exploitability were
 - Harsh, draconian labour conditions on the mines, amounting to virtual slavery.
 - Restriction of workers’ contractual rights through the contract system (i.e. the Master and Servant Laws, which for example, made breach of contract by non-white workers a criminal offence, and which ensured the elimination of competitive wage determination)

- The pass system (a system of “movement control and labour regimentation”)
- The compound system – i.e., accommodating mineworkers in conditions akin to concentration camps, to render them more controllable.
- Semi- rather than full, proletarianisation, in terms of which the rural economy functioned to partly support the livelihood of mining labour, so that the mine wage did not have to bear the sole burden of the labourers’ reproduction

By contrast, workers of a non-indigenous background (in short, white workers of European origin) brought to the workplace their “democratic” rights, and organized (often fiercely) in defence of these rights.⁶ As such, they abjured any class-solidarity with their non-white counterparts, preferring to remain a labour aristocracy, and, with the help of the state, ensuring enforcement of their own set of colour bars – the so-called “employment colour bars” which were the means used by the (“politically-free”) white workers to maintain their privileged position. These colour bars included:

- The job colour bar – whereby all skilled jobs were reserved for white workers
- The White Labour Policy – in terms of which the state-as-employer gave preferential treatment to white workers over non-white workers
- Highly discriminatory working conditions for non-white workers (e.g., lower pay for the same work, inferior working conditions, etc – all backed up by legislation)

THE STRUGGLE FOR A NON-RACIAL DEMOCRACY

In circumstances of both national and economic oppression, an option of struggle preferred by a small section of the oppressed educated elite was that of *collaboration*, whereby such elite sought piecemeal advances in their own interests. For them, (from the 1840s already, via the Cape Franchise) it was a norm to serve on unequal, racially-separate dummy advisory councils which had the effect of reinforcing “racial” distinctions and thus, the conditions of exploitation.

The emergence of the Unity Movement in 1943 signalled a clear departure from the politics of reform and collaboration. In rejecting the whole notion of separate political institutions, the Movement stated:

Clearly, no struggle for equality is possible while inequality is being accepted. You cannot simultaneously accept and reject inferiority. No people working the instruments of their own oppression can wage a struggle against that oppression.⁷

The mission of the Unity Movement was to unite the fractions of the oppressed in a single movement committed to nothing less than equal citizenship for all, and abolition of the “rightlessness, poverty and inequality of the nationally oppressed and economically exploited mass.”

In its “Declaration of Unity” of December 17, 1943, the following points are made:

The recognition that segregation is an artificial device of the rulers and an instrument for the domination of the Non European is at the same time the recognition that the division, strife and suspicion amongst the Non European groups themselves are also artificially fostered by the ruling class. From this it follows:

- (a) That no effective fight against segregation is possible by people who tacitly accept segregation amongst themselves;
- (b) That the acceptance of segregation, in whatsoever form, serves only the interests of the oppressors;
- (c) That our fight against segregation must be directed against the segregationists within as well as without, and
- (d) That the unity of all Non European groups is a necessary precondition for this total fight against segregation.

Further:

The aim of the Non European Unity Movement is the liquidation of the National Oppression of the Non Europeans in South Africa, that is, the

removal of all the disabilities and the restrictions based on grounds of race and colour, and the acquisition by the Non Europeans of all those rights which are at present enjoyed by the European population.

The ANC of the day was neither willing to terminate its participation in the Native Representation Council, nor to elevate the unity of the oppressed as a whole above the unity of the African people. In the words of R V Selope Thema, (himself a member of the Native Representative Council), speaking for the ANC at a meeting with an AAC delegation:

. . . the unity of the African people [is] of primary importance. Charity begins at home. They, the Africans, want to unite in their economic and social life, and therefore they have to unite as a race. We have a purpose to fulfill as a united African race. Our aims might be opposed to those of other people, it does not matter. We should follow the law of self-preservation. We should love each other first before we loved other people.⁸

The SA Indian Congress, too, had no appetite for principled unity or the demands of a programme of equal democratic rights. Speaking on their behalf at the Second Unity Conference in 1943, Mr Al Kajee, dealing with the question of the franchise as contained in Point 1 of the Ten Point Programme, stated that the Indian Congress stood by the policy of compromise, that they had accepted the principle of a 'communal' vote based on educational and property qualifications. He made it clear that the merchant class leadership had no interest in building a movement for liberation from economic exploitation and political domination. They wanted a loose 'unity' that could be manipulated to improve their bargaining position in various negotiations with the ruling class. What mattered to them were their trading rights and they would make any compromise to secure these. Thus they were quite prepared to sell out the franchise rights of all the oppressed, including the vast majority of the Indian people, in order to secure the trading rights of the few merchants."⁹

The Unity Movement was uncompromising in its approach. Its position was clearly articulated in the 1985 "Declaration to the People of South Africa:"

We strive for full democratic rights for all, regardless of colour, 'race' or sex. We strive for the dismantling of apartheid in all walks of life; for the dismantling of the location and homelands system and for the re-unification of South Africa. Equally importantly we strive to put an end to the oppression and exploitation by local and foreign interests, of the mass of rural poor who bear the brunt of the evil system that dominates South Africa at present. We strive for principled unity and a programmatic struggle to liberate the oppressed from the yoke of servitude and the daily insults of colour and 'race' discrimination. The rulers have intensified their divide-and-rule policies . . . Under the pretense of 'power sharing' and the fraud of 'independent national states' (homelands) the rulers have set up more elaborate machinery both to divide the oppressed and to harness gutless collaborators to work that machinery

BREAKTHROUGHS AND SELLOUTS

The Unity Movement position was vindicated in the 1980s when the mass of unfranchised citizenry rejected the ruling class fraud of "separate nations," by boycotting the dummy representative bodies (Management Committees, Urban Councils, The Tricameral Parliament), effectively rendering them unworkable. (In elections in 1984 for the House of Representatives and the House of Delegates, only 30 percent of registered coloured voters and only 20 percent of registered Indian voters cast their ballots.)¹⁰

The 1980s was a period characterized by mass revolt as well as economic crisis for the country, forcing its rulers to consider their options. Clearly, apartheid's days were numbered and the only question was how to secure the future of capitalism.

The deal cobbled at CODESA provided for a single parliament but left control of the economy in the hands of the capitalists. South Africa would commit to the emerging regime of "liberal markets" in effect reducing any obstacles to free investment by foreign corporations (including privatisation of state assets), and there would be total commitment to honouring the foreign debt. In other words, CODESA created the hoax

of “one South African nation” (but whose wealth-generating machine would remain firmly in the hands of the capitalists). By as early as 1996, GEAR put paid to any hopes of “a better life for all.”¹¹

WHITHER SOUTH AFRICA?

There is an expectation in some quarters that sooner or later – in the broad sweep of historical time – the world will swing back in the direction of social democracy. This is when capitalism, having exhausted the potential for exploitation offered by neo-liberalism, will once again focus on a Keynesian-type model for consumer-led growth. When this happens – so the hope goes – countries like South Africa will benefit not only from the economic opportunities to arise but also from the more people-friendly implications inherent in a system of social democracy.

But the Unity Movement thinks otherwise. In its Ten Point Programme (revised in 2013) it has the following to say:

However, the excesses of neoliberalism should not blind us to the fundamental crisis of capitalism. Whether the economy is more oriented or less oriented towards a welfare state does not eliminate the hazards fundamentally inherent in the system. Capitalism remains the major cause of instability, environmental degradation, underdevelopment, war and starvation in the world today. Under its regime, corruption and waste flourish. It is the single greatest threat to sustainability of the planet, it has long ago exhausted its potential for progressive development, and is now characterised by its destructive tendencies. It is a system compulsively in search of infinite growth in a finite world. Today, its only promise to humankind is a future of increased barbarism if not annihilation.

The Movement’s implacable commitment to non-racialism is reflected throughout the Ten Point Programme, for example, one of the aims is “To rid society of all forms of racial, colour, tribal, gender and class discrimination – including where these occur in the political, economic, social, educational and cultural areas of our lives.”

CONCLUSION

A socialism that succeeds in bringing about thoroughgoing social justice can be perceived as a rising tide which lifts all boats. This would mean that a thriving, prosperous (future) South African society (only possible under socialism) will have eradicated a multitude of its present ills, not least that related to racialism. This idea is echoed in the following quote

The fight against racism is . . . organically connected to the revolutionary struggle to up-root the capitalist social system, which has created and perpetuated it, and to create an egalitarian socialist world-order in which cooperation, not competition, is the norm. Only in such a society, based on the rational planned organization of production sufficient to meet the essential needs of all, will every human being, regardless of color, gender, or nationality have the opportunity to develop themselves to the fullest. Only under socialism will racial prejudice and discrimination be eliminated once and for all.¹²

Notions like “racial equality” however, start us off on the wrong foot, as it presupposes the existence of “race” or “separate races.” We need to promote the scientifically proven truth that race is a myth – a social construct of fairly recent origin, which in this day and age “remains an important ideological mainstay for the capitalist elites” of the world.¹³

It would be fitting to end this section with the stirring message contained in the Unity Movement’s 1951 “Declaration to the People of South Africa – a message which still resounds today:

Who are the people to whom we are addressing this declaration? Who constitutes the South, African nation? The answer to this question is as simple as it would be in any other country. The nation consists of the people who were born in South Africa and who have no other country but South Africa as their motherland. They may have been born with a black skin or with a brown one, a yellow one or a white one. They may be long-headed or round-headed; straight-haired or curly-haired; they may have long noses or broad noses; they may speak Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho, English or Afrikaans, Hindi, Urdu or Swahili, Arabic or

Jewish; they may be Christians, Mohammedans, Buddhists, or of any other faith. So long as they are born of a mother and belong to the human species, so long as they are not lunatics or incurable criminals, they all have an equal title to be citizens of South Africa, members of the nation, with the same rights, privileges and duties. In a nation it is not necessary that the people forming it should have a common language or a common culture, common customs and traditions. There are many nations where the people speak different languages, consist of different nationalities with different cultures. All that is required for a people to be a nation is a community of interests, love of their country, pride in being citizens of their country.¹⁴

NOTES

¹ See for example, Neville Alexander's address to the fourth Strini Moodley Annual Memorial Lecture in May 2010, entitled, *South Africa – an unfinished revolution?* and his reference in that lecture to "Professor [Sampie] Terreblanche's summary of the hidden negotiations about the economic aspects of the negotiated settlement, in his *A History of Inequality in South Africa, 1652-2002.*"

² Mining magnate Patrice Motsepe's fortune is currently estimated at R32 billion, while brother-in-law Cyril Ramaphosa's stands at R6 billion. (<http://venturesafrica.com/south-africas-top-five-wealthiest-individuals/>, 25 July 2015))

³ A term used by GC Mhone in his article *Enclivity and Constrained Labour Absorptive Capacity in Southern African Economies*, published in 2001 by *The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)*

⁴ F A Johnstone, in his *Race, Class and Gold* (Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1976) details the imperatives upon which the gold mining industry in South Africa was built.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Quoted in *Majority Rule: Some Notes (Volume XX)* by Victor Wessels (writing as Sarah Mokone) in the *Educational Journal*, circa 1977

⁸ From the minutes of the Joint Meeting of the National Executive Committees of the ANC and the AAC, April 17-18, 1949. Pp. 40.

⁹ *Majority Rule: Some Notes*, op cit. (page 42)

¹⁰ Article, *History of South Africa: Government in Crisis, 1978-89*, Source: Area Handbook of the US Library of Congress website

¹¹ In a searing comment, Phyllis Ntantala (mother of former ANC stalwart, Pallo Jordan) had the following to say: "The Agreement cobbled by the South African regime and the ANC at Kempton

Park is one of the biggest Frauds that was ever sold to a people . . . It was agreed to give the reins of power to the ANC on condition that . . . the Economic Structure was left intact. This meant that besides the conglomerates that own the wealth of South Africa, the 11% of South Africans would still control 80% of the economy.”(from NTANTALA, PHYLLIS: (2003) *Mistakes and Miscalculations: The Agreement*, unpublished article)

¹² From *Capitalism & Racism*, 1917 number 12, 1993, International Bolshevik Tendency

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ From *Grand Apartheid: Their Nation and Ours, in Majority Rule: Some Notes (XX)*, page 111, circa 1977.

WHY WAS RACIALISM NEVER DISMANTLED IN SOUTH AFRICA?

INTRODUCTION

At the end of World War 2 it was revealed for the whole world to know that in the preceding period the German dictator Adolf Hitler and his SS Storm-Troopers had carried out massacres of Jews in a number of concentration camps in the country. Gas chambers had been created and used in order to carry out what Hitler called “the final solution” to the “Jewish problem”. Hitler considered himself the supreme leader of the Aryan race – a glorified concept of a master race of Europeans or Herrenvolk. Nazi ideology denigrated the Jewish population as an inferior race that needed to be excluded and exterminated. The motivation of Hitler’s activities was clearly economic, but the painful method became racial. Between 1934 and 1944 some six million Jews were massacred in genocidal acts of extermination.

In 1991, after the break-up of the Yugoslav government which had been set up by Marshal Josip Broz Tito at the end of World War 2, a civil war broke out in the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The notion of a Slav population led by Slobodan Milosevic was used to foment a racial cleavage between Bosnian Slavs, Croats and other minority groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This led to a protracted persecution of the minority groups by the Slav population which ended in the extermination of over a 100000 people. A new term was introduced in the vocabulary of racism, namely, “ethnic cleansing”.

In Rwanda a policy of divide and rule was used by the Belgian rulers for the purpose of installing in Kigali a Rwandanese monarchy which was styled as the monarchy of Rwanda/ Burundi. The system of indirect rule followed in which the Rwandan monarchy acted as the agency of Belgian authority. A deliberate policy of splitting the Rwandan population into Tutsi and Hutu tribal entities, each inimical to the other, was employed to balance off the weaknesses of one group against those of the other with Belgium creaming out the profits accruing from this divisive policy. The system of atomizing the population into so many splinters led to the growth of further factions, each intent on behaving as a focus of power. The result was civil war in Rwanda following upon the destruction of the monarchy. It was the dynamics in the failure of building peace out of the civil war which ultimately led to the 100 days of genocide in Rwanda between April 7 and July 4, 1994. During this time between 500000 and 1 million Tutsis together with a minority of Hutus were exterminated. The results of these events have been a direct disturbance of the entire relationship between the people of Rwanda, Burundi and the

eastern province of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The seeds of racialism are a perennial weed which cuts across brothers, neighbours and nations, especially in an African continent which is seen by imperialism as the bedrock of loot.

In South Africa the ruling class has ever since the middle of the nineteenth century followed a policy of divide and rule in which the nascent South African nation was cut up into tribes, national groups and races. Numerous genocidal events happened in this country. Apart from the brazen wars of conquests and dispossession, they engineered the Nonqhawuse cattle killing of 1857, the massacres at Bulhoek, Sharpeville/Langa, Boipatong and Langa at Uitenhage. Other purely political activities led to the starvation and death of thousands of the oppressed. In the sphere of labour there has been no industry in South Africa more genocidal in many different ways than the mining industry. When the police force employed by the ANC government and directed by President Jacob Zuma massacred workers at Marikana, they seemed set to prove the validity of the umbilical cord linking racialism to capitalism in the classical fashion demonstrated in an earlier period by Herrenvolkism .

Racial ideology was employed as an instrument of staving off the unity of the oppressed as well as making it impossible for the component parts of the nation so conceived to understand the obvious logic of building one nation. The ruling class itself adopted a Herrenvolk mentality similar to that of the Nazis in Germany. Herrenvolkism imputed biological inferiority to the oppressed. It has been the central task of the revolution in South Africa to overcome all these divisions and strike out boldly on the path of building one nation. Like in Germany in the period between the two World Wars, or in Yugoslavia, or in Rwanda/Burundi, the common denominator in the destructive use of racialism has been the presence of a capitalist system the aim of which was to service a voracious group of parasitic rulers. Herrenvolkism is a racist creed upon whose roots geminates other racialisms which forever will impede the building of one nation. The main task of the present study is to expose the fallacy of racial identity in any nation as well as to illustrate the fatal connection between racialism and capitalism.

THE JIMMY MANYI SAGA

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who composed the racist picture of a “Rainbow Nation” in South Africa and several homilies about white and black keys on a piano, was wont to promise us a dismantling of apartheid in SA. However, neither he nor leading ANC government officials and apologists ever dared to consider the demolishing of the

entire social economic structure in SA from 1994 onwards. Corporate power was assumed to be eternal. The transition from “apartheid to democracy” would be achieved in a seamless movement in which old and new political structures would rapidly be replaced by new persons in parliament, provincial and local government. A plethora of auxiliary political and cultural organisations grew which brought in the new administrative strata and judicial cadre. A “better life for all” had been promised. No one can doubt that money has been found to fill the pockets of an effective minority of black persons. The strange thing is that two disturbing features of this situation stood out:

- the number of the poor together with the quality of poverty was worsening daily;
- racialism both at the centre of economic life and in the daily lives of the people was growing apace.

Already in May 2008 a wave of xenophobic attacks on migrants from other African countries presented South Africa with a social crisis of mounting proportions. Surely this was a form of racism in operation among impoverished working class communities throughout the country. Officialdom devised administrative methods of putting a band-aid on the festering sore.

The problems posed by immigrants from elsewhere on the continent were constantly compounded by the boiling pot of the Zimbabwe situation. Chameleon-like, officials were dithering over these matters when the Jimmy Manyi saga erupted. As the ANC-government was working on an amendment to the Employment Equity Act in February 2011 the Solidarity Trade Union rang alarm bells on how the new labour quotas being contemplated would gravely affect the labour position of “Coloured” workers in the Western Cape. Other people extrapolated similar woes to “Indian” workers in Natal. In this context, smouldering with anxieties of race, Trevor Manuel, former Minister of Finance and a Minister in the first Zuma presidency, exhumed the skeleton of a speech made by one Jimmy Manyi, a Cabinet spokesperson, when he was Labour Commissioner early in 2010. Manyi had been concerned with the “over-

supply of 'Coloureds' in the Western Cape". Apparently scandalised, Manuel had written an open letter to Jimmy Manyi in a philippic accusing Manyi of rank racism. This cauldron of contradictions in the ANC was heightened when several leading ANC officials including the General Secretary, Gwede Mantashe, came to Manyi's defence. While Manyi apologised like an injured innocent, Mantashe reeled out percentages of "Indians" and "Coloureds" in substantiation of the need for new equity quotas for "Africans".

It is likely that Manuel's intervention was driven by the electoral desperations of the ANC in the Western Cape. On the other hand the ANC was shown to be clearly hoisted on the horns of a racist dilemma. The racism of this organization's equity policies is also often exposed in the special racial arrangements it legislates on both Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment. It is interesting how a political party so absolutely married to a deregulation of the financial markets so conveniently and brutishly pulls out regulation and planning by law in a purely racial terrain, pitting one block of workers (usually from a "minority" population group) against another block of workers. And so, constantly, "African" workers are defended against "Coloured", "Indian" and "White" workers. What is this ANC racialism all about? Is the ANC going to degenerate to the level of enacting its own population removals a la Verwoerd? And, are the actual population removals being carried out presently in the North West, Limpopo and Mpumalanga by the mining companies with the connivance of the Department of Minerals and Energy also driven by racial considerations? What is this racialism all about? Is ANC-racism a systemic feature of the economy of the country?

In a recent lecture Neville Alexander averred that it was the termination of social revolution which 1994 actually constituted that ushered in the racial outlook of the ANC. One needs to add though that the Freedom Charter (Clause No. 2) in its provision for equality of "national groups", "races" and customary usages actually denotes a state, not of non-racialism, but rather of multi-racialism in the democratic state of the future. Of course, the concept of a multi-racial democracy is a contradiction in terms. Nonetheless, this is not accidental. The Freedom Charter was

predicated on the project of a mixed, Keynesian or social democratic economy in the society of the future. The willy-nilly acceptance of the South African economic structure in 1994, dominated as it was by four big monopolies, was therefore true to promise. The situation was accentuated by the further slide of the ANC in the period 1991 – 1993 to an adoption of the neo-liberal prescriptions of the World Bank for the South African economy.

We will now set out to show how the acceptance of capitalism drives a racialistic political and economic agenda in a thorough-going manner.

OUR FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH RACIALISM 1936 - 1960

Ever since the 1930s in SA liberals have found it difficult to accept the precepts of the segregation policies of British imperialism. They were further horrified when the vertical provisions of state policy became qualified into horizontal, spatial relationships by apartheid. Truly, racialism had come home. In opposition to this political system liberalism demanded political equality for all persons in education and in the franchise rights along the scale of a qualifying civilisation test. When African nationalism came upon the scene in the 1940s, it joined the liberal critique by asserting the fundamental equality of all races in society. This was in favour of the assumption of franchise rights by all citizens in the country irrespective of such factors as race, sex, religion or culture. This can be classified as the general human rights critique provided by both liberalism and African nationalism. To be sure, it should be borne in mind that while the equality test prevailed in the political sphere, it was articulated along a broader social terrain to include access to the social rights of work, education, land and health. In demonstration of this position such a broad human rights regime was codified in the political and social provisions of the Freedom Charter put out by the Congress Movement in 1955. All liberals in the country, those carrying a capital L and others with a small 'i', amongst whom African nationalists should be counted, came into programmatic agreement. In other words, this broad human rights platform was upheld by such a wide spectrum of personalities as Albert Luthuli, Joe Slovo, Patrick

Duncan, Margaret Ballinger, Trevor Huddleston, Oliver Tambo, ZK Mathews and Nelson Mandela.

The Non-European Unity Movement reply to liberalism on the question of racialism can be divided into two phases. The first phase covered the period 1936 to 1960. The second phase occurs between 1960 and 1980. Along this line was developed the NEUM theory of non-racialism. In an historic sense we are still living through a continuum of the second phase. The strictures on this development which have been made by Dr M Adhikari seem inappropriate. He would like the NEUM theory on racialism to spring out fully-fledged in 1943 like Minerva from the lock of Jupiter. This is both fantastic and unhistorical. He would appear to be impatient with the organisational strategy adopted in 1943. His impatience goes against the grain of both mass consciousness and organisational maturation in the broad mass movement. In this sense his remarks become ludicrous. The NEUM position on non-racialism was outlined in *The Background to Segregation* presented to the national Anti-CAD Conference as early as 1943. It was further amplified and elaborated in the course of the two phases indicated above.

In contradistinction to the position of the liberals a new school of thought arose in the middle of the 1930s. These young intellectuals were strongly influenced by the developments driven by Fascism in Europe and the Bolshevik-Leninist response to it. They understood Fascism to be a product of capitalism in crisis. The main mass force behind Fascism, running berserk out of fear for its own economic survival, was the German and Italian petit bourgeoisie. Taking cover behind the power of the big corporations and the might of the Army, the Fascist hordes mobilised entire nations in Germany and Italy into uniform. Peculiarly their ideology was cemented together by a racist mystique which divided the nation into superior and inferior human races. The final solutions provided by Fascism of racial scapegoating and war resulted in the occupation of Europe by the Axis armies and a plunging of the whole world into armed conflict. How could we understand these events which were so clearly a social microcosm of what was happening in SA?

The women and men of the new school in SA came to form the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM). It is the critique offered by this body of thinkers and actors which is germane to the issues we are seized with. In the first place we need to associate our NEUM theory on racialism with the political strategy of non-collaboration developed by the radical partisan movements in occupied Europe during World War 2. Secondly, the thought itself went back to Darwin and the theory he provided for the classification of species which included a single human species. Nothing in this theory, in spite of its corruption by some of Darwin's epigones, found evidence for the existence of more than a single human species deriving from a common evolutionary root. The school of the NEUM was strengthened by internal researches made by supporters in the Progressive Forum based in Johannesburg. These young radicals were able to rely on the historical researches conducted by Gordon Childe on the history of the early hominids. These had gone on to look at historical man in ancient China, India, Mesopotamia and the Nile Valley. It is also valuable to take note that Gordon Childe traces the intellectual energy of humankind beyond the evolution of *Homo sapiens*. He brings it forward to the period when people, having overcome the initial problems posed by the *Iron Age*, crossed the threshold of pre-history. Throughout these historical times humankind develops on the basis of energy, not from another or external source, but rather relies on materials and other forms of life existing in the material world. The work of Gordon Childe is brought into its own by the inestimable contributions made by the Leakey's at Olduvai and Western Kenya. In this country these labours have been well supported by the researches of Phillip Tobias at the site called *The Cradle of Humankind*. The position of the NEUM thinkers was affirmed by this long line of intellectual labour in the following ways:

- Firstly, there is only one human species, i.e. one human race.
- Secondly, the human species appears to have originated on the African continent.
- Thirdly, the dispersal of humans throughout the world is a matter of the historical evolution of continents and climates.

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- Fourthly, the ability to self-reproduce internally is universal to all human beings whatever their pigmentation may be.
 - Fifthly the question of colour is irrelevant to climatic conditions.

These researches were summarised by the NEUM in the seminal work, *The Contribution of the Non-European Peoples to World Civilisation*, subscribed by BM Kies in 1953.

In a number of political publications members of this School further asserted that race, class and gender were indissolubly bound in the political economy of capitalism. Race theory was orchestrated by the dominating class. And, in spite of the many claims made by racial ideologues, they found no evidence for the existence of different species, hence “races”. Conclusive evidence indicates the existence of only one human race – that of *Homo sapiens*. Current racial ideology is clearly driven by capitalist development and interests throughout modern history. This thesis is pursued from the very founding documents of the NEUM, in the declaration it made to the nations of the world (1945) and to the people of South Africa (1951). It is further pursued in the analysis of the racial pogroms that broke out in Natal (1949 -1950) between the Zulu speakers in that province and people of Indian origin. The driving feature of the analysis puts an emphasis behind the building of a new nation in South Africa, one which would overcome racial atomisation through the abolition of the capitalist system. Racism is discovered to have articulated a world population divided into two. At the top stands the Herrenvolk or “master race” of human governors. They also control the wealth of nations. Below that lies the mass of humanity located outside of Europe and North America. These are the “races” of the oppressed. In actual history these “races” have come to compose the labourer class of capitalism. For purposes of this analysis it is immaterial whether the claimed human “races” are two or three or four. In the hands of historical non-collaboration, the battles with imperialism would propel the birth of a new nation through the termination of capitalism. By these means would racialism be crushed and the liberty of all be equally assured.

In any event, in the sphere of scientific endeavour, these issues have been put to rest by the decoding of the human genome completed in the last few years. This shows uncontestedly that all humans share the same genetic make-up.

THE MATURE CRITIQUE OF RACIALISM

The NEUM critique of racialism was started collectively by a School of students of Language, History, Biology, Economics, Social Anthropology and Medical Science, including Genetics, inside South Africa. These were carried out inside a political critique integrated by non-collaboration. The NEUM study of racialism directly led to the development of its Ten Point Programme designed to guide the political struggle of the oppressed towards the building of an anti-imperialist nation. Whilst the theory itself renounced racialism in all its guises, the birth of an anti-imperialist nation would bring the system of capitalism to an end.

This tradition owes its further elaboration to the work of Hosea Jaffe. Having left the country in 1960, Jaffe embarked upon a prolonged career of struggles and studies ranging from Kenya, Ethiopia, Egypt, the Maghreb, the Middle East, India, and the United Kingdom to Western Europe. During this time he also made enduring contributions with other “third world” scholars to the theory of under-development. In this context he was able to subscribe the mature critique of racialism basing himself on the principles developed by the School of Non-collaboration in South Africa. These studies were published in an array of essays and booklets whose central themes were finally collated in the monumental work, the *Pyramid of Nations* (1980). The principle conclusions reached by these studies can be summarised in the following points:

- ✓ The biological / genetic / anthropological studies already covered between 1936 – 1960 in South Africa are taken as the basis of these later contributions.
- ✓ A global view of the accumulation of capital from the 14th century onwards indicates the scale of measurement in space and time. It covers the

development of capitalism during the Crusades, in the Italian capitalist states of Mediaeval Europe; the Moorish - Andalusian – Dutch – English bankers and merchants; European slavers in West Africa, the Caribbean and South America; and early mercantile colonies in the Cape, Goa, the Dutch East Islands and Australasian settlements. These comprise the territorial framework upon which was founded the British, Dutch, French, Belgian, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian empires, all outside of Europe. In a parallel process an American empire flung itself upon the Islands of the Caribbean. Later it superimposed itself upon the European acquisitions in the Caribbean and South America.

- ✓ The outward expansion of capitalism was carried on the wings of a racial doctrine that lumped the Europeans together into superior nations of conquerors. Similarly, non-Europeans were lumped together into savage hordes of disdainful barbarians whose saving grace was their ability to bear slavery and various other forms of toil. The racist creed dictated that it was their lot to be vanquished and turned into beasts of burden, hardly above the apes. This was the ideology of conquest, enslavement and subjugation. As a belief system it allocated tasks and responsibilities upon Europeans and non-Europeans alike. The former had to undertake the civilising mission of plunder, pillaging and enslaving in order to milk out capitalist profitability. The latter had to bear the insults of being converted into slaves in the very land of their forefathers and silently carry the cross of the converted as a producer of the profits for the master.
- ✓ The tendency of conquest followed patterns predisposed by the nature of pre-colonial societies. In one class of pre-colonial societies we had been ruled by local forms of feudal despotism, and where upper class domination of society already existed, colonialism merely corrupted the ruling caste of local leaders and sovereigns. These were co-opted into servants of colonial majesties and a system of indirect rule was established. In these cases racial stratification was broadcast downwards and the colonialists were able to find willing hands that

carried out the dirty work of local oppression and exploitation of both labour and resources. Here the colonial system found no lack of labour. Such was the case in West Africa, the Maghreb, the Middle East, the Indian sub-continent and in Mexico.

In the second class of pre-colonial societies, those designated by Morgan to be in a state of “savagery”, colonialism went on to decimate local populations in genocidal wars of extermination, clearing up the lands for European settlement as if they had never been occupied before. The remnants of local populations were herded into reservations and similar special settlements, spatially segregated from settler communities. These settlements were a mirror image of metropolitan societies and acted like outposts of the central system. In that way imperialism had transplanted itself from one territory to another, complete with European “white” labour. This was the case in America and Australasia. On the other hand, in the southern states of the USA and Brazil large scale plantation slave labour was imported and infused into the local conditions. These are the ideal conditions which led to the emergence of a colour-caste system of racialised labour power.

The third category is those pre-capitalist societies designated by Morgan to have been in a state of “barbarism”. This happened in South Africa where the local communities could not be decimated by capitalism except in the case of the San people whose remnants were driven off to arid semi-desert areas not immediately accessible to the colonists. Their place was filled up by large masses of indentured labour which circumstance introduced a system of chattel labour. The interesting confluence of slave labour, indigenous conquered labour and settler domination resulted in the introduction of a system of segregation that compartmentalised by racial categories the different strands of labour.

- ✓ As a doctrine racialism was the official theory of the imperialist and oppressor. Beyond this it rapidly took a hold of all other forms of writing and art. Especially in the nineteenth century, all major thinkers and writers in Europe, including the

“innocuous” producers of the novel and drama, spouted racist belief at one time or another.

- ✓ Finally, Jaffe is able to demonstrate that in the crisis of racialised colonialism experienced by German and Italian capitalism in the inter-war period, it was in terms of racial dogma extending itself into internal genocide and inter-imperialist war that Fascism sought final solutions to its economic problems. In this sense a capitalist self-image constructed by “race” had gone out to recreate itself overseas and come back to bite imperialism. This comprehension of racialism has no organic experience outside of capitalism in a history covering over 500 years. Racialism exists throughout in all specific conditions as a function of capitalist exploitation and domination.

RACIALISM IN OUR LIVES

No other method of analysis is able to disclose the true dynamics of racialism during our time. The liberal and nationalist approach is so incompetent in its cognitive abilities that it offers a false analysis of the racial factor in the capitalist state. Because it lacks class analysis it conceals the truth from the liberal thinker, largely because the latter is complicit in capitalist exploitation. Whilst the position of Ballinger and Duncan is self-obvious *ab initio*, that of Mandela and Slovo reveals its utter bankruptcy after 1994 in the course of a successful “democratic” overturn. The longer “the transition from apartheid to democracy” proceeds, the more the racial cancer of capitalism devours the very entrails of human progress. The masses face a growing state of joblessness; the basics of a civilised existence in the sphere of social delivery diminish daily; and the bosses construct a new colour bar system comprising corporate power in alliance with a “black” BEE appendage. Segregation dogs the South African colour bar system to the very end. It needs to be added that the dynamics of global capitalism worked in tandem with this situation.

The current global framework is dictated by World Bank economics. Debt dominates Third World economies. A continuous state of war waged by Imperialism has not abated in this sector ever since 1652. These wars are waged over the resources of

these lands such as oil, mineral deposits and agricultural products. War by peaceful means has been continued in the process of globalisation or the integration of these subsidiary economies into Imperialism through financial deregulation and the continuing system of financialisation of all the markets. South Africa after 1994 has been at the centre of this enterprise. This is what economically segregates the oppressed into a class of the poor. This is what gives exploitation the colour of the dispossessed, emphasising the hidden racial factor. In this way imperialism carves out imperialist nations and proletarian nations. And this is what causes the racial bickering to erupt uncomfortably in the ranks of the ruling class, or the ANC in this country, from time to time. This will also bring about episodic outbursts of xenophobic violence in working class districts. These kinds of eruptions occur in South Africa and bubble all the time in the politics of other African countries. Imperialist finance throughout the colonial and neo-colonial world demonstrates its political colours through such cycles and spasms of racialism. This is the politics of racialism in the countries of the oppressed. It underlines the economics of imperialist domination.

The central persuasion of our conception cumulatively identifies three conjoined factors in modern history. These are capitalism, racialism and exploitation. They are bound together in a Gordian knot which spells starvation and barbarism to the oppressed whilst it provides the illusion of progress to the ruling class. Non-racialism is the cornerstone of the class struggle both in the proletarian nations and in the oppressor nations of the North. In the absence of the non-racial factor the class struggle is turned into a formal contestation between “haves” and “have-nots” in a non-revolutionary, economistic manner – the very hallmark of populist labourism. On the other hand it is non-racialism, by bringing an end to the system of capitalism, which brings about a bright future for all humankind.

So is it demonstrated that the universal law of genuine human progress lies along the path of non-collaboration, anti-imperialism and a socialist revolution.

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THE UNITY MOVEMENT AND NONRACIALISM IN SPORT

The paper will focus on the history of the South African Council on Sport (SACOS) with special reference to non-racial school sport, emphasising the influence of Unity Movement ideas in the formulation of some of the policies adopted by both.

INTRODUCTION: A BRIEF HISTORY OF NON RACIAL SPORT

After 1948 the Apartheid government's repressive and discriminatory laws were rigidly applied in sport as in all other areas of social life in South Africa. While on the one hand, "Whites" only sports bodies were further bolstered by the enactment of these laws on the other hand sports bodies amongst the oppressed groups which had been organised on a racial basis into "Coloured", "African", "Indian" and even "Malay" sports bodies started to consider forming non-racial bodies.

The oppressed groups, which will hereafter be referred to as Blacks, were strictly prohibited from any sporting contact with whites except as spectators and then they were herded into separate sections, through separate entrances of the sports stadia where only white teams played.

When the Apartheid government became aware of the first stirrings of a challenge to the status quo from Black sport federations it reacted by announcing what was South Africa's first official sports policy in 1956. The intent and content of this sports policy is spelt out by Desai and Veriava as follows: *"apart from making explicit the state's commitment to the separate organisation of sports, it also insisted that black federations seeking international recognition would be forced to do so through the existing white organisations in South Africa, and that athletes who attempted to travel overseas to engage in activities 'designed to change South Africa's traditional racial divisions' would not be issued with passports (Draper 1963: 6). The broad application of the latter measure effectively banned any black sportsperson from competing in international competition without the explicit support of the state."*¹⁴

They go on with the following quote; *“The government does not favour inter-racial team competitions within the borders of the Union and will discourage such competition from taking place as being contrary to the traditional policy of the Union – as accepted by all races in the union...The policy of separate development is in accordance with the traditional South African custom that whites and non-whites should organise their sporting activities separately. The inclusion of different races in the same team would therefore be contrary to established norm and custom. (Minister of the Interior Naudé, cited in Lapchick 1975: 35)”*¹⁴

Desai and Veriava go on to say *“Although the state’s policy would be variously amended in order to navigate the bumpy terrain created by an increasingly powerful campaign to ensure white South Africa’s exclusion from international competition, state policy continued to reflect a deep commitment to the basic tenets of the 1956 policy”*¹⁴

Added to this the playing of sport was governed by the Group Areas Act of 1950 and proclamation 65 of 1956 which stipulated that all public places of recreation, including sporting events, theatres and concerts in white areas could not be frequented by non-whites and vice versa.¹⁴

It was thus against this backdrop that the development of the non-racial sports movement, which was to become a part of the more broadly based Anti-Apartheid struggle has to be seen.

The origins of the non-racial sports movement are well documented and include a personal account by Dennis Brutus, generally acknowledged as being the prime mover behind the formation of both SASA and SANROC.¹⁴

Briefly the origins of the non racial sports movement can be traced to the formation of organisations like the Committee for International Recognition in 1955, the South African Sports Association (SASA) in 1958, and its successor, the Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC) founded in 1963.

According to ES Reddy a former Director of the United Nations Centre against Apartheid, the issue of discrimination and segregation in sports was first raised during

the Indian passive resistance campaign of 1946-48. George Singh, who became a founder member of SASA, SANROC and SACOS, was among the leaders of that campaign.

These organisations were formed by non-racial sportspersons, *“to fight against racism in sport and press for international recognition of the non-racial sports bodies in South Africa. Their leadership was largely from the Indian and Coloured communities as the Africans were not practising many of the codes of sport with international affiliations.”*¹⁴

So for example, the main motivation behind the formation of SASA was the result of a growing demand by black sporting federations for international recognition in the wake of such recognition being fought for and granted to the Non-Racial South African Table Tennis Board (SATTB) in 1955.

The SATTB was the first non-racial sports body to be formed in 1948. The Committee for International Recognition was able to secure its recognition by the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) and have the white body expelled. As a result a SATTB team was able to participate in the world championships in Stockholm in 1957, but immediately thereafter the government refused passports to its teams, ruling that no black could compete internationally except through a white sports body. A detailed history of the SATTB is contained in the 5th BGM Secretarial report 1983.¹⁴

The formation of SASA was met with hostility from the state which first started by harassing and subsequently banning the leadership of SASA under the Suppression of Communism Act. However showing that they would not be cowed by this intimidation from the state, and not a little ingenuity they went on to establish the South African Non Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC) which was set up specifically to exploit the fact that the South African National Olympic Committee's (SANOC) exclusively white membership was in direct conflict with the non racial constitution of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). It was on that basis that SANOC's membership of the IOC was challenged.

After being banned and imprisoned on Robben Island for 18 months for leaving the country illegally, Dennis Brutus went into exile together with other members and played

a leading role in ensuring that racist white South African sport was expelled from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and subsequently from most other international competitions and sport federations through SANROC based in Britain and the USA.

It was SANROC which had been responsible for South Africa being excluded from participation in the Olympic Games in Mexico in 1968 and which subsequently successfully, campaigned for it to be expelled from the IOC in 1970.¹⁴

The Apartheid state, in an attempt to appease the clamour both from inside and outside the country, for the sports policy announced in 1956 to be changed, responded by making certain concessions and reforms such as their multinational sports policy announced in 1976 and implementing recommendations made by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in 1983. These reforms and concessions were totally rejected by SACOS.¹⁴

It was during the 1970s, that sport in South Africa became defined, from the perspective of the oppressed, in terms of “white”, “establishment”, “multinational” or “Apartheidsport” on the one hand and non racial sport or “Sacossport” on the other.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL ON SPORT (SACOS)

The groundwork laid by SASA and SANROC was taken forward to a higher level by the South African Council on Sport (SACOS) which was formed on 17 March 1973 to “strive for non-racial sports structures from school level upwards and to generate opposition to and to expose discrimination in sport, in sport sponsorship and facilities in South Africa.”¹⁴

An excellent account of the history, structure and functions of SACOS is given by Noel Goodall in his master’s thesis at Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) in 2004.¹⁴

When opposition to the Apartheid regime by political organisations like the ANC, PAC, SACP and UM were ruthlessly suppressed in the 1960’s, sport became arguably the only avenue through which opposition not only to the sports system, but to the whole system of Apartheid could be expressed.

And thus it was inevitable that as stated by Goodall, “SACOS undoubtedly played an important role by filling a void created by the banning of the major anti government movements and by adding a new dimension to the role of sport as a vital social activity.”

Certainly many Unity Movement inspired activists and sportspersons saw it as such and became involved in non racial sport as a means to achieving political ends as it were.

After its formation in 1973, SACOS developed into a strong organisation which by the mid 80's had established itself both nationally and internationally, as the “*Sports Wing of the Liberatory Movement*” and as “the authentic representative of non-racial sport” in the country. It had Sam Ramsamy, the president of SANROC as its external representative based in Britain, was an affiliate of the Supreme Council for sport in Africa, the French sports federation the FSGT and had fraternal links with a number of Anti-Apartheid Movement organisations in Europe and anti-South African Sports organisations like Halt All Racist Tours (HART) in New Zealand, and the American Coordinating Committee for Equality in Sport and Society (ACCESS), amongst many others. SACOS was also recognised by the UN Committee against Apartheid Sport (UNCAAS) and the International Committee Against Apartheid Sport (ICAAS) which was based in Sweden. (See BGM secretarial reports for complete list of affiliations and associations

At its height in 1988 SACOS had 30 affiliates representing 19 different codes of sport. The affiliates included two school sports organisations SAPSSA and SASSSA, the Tertiary institutions sports association (SATISA) and 8 Provincial Councils of sport.¹⁴

SACOS was seen both by the establishment and by conservative elements within the ranks of the black population as being responsible for bringing “politics into sport”. This statement reflected the belief in those quarters, that sport and politics should not be mixed. Whereas SACOS in fact saw the sports struggle as being integrally linked with the struggle for freedom from racial oppression and economic exploitation. Hence, it was not surprising that, in the wake of the HSRC report in 1983, the government labelled SACOS “*an enemy of the state*”.¹⁴

Goodall summarises the role of SACOS very well as follows:

“In its reaction to this ideology (of Apartheid) SACOS had adopted as its goal and guiding principle, the principle of non-racialism. SACOS not only challenged apartheid sport on the basis of this principle, but also exposed the fraudulent reformist acts of the state and instilled an awareness, locally and internationally, of the evils of Apartheid. This is the new dimension SACOS added to the role of sport.”¹⁴

SACOS obviously attracted adherents of all the political tendencies each of which sought to gain hegemony within its ranks. So much so that during 1985 SACOS held meetings with all the major political organisations within the Broad Liberatory Movement, including the UDF, AZAPO, National Forum and New Unity Movement which all endorsed both its status as the “sport swing of the liberatory movement”, and its policy of political non-alignment.¹⁴

However it is not hard to see why some of its detractors especially from within the ranks of ANC aligned organisations, accused SACOS of in fact being aligned to the Unity Movement.

Clearly this was so because, as will be shown shortly, so many of the policies and practices adopted by SACOS appeared to be influenced by Unity Movement ideas.

In terms of its constitution, Sacos held Biennial elective conferences (BGM's), annual general council meetings and regular National executive meetings. Over the years a number of special conferences were also held. Sacos meetings were characterised by a high level of debate. In fact it was of such a standard so as to put our current parliament to shame! All matters that had a bearing on the policies of Sacos were debated and decisions taken, after specially commissioned research papers were read at conference.

Another feature of SACOS conferences was the strict dress code applied to delegates.

The last BGM, its 11th, was held in Cape Town 22 and 23 April 1995.

THE UNITY MOVEMENT (UM) AND SACOS

Briefly, the UM which was founded in 1943 as the NEUM promoted the following core principles and policies: Non-racialism, the building of a single undivided nation, non-collaboration and anti-imperialism, the Ten Point Programme (TPP) of non negotiable minimum demands and the concept of principled struggle.

Stated simply non collaboration meant refusing to work the machinery of one's own oppression. This policy was given practical effect by implementing the weapon of the boycott which was deployed not only against institutions and agencies of the state but also against persons from within the ranks of the oppressed who were found to be guilty of collaborating.

The policy of non collaboration and the boycott weapon were seen as being integral to the philosophy, tenets and practice of the NEUM and as being inseparable from its Ten Point Programme (TPP) of political demands.

It is generally accepted that it was the UM that first introduced the principle of non racialism, into political discourse in South Africa. It is an incontrovertible fact that the UM played a seminal role in propagating the principle of non racialism in the '40's and 50's, notwithstanding an attempt by Adhikari to debunk this idea.¹⁴

The UM concept of non-racialism has to be seen as being in contradistinction to the Multi-racialism of the Liberals and the ANC- SACP with their four nation thesis.

The UM idea of non racialism was linked to that of the building of a single, undivided nation, as expressed by the UM slogan "We Build a Nation"

Although the founders of the non racial sports movement cannot be directly linked to the UM, Dennis Brutus for example does admit to having been influenced by certain members of the organisation.¹⁴ Also, it is highly likely that many of those who initiated the development of the non racial sports movement were inspired by the NEUM's *Declaration to the Nations of the World in July 1945* and *The Declaration to the People of SA* of 1950, as well as other UM writings which espoused the non-racial ethic. Examples of these are: *Background of Segregation* by Ben Kies (1943) and *Origin and Development of Segregation in South Africa* by W.P. van Schoor (1951).

When the New Unity Movement (NUM) was formed in 1985 as the re-incarnation of the NEUM, some of its members were already members of SACOS and its affiliates at code level and in the provincial councils of sport. NUM members assumed leading positions in the various codes, in the Provincial Councils of Sport and served on the National executive of SACOS.

The NUM gave its full support to SACOS, while fully accepting its non aligned position when members of its national executive addressed the general council meeting of SACOS in Cape Town in 1985.¹⁴

It should therefore not come as a surprise to discover that sympathisers and members of the UM had influence inside Sacos forums but that is not to say that other political tendencies had no say within the organisation.

In fact it would be true to say that most supporters of SACOS were members of tendencies other than the NUM.

Let us have a look at SACOS policies and some of its practices. SACOS did not only concern itself with discussing sports policies. It also took part in activities which while promoting the interests of non racial sports persons also became involved in initiatives, more broadly linked to its role as an organisation involved in the political struggle as part of the broad liberatory movement.

SACOS: PRINCIPLES, POLICIES AND PRACTICES

1. THE POLICY OF NON RACIALISM

As alluded to above this was the defining principle on which SACOS was based. The SACOS understanding of non racialism agreed in every detail with the principle as enunciated by the UM. So ingrained was the principle of non racialism that when the Black consciousness movement, through AZAPO, arrived on the scene, and took issue

with the non racial policy of SACOS they failed in their attempts to influence the organisation to change its stance in this regard.¹⁴

It was its adherence to the principle of non racialism that ensured that SACOS would be implacably opposed to all the race based reforms introduced by the government through the Koornhof Bills of 1977 and the Human Science Research Council's Recommendations of 1983.

2. THE DOUBLE STANDARDS RESOLUTION (DSR) AND “NO NORMAL SPORT IN AN ABNORMAL SOCIETY”

The DSR which was another defining feature of SACOS correlated very well with the UM's policy of non collaboration. It was first adopted in June 1977 at a General Council meeting and had been formulated as a response to the governments newly announced policy of multinational sport or “normal sport” as they called it.

The DSR as adopted in June read as follows:

“Any person, whether he is a player, administrator or spectator, committed to the non-racial principle in sport, shall not participate in or be associated with any other code of sport which practises, perpetuates or condones racialism or multi-racialism. Players and or administrators disregarding the essence of this principle shall be guilty of practising double- standards, and cannot therefore be a member of any organisation affiliated to SACOS”¹⁴

The DSR acquired an overtly political dimension when its application was extended to the rejection of all discriminatory government institutions. This was done in a further resolution adopted in September 1977.

The resolution read:

“No member of SACOS shall in any way condone, encourage, foster or advocate racialism or discrimination in any form and no individual associated with SACOS or its members shall in any way condone, encourage, foster or advocate racialism or discrimination and for the purposes of this clause the participation in, support of,

*oral forms of government bodies designed to entrench and /or promote of people via bodies such as the Coloured Persons Representative Council, the South African Indian Council, Local Affairs Committee's, Community Councils, Management Committee's and the like, or any successor thereto, shall be deemed to condone or encourage or foster or advocate racialism and discrimination"*¹⁴

A further dimension to the DSR was added when the slogan "No normal sport in an abnormal society" was formulated. As recalled by Frank van der Horst SACOS Vice President at the time, the slogan was formulated by an official of the WP cricket board, Abel Jordaan.¹⁴

The slogan soon gained wide spread acceptance and helped in raising the political consciousness of all oppressed communities since it succinctly articulated the idea that non-racial sport could only be achieved in a liberated, non-racial democracy.

As Van Der Horst says *"The strict application of the DSR policy and the "No normal sport in an abnormal society" battle cry, clearly identified SACOS as the sports wing of the liberatory movement"*.¹⁴

However, the strict application of the DSR did become contentious and, as subsequent events show, came to be its undoing. For example the use of "Permitted Venues" and the use of sports facilities at Segregated University Campuses came under review in 1983 already.¹⁴ And so, for example, after a prolonged period of deliberation a decision to relax the moratorium on using sports facilities at the segregated universities resulted in UWC being used as the venue for the second SACOS sports festival in 1988. The DSR itself was also to come under fire from the ANC and its allies soon thereafter.

1. THE NATIONAL SPORTS FESTIVALS

SACOS hosted two sports festivals in Cape Town in 1982 and 1988. Dubbed *"The Olympics of the Oppressed"* these festivals were staged to show case non racial sport and helped to counter the misperceptions and lies peddled by its detractors that SACOS

was small, inconsequential and only concerned with “politics”. Detailed reports of these events are contained in the 5th and 8th BGM Secretarial Reports respectively.

2. THE SPORT AND LIBERATION CONFERENCE

This conference was staged in Hanover Park, Cape Town 20 - 21 August 1983. It occurred over the same weekend as Danie Craven’s International Rugby Media conference and on the launch date of the United Democratic Front (UDF).

Spurning an invitation from Danie Craven to attend his media conference, SACOS decided to take advantage of the presence of the international media both to debunk and expose Craven’s initiative as a fraud and to highlight the true state of affairs prevailing in the country.

This conference which was attended by more than 1000 delegates representing a wide range of organisations, including sports, community and trade union bodies deliberated on a number of papers prepared by SACOS members. This conference was a landmark event which helped cement the role of SACOS as part of the broad liberatory movement.

5 input papers delivered at the conference were published by SACOS.

3. THE MN PATHER MEMORIAL LECTURE

SACOS started the practice of having an annual lecture in 1982 both as a fund raising venture and as a means of introducing non racial sports persons to a broader perspective on developments outside of the sports arena. In 1986 the lecture became so named to honour the memory of the founding general secretary of SACOS, Mr MN Pather who had also been involved with both SASA and SANROC. He died in 1985.

Those invited to deliver the annual lecture were prominent in the liberatory struggle and included persons like Dullah Omar who delivered the inaugural lecture, Alec Irwin, Education officer for FOSATU at the time, Gwede Mantashe, General secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) at the time and Father Smangiliso Mkhwathswa

secretary of the Catholic churches institute of contextual studies, amongst others. All these lectures were published by SACOS.

4. THE MORATORIUM ON INTERNATIONAL SPORT CONTACT

In 1977 SACOS successfully campaigned for the United Nations, through its Commission Against Apartheid in Sports (UNCAAS) to impose a Moratorium on international competition with South Africa. A resolution forbidding all contact with international sports federations was adopted. This supplemented the Gleneagles Agreement through which South Africa's membership of the Commonwealth Games was suspended 6 months previously. True to its principles SACOS forbade any of its affiliates from international sports contact. And when UNCAAS instituted a black list of sportsmen who violated the terms of the moratorium SACOS instituted an Internal Blacklist of defectors from non racial sport.¹⁴

5. THE SACOS SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR AWARDS.

This was an annual event to honour the top achievers in each of the codes affiliated to SACOS.

6. BREAKING DOWN RACIAL BARRIERS COMMITTEE

Always aware of its relatively poor support base in the African townships, SACOS tried to address this by setting up a Breaking Down racial Barriers committee in 1984. The purpose of this committee was to explore ways and means of extending SACOS influence into the townships. This proved to be an extremely difficult exercise as access to the townships by non Africans was prohibited by law and the Bantu Affairs Boards rigidly controlled the use of facilities in the townships, as illustrated by the Dan Qeque stadium affair.

An example of difficulties faced by SACOS is the act that officials like Frank VD Horst, Ihron Rensburg and Allan Zinn were arrested and charged with being in the New Brighton Township illegally.

As far as school sport was concerned “one of the major problems experience when dealing with the schools in the ‘townships’ was teacher apathy. This was so because sport in the DET schools was organised by the Department of Sport and its employees who were mostly job-seeking, washed-up athletes from the ranks of establishment sport. They obviously were not interested in promoting sport but in siphoning off the money which was more part of their programme than anything else.

7. POLITICAL NON-ALIGNMENT

As alluded to above, the question of political alignment became a contentious issue for SACOS. Debates concerning political alignment within SACOS forums started in earnest in 1983 and came to a head in 1988 with the birth of the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) inspired National Sports Congress (NSC) which insisted that SACOS become aligned to the MDM / ANC and that it drop the Double Standards Resolution (DSR)

It was in response to this development that Colin Clarke the General Secretary mounted a spirited defence of the non aligned position of SACOS as recorded in the secretarial report to the 8th BGM in 1988.

Clarke strongly emphasised the fact that all policies adopted by SACOS were accepted only after rigorous debate and that all decisions taken were arrived at democratically.

NON RACIAL SCHOOL SPORT

The Non racial school sports organisations were arguably the most important affiliates of SACOS and given the devastating effect that the demise of non racial sport came to

have on school sport for the oppressed children of this country we believe special mention of its history is merited.

The paper presented by Hamilton Petersen at the National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre (NAHECS) Conference of 2005 gives valuable insights into the role of these important bodies highlighting and contrasting as they do, the situation that existed in the schools of the oppressed before 1992 with the situation that currently prevails namely, no or very little organised school sport, and no or very little teacher involvement in the schools of poor, working class children.

We learn that the first attempt at creating a non racial schools organisation was the South African Schools Sports Board catering for primary school learners which was established in the 1950's. After the establishment of SANROC, the need for a high (senior) schools sports organisation was seen. With some former officials of SANROC taking the lead, the South African Senior School Sports Association (SASSSA) was established in 1961.¹⁴ In 1965 the South African Primary Schools Sports Association (SAPSSA) was established. These bodies both affiliated to SACOS, SASSSA in 1977 followed by SAPSSA in 1979.

The author cited above gives a good account the roles played by these bodies in promoting non-racialism in sport, emphasising the fact that teachers who were members of the Cape African Teachers' Association (CATA) and the Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA) both of which were affiliated to the UM played leading roles in both SASSSA and SAPSSA.

The Apartheid Regime after 1948 introduced 'Bantuised', 'Indianised' and 'Colourised' education and went to great lengths to prevent contact between these groups at any level. For example in 1970 the CAD used Proclamation No.26 of 1965, an amendment to the Group Areas Act of 1950, to prohibit "mixed" school sport. This diktat was published in the Education Bulletin of the CAD and stated that "Coloured" schools must stop participating in any sort of sport with "Bantu", "Indian" or "White" schools.

Furthermore, any “Coloured “ school that happened to be in a “white” group area was prohibited from any sort of sporting contact with any other “Coloured” school.¹⁴

Progressive teachers realised that they were engaged in the battle for the minds of the youth and the schools of the oppressed in the “70’s became “sites of struggle”

It is well known that learners had in 1976, 1980 and 1984/85 shown a rejection of both “gutter education” and oppression and exploitation. Petersen suggests that SACOS and its schools organisations had helped to create this “*Liberation culture*” which was so pervasive at that time. Teachers from the progressive teachers’ organisations and SACOS teachers played an important role in liberating the minds of the youth from “the racist poison being administered by the apartheid regime.”

Petersen informs us that the organisation of sport under SAPSSA and SASSSA was of a particularly high standard. They were both multi-coded, catering for up to 16 different codes of sport.

The codes catered for by SAPSSA and SASSSA joined all national bodies that were affiliated to SACOS. Besides attending the national meetings of these codes and participating in their structures and sharing their expertise, the national SASSSA team played against the adult provincial team of the province in which the tournament was held (as in cricket) or played in their B-Division tournament, or against a ‘colts’ team as in rugby. In the primary schools two national teams were selected and played a match to conclude the tournament.

SAPSSA and SASSSA teachers regularly participated in coaching clinics and wrote examinations organised by adult (senior) codes of sport as in rugby, cricket, swimming and athletics. SAPSSA and SASSSA teachers also participated in the administrators’ courses run by the provincial councils of sport. SAPSSA and SASSSA teachers were well equipped and well skilled as the result of them certification courses in coaching, judging, umpiring, refereeing etc.

Most senior players in the adult codes were products of these two organisations. SAPSSA and SASSSA came to be known as the nursery of SACOS.

SAPSSA and SASSSA were actively involved in the dissemination of liberatory ideas. At SASSSA this was transmitted to the learners through Workshops which became the “17th code. SACOS sport was on the agenda of every meeting and all discussions at every tournament. SACOS literature and the literature of most of the political tendencies were distributed at all meetings and many of the tournaments. At local level in a number of centres, depending on the popularity of the code in the area, school sport was played on Saturday mornings to accommodate parent interest in the code. Teachers were voluntarily out in force on Saturday mornings, refereeing, and coaching, umpiring and accompanying teams. Teachers acted out of commitment to the “sports struggle” as prosecuted by SACOS.

Teachers under the banner of SACOS showed total commitment in sport and society. Being non-aligned politically, SACOS, SAPSSA & SASSSA provided an organisational home for teachers of all progressive political persuasions but also for many who simply identified with its principles and policies. As SACOS was linked to community and political organisations many were influenced by the various tendencies within SACOS. This provided further impetus to the political struggle.

Many SACOS teachers took leading roles in community organisations and Petersen describes how SACOS teachers involved in the sports struggle were victimised for their efforts and citing the example of an incident in the Eastern Cape in 1985 when the CAD tried to summarily transfer 3 teachers to distant parts of the country, as punishment for their involvement in and promotion of Sacos Sport. The community rallied to the defence of these teachers and the CAD backed down.

However this picture of SASSSA and SAPSA sketched by Petersen came to an end with the establishment of the United Schools Sports Association of South Africa (USSASA).

After 1994 SAPSA and SASSSA joined USSASA .The former immediately resigned from SACOS while the latter initially retained its membership of both.

From that point on a very gloomy picture of the situation existing in the schools of the oppressed is painted: *“There is no doubt that in the case of schools the children of the*

poor are being discriminated against. In order to redress this situation massive funding is needed that will enable South Africa's poor full access to and equity in education, sport and society."¹⁴

Bodies like SASSSA and SAPSSA ceased to exist after becoming part of the United USSASA and as a result organised school sport, to a large extent, only occurs at the former model C schools.

THE DEMISE OF NON RACIAL SPORT

Sadly, since 1998 developments inside of SACOS and in the country generally, led to the total collapse of organised sport amongst the oppressed as had existed under SACOS and the demise of SACOS itself.

This history is documented.

Whilst Goodall gives a well reasoned account of how and why SACOS became "marginalised", as he sees it, Brown makes the assertion that the demise of Non-racial sport and of SACOS was brought about as a consequence of the Negotiated Settlement pursued by the ANC and its surrogate the NSC.¹⁴

The reason why sport became a part of the negotiated settlement is easy to understand. The white minority, especially the Afrikaner section for who sport was like a religion, had been deprived of international sporting contacts as the result, firstly, of being expelled from the IOC in 1970 and secondly, because of a United Nations and Commonwealth supported Sports boycott imposed on the country in 1977. This had a debilitating and demoralising effect on them.

As the negotiations proceeded and agreement was being reached on the terms of the Settlement, one of the key concessions that the ANC and its Imperialist allies needed to make was to guarantee that the Sport moratorium would be lifted and that South Africa would be re-admitted to the IOC and other international sports federations, in order to

allay the fears of Whites that they were not getting much in exchange for agreeing to hand over political power to the Black majority.

The ANC and its allies used sport as a bargaining chip in the Negotiated political settlement and that by so doing they set in train a process that was to result in the effective destruction of Non-racial Sport in general and of SACOS in particular.

Douglas Booth from the University Of Brisbane, Australia conducted a survey of the sports set up in South Africa in the wake of the lifting of the sports moratorium and the unification of sports codes in 1995. Booth's summing up of the situation prevailing in 1995 is an indictment of those who accused SACOS of being out of touch and unrealistic in their approach to resolving the contradictions of South African sport. With reference to the lack of structural reform in South African sport by which is meant; "the provision of sports facilities, the development of sporting skills and the enhancement of sporting opportunities amongst the disadvantaged"., he says, *"While some former anti-apartheid activists use sport to empower local communities, the majority view it as a convenient route to self-enrichment or, at best as a symbol of racial reconciliation .Few care about developing sport in disadvantaged communities."*¹⁴

This statement echoes what SACOS had to say in its memorandum addressed to the UNCAAS in October 1992 which states:

*"The entire unity process has been bedevilled by bad faith, behind the scenes machinations, jockeying for positions and corruption. There is not a single example of unity being established in good faith and on a principled basis nor has the previous gains made by non-racial sport been entrenched. Imbalances are not being addressed and development programmes are non-existent."*¹⁴

In his presidential address to a General Meeting of SACOS in 1994 Reg Feldman had this to say:

*"Non racial sport has been smashed. United sport is in disarray. Facilities in the townships are lying idle. People on the ground are dissatisfied, not only in sport but in general also with the ANC and the NSC."*¹⁴

An organisation like the South African Amateur Athletics Board (SAAAB) which had been in existence for more than 40 years rather chose to cease to exist in October 1994 than “go into unity with a “united” national athletics organisation that was the outcome of political bargaining and achieved by methods that to the board were morally unacceptable”. There has been no athletics in the townships since its demise.

In conclusion it is asserted that although SACOS had some limitations it nevertheless brought a unique perspective to the sports scene in South Africa and that subsequent developments have vindicated the principled positions it adopted especially on the lifting of the sports moratorium and on the unification of sports codes.

THE WAY FORWARD: RE-AWAKENING THE SACOS ETHOS

It is generally accepted that the promise of “*a better life for all*” as promised by the ANC in 1994 has not materialised. This applies with even greater relevance to sport amongst the disadvantaged, working class communities in every part of the country. The situation in school sport being particularly dire.

Whilst the National Union of Metal Workers’ (NUMSA) initiative of building a united front for socialism holds some promise of mounting a challenge to the hegemony of the ANC and its neo-liberal economic policies, the question that arises is whether a new SACOS-like organisation is needed to address the specific problem of sport for the working class poor of this country. If so, then what is to be done to reawaken the SACOS ethos in schools and amongst existing sports clubs which are based in working class communities today?

The demise of organised sport amongst poor, working class communities with its attendant social evils needs to be addressed, and community leaders and activists should agitate for the provision of sporting facilities where these people live.

Whilst reports of attempts being made amongst SACOS aligned teachers in Cape Town, Gauteng and Port Elizabeth to revive school sport in those areas are to be welcomed there is a pressing need for the question of the importance of organising

sport in working class communities and specifically in the schools located there, must be placed on the agenda of all community based organisations.

The SACOS ethos was about sports organisations of the people uniting in struggle against Apartheid sport. The challenge to-day is the building of a mass based sport movement under the direction of social forces aligned to the working class and the poor of this country. The question is there a role for a SACOS-like organisation at this time?

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THE CAPE AFRICAN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION (CATA) and the
TEACHERS' LEAGUE OF SOUTH AFRICA (TLSA):
The LEGACY and the PROMOTION OF NON-RACIALISM in
EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

We have trodden the mud and the slush of the road to segregation. Are we going to choose to continue along that road? Or are we going to take the only road to liberty and equal rights for all - the road which leads to the unity of all the oppressed people against those who oppress us.¹⁴

In South Africa progressive teachers' organisations played a uniquely important role in the liberation of its people. The role played by these teachers' organisations can never be underestimated. It is clear from just a superficial overview of their activities that a more comprehensive study needs to be undertaken.

The aim of the oppressor was to keep those with intellectual ability in the oppressed communities in subjection. It was then not surprising that many potential academics amongst the oppressed became teachers in the schools. It was mostly for this reason that the most vibrant intellectual and political spaces in South Africa throughout the 1930s to the 1950s and beyond were occupied in the teachers' organisations. Progressive teachers were therefore organised in the Cape African Teachers' Association (CATA), the Orange Free State African Teachers' Association (OFSATA), the Natal African Teachers' Society (NATS), the Natal Indian Teachers' Society (NITS), the Transvaal African Teachers' Association (TATA), the Transvaal Indian and Coloured Teachers' Association (TICTA), and the Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA). These organisations played a significant role in the liberatory movement in South Africa.

The oppressor had designed an education system that, as a senator Schoeman states in discussing the Eiselen report¹⁴, “*he had no objection to teaching Natives to be more useful on farms and industries, but they should at all times be taught that they could never be Europeans*”¹⁴. In order to accomplish this goal the state envisioned that they needed the oppressed to accept their inferior status. And how would this be realised? By enslaving the minds of our children. This “enslavement of the mind” had to begin in the schools, and to this end the Apartheid Regime, after 1948, introduced ‘*Bantuised*’, ‘*Colourised*’ and ‘*Indianised*’ education. Progressive teachers realised that in the schools they were engaged in the battle for the minds of the youth. Schools in the forties and thereafter became “sites of struggle”.

However, Richard S Canca, editor of *The New Teachers’ Vision* had this to say in the October – December 1955 issue:

*Man’s domination over domesticated animals is not so much a question of his ability to overcome them physically as it is the fact that they accept his dominant position. In like manner the domination of one human group by another is never complete unless and until the subordinate class mentally accepted his thralldom.*¹⁴

The teachers in CATA and the TLSA realised the challenges that lay ahead!

The teachers realised from the outset that the “battle for the minds” of the youth was going to take place in the schools. The evisceration of black political rights gave impetus to the struggle by the majority of teachers leading up to the measures taken by Hertzog and Smuts against the oppressed, but specifically as from 1936. This was intensified by the introduction of Christian National Education and the enactment of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and the then imminent transfer of “Coloured” and “Indian” Education to separate education departments. This was, in short, the background against which our teachers had to educate the youth. This was the background that informed the tenets and philosophy of the teachers of the forties and fifties and propelled the radicalising of the teachers’ organisations, and in particular, CATA and the

TLSA. The watchwords of the teachers in particular in these two organisations as regards the policies of the state were “*impede, obstruct and undermine*”¹⁴.

RACISM

WP Van Schoor, president of the TLSA in February 1951 in his monograph ***The Origin and Development of Segregation in South Africa***, one of the most insightful analyses of the origin and nature of segregation in this country begun and concluded his treatise with the now famous dictum “*A people desiring to emancipate itself must understand the process of its enslavement.*”¹⁴ With this in mind we delve into the causes and manifestations of racism in South Africa.

South African educational history is replete with examples of racism and in particular the state’s divide-and-rule policies. From the initial four education departments, the state further dissevered the education of South Africans into eighteen education departments (which then included the fourteen “Homelands / Bantustans”) – this facilitated the practice of oppression and exploitation.

The concepts of “race” and ethnicity were imposed on the world, particularly on Africa, by European colonialism. Linked to this was the notion of tribalism, the origins of which are to be found in ancient societies such as in England, among the Norsemen and the Dutch. The essence of racism was ‘a belief in the superiority of a particular race’; further, racism classifies people into groups on the basis of physical qualities. Those who believe in this notion saw a causal link between the physical characteristics of groups of people and their intellectual and cultural make-up. In terms of racism it is regarded as natural that a “superior race” should rule “inferior races”. It follows then that the superior “race” should control the political and economic systems of countries since inferior “races” lack the competence to do so. Both CATA and the TLSA believed that there is only one human race, *homo sapiens*, and that racism is regarded as unbelievably wicked, evil and illegal in essence and incapable of producing equity. The ideas of the master race were rejected as well as the state’s attempts to engineer the collaboration of the oppressed in these racial structures.

From Shepstone (the founder of the Native Policy) to Grey and the notorious Glen Grey Act (1894), to Rhodes and the Boer Republics that arrogantly declared “*there would be no equality between “White and Black in Church or State;”*”¹⁴ all had one thing in common – the provision of a cheap labour force in the country. These views found favour with the masters in England when they even instituted a grant-in-aid for industrial education.

Racism, a product of the Colour-bar system, arose in all earnestness after the military conquests in the Cape. This allowed for the recruitment of cheap labour on the mines in Kimberley and the Transvaal.¹⁴ This, in short, was then the background against which the apartheid philosophy was conceptualised.

Divisions amongst the oppressed: Let us consider the other side of the demarcation. How did the oppressed react to this racist group mentality? In his address to the Anti-CAD Conference in 1943 the young Ben Kies made an appeal to those classified as “Coloured” to rid themselves of the slave-mentality and the adherence to racial tags.

It suited the oppressor to foster these artificial differences: up to this day people see themselves as African/Black oppressed, the Coloured oppressed, etc. Even in “progressive organisations” such as the United Front, which supposedly posits a socialist viewpoint, members have been elected on a “racial” basis. When this happens it becomes a simple step to assert that one group has more privileges than the other, and then another step to claim superiority over the other. If we do not nip this cancer in the bud and we fail to realise the crushing power of that most insidious and paralysing of diseases – we shall be reduced to a slave mentality.

THE WORKERS PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA (WPSA)

The fountainhead of the development of the principles and policies of the NEUM to which both the CATA and the TLSA were affiliated, originated in the WPSA.

In a “*Retrospective View*” Baruch Hirson states,

The basis for the programme of the NEUM was conceived within the ranks of the Workers Party of South Africa (WPSA), a small group of Cape Town based Trotskyists who stressed the centrality of the land question and the demand for the vote in their programme.¹⁴

In the Cape their members became the leaders of the (Coloured) Teachers League of South Africa and the Cape African Teachers Association; they dominated the intellectual left of Cape Town through the Lenin Club, the Spartacus Club and then the New Era Fellowship. They recruited to their ranks academics and to a lesser extent workers, and could even count a former nun as a leading member.¹⁴

It was clear from replies by Trotsky and the writings of Ben Kies and Tabata that the policy of non-racialism as well as the policy of non-collaboration had been developed in the cauldron of studies, debates and discussions in the WPSA.

In April of 1935 Trotsky wrote a reply to the thesis on *The Agrarian and National Questions* submitted by the Workers Party of South Africa and differed on the question of non-racialism

When the thesis says that the slogan of a "Black Republic" is equally harmful for the revolutionary cause as is the slogan of a "South Africa for the whites," then we cannot agree with the form of this statement: whereas in the latter there is the case of supporting complete oppression, in the former, there is the case of taking the first steps towards liberation.¹⁴

Later in what appears to be a reply, Tabata, in emphasising the non-racial ethic, states in

his "Awakening of a people":

Here we may emphasise that it is not an anti-White or racist movement. In fact racialism is foreign to it and indeed wholly contradictory to its principles. Racialism is an enemy of Non-European unity. If at the moment the movement is called "The Non-European Unity Movement", this is dictated by the objective conditions existing in South Africa to-day,¹⁴

THE PHILOSOPHY OF NON-RACIALISM

CATA and the TLSA were both affiliated to the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM). This signalled a break from their past as both organisations realised their community of interests and the common goals for which they were striving. Although originally and historically founded in racial structures by their predecessors, they took the “*new road*” after 1943. In historic joint conferences these two organisations, In the Cape Federal Teachers’ Council, like their parent body, the NEUM, attempted to counter the deep-seated racialism ingrained into the body politic of South Africans.

Members of CATA and the TLSA realised from an early stage that whilst the divisions existed between “white” oppressor and the “black” worker and the unemployed oppressed, the divisions were at the same time much the same as in other parts of the world; they continue to be such to this day: that is, the palpable difference that exists between the ruling middle classes and the proletariat, the more ‘dangerous class’, identified as the precariat,¹⁴ and the unemployed.

It was realised from early on that the struggle in education was linked to the struggle for political emancipation and democracy. The influential Teachers’ Federal Council, comprising CATA and the TLSA, demanded an unsegregated system of education at all levels in South Africa. Individuals within these organisations espoused the non-racial ethic in their writings: Ben Kies (1943) in *Background of Segregation (editor of the Educational Journal)* and W.P. van Schoor (President of the TLSA) in *Origin and Development of Segregation in South Africa* laid the foundation for the acceptance of the principle of non-racialism.

In *Background of Segregation* Kies wrote:

“...They have carved us up into three groups until today we look upon ourselves as either African oppressed, Coloured oppressed or Indian oppressed. They intend to reduce us all to the same low level of slavery, but to keep us segregated even in subjection. Each section is to be in the same chains as the other, but each group is always to think that its chains are somewhat different.”¹⁴

Further, both organisations realised that the struggle in education cannot be divorced from the struggle in society. In his monograph “The Colour Bar in Education” Edgar Maurice, in the triennial AJ Abrahamse lecture delivered in April 1957, states

“.....the colour bar in education is no more than one aspect of a wider and more general system known as the colour bar, which operates in many spheres of society apart from education. I refer, of course, to political colour bar, the economic colour bar, the social colour bar, the residential colour bar, the official and unofficial colour bar and, worthy of mention because so oft overlooked, the religious colour bar.”¹⁴

Tribalism inextricably linked to racialism is ably dealt with by Livingstone Mqotsi at one time secretary of CATA. In his “*Tribalism: An Archaism and Divisive Myth*” Mqotsi, an anthropologist, rejects the concept of different tribes and “races”. He states:

The social system that imperial history over the ages came to categorise as tribalism is a social formation that relates to a particular stage in the development of human society and social institutions. For historical reasons this social formation has come to be associated almost exclusively with Africa. Yet the sociology of recent and more enlightened historiography has demonstrated that this is a fallacy and a distortion of fact. Indeed, evidence shows that the concept of the existence of "tribes" is a myth that has been developed into a fully-fledged mythology by the advocates of "race" differences, racial superiority and its converse, racial inferiority. But the mythology of "tribalism" as a constant and unchanging social reality and its geographical location continues unabated¹⁴.¹⁴

THE NON-EUROPEAN UNITY MOVEMENT’S (NEUM) POLICY OF NON-COLLABORATION

Equally important was the NEUM’s policy of non-collaboration to which both CATA and the TLSA strictly adhered. Whenever the ruling class and its collaborators tried to draw the oppressed into the divide-and-rule structures or to wreck the independent national

liberatory movement, it found its powers so weakened that every dummy institution or system created to divide and rule failed in its basic purpose.

The policy of non-collaboration was designed as an antidote to the poison spewed by the oppressor into working the system of one's own oppression. Many amongst the oppressed could not abide by this policy, particularly the leadership of the African National Congress (ANC) and the merchant class in the South African Indian Congress (SAIC). It was particularly this that led to the breakdown between the AAC and the ANC and also later when the AAC, the Anti-CAD, the SAIC and the ANC met on 8 July 1943 in Johannesburg in preparation for the first Unity Conference¹⁴.

In 1944 the All African Convention (AAC) which was affiliated to the NEUM rejected the ideas of trusteeship and asserted their right to full equality. Few realised what effect this would have on the psyche of the masses. *"It was only the abrasive condemnation of racialism and the governance of the chiefs by Steve Biko and a hegemonic Black Consciousness Movement in the 1970s that forced the ANC into temporary retreat on this issue¹⁴*. Prior to this many of the oppressed were brutalised into thinking of themselves as inferior. This in the main was due to generations of oppression, the degradation of township life, the (il)legal and ideological weapons created by oppressive apartheid-capitalism, the deliberate starving of society of basic education and the weight of the state machinery on the mind of the oppressed that was the cause of the oppressed thinking of themselves as less than human beings.

THE CONCEPT OF EQUALITY

The concept of equality can only be realised when we have a non-racial democracy. We can only have a non-racial democracy after we have laid the basis for a socialist state – non-racialism can only flourish under socialism.

Schools are a microcosm of the state. The political, social and economic system of a country determines the education system of a country. The education system therefore

determines what kind of citizen the state wants to produce. With this in mind we have a look at the ANC's Freedom Charter;

The acceptance of the ruling party's political and economic policies, particularly on racism and their concept of equality are embodied in their Freedom Charter which specifically states:

All National Groups Shall have Equal Rights

- *There shall be equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts and in the schools for all national groups and races;*
- *People shall have equal rights to use their own languages, and to develop their own folk culture and customs;*
- *All national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride;*
- *The preaching and practice of national, race or colour discrimination and contempt shall be punishable crimes*
- *Apartheid laws and practices shall be set aside.¹⁴*

The above has then been implemented and is contrary to the principle of non-racialism. What has been achieved as indicated by the third bullet is a multi-racial state. The education system is therefore a product of such policies.

The education system in SA is consequently subjected to an inferior destructive class-based society. South African education is generally ranked amongst the lowest in the world with Mathematics and Science occupying the last position according to the World Economic Forum survey.

This social catastrophe is caused by extremely poor housing conditions, lack of electricity, lack of or inadequate roads infrastructure, unemployment, squalid living conditions, poverty, homelessness, squatter camps and the drudgery in the strife-torn

violent townships. It is therefore no coincidence that South Africa's downtrodden presently suffer class discriminatory education.

The education of the poor is characterised by ill-equipped or neglected infra-structure, mud-schools, in many cases no sanitation or electricity, overcrowding (adverse pupil-teacher ratio), redeployment of teachers on an annual basis which destabilises schools and institutionalised destructive racism.

The above is illustrated by South Africa's Gini-Coefficient being consistently the highest in the world, now at 0.65.

CATA AND TLSA: PROSECUTING THE STRUGGLE:

Both CATA and the TLSA had a prior chequered history. CATA and the TLSA in 1943 took the "new road". Both became affiliates of the NEUM and posited the view that their struggle in education was part and parcel of the struggle for a democratic future based upon political and economic freedom.

One of the oldest organisations in the country (established in 1913), the TLSA was initially a conservative teachers' body. After the establishment of radical debating societies in the Cape, the TLSA took the revolutionary road. It was the first teachers' organisation in the country to align itself with the struggle of the oppressed people for the total liberation of its people. It had adopted the principle of non-racialism and non-collaboration from the outset. Its members had a very high level of consciousness which was matched by dedication and commitment to their students, their parents and the communities they served. The motto of the League "*Let Us Live For Our Children*" has resounded around this country for many years.

CATA established in 1934 was also initially a conservative teachers' body and concerned itself primarily with matters of education for the first decade of its existence. After affiliating to the AAC, this body of intellectuals took the "new road" and together

with *the peasantry formed the organic link to fight against the notorious Rehabilitation Scheme, the Bantu Authorities Act and the Bantu Education Act.*¹⁴

The apartheid state reacted with venom and banned large numbers of teachers by administrative means – members were hounded, victimised and persecuted. Many were “advised” to leave the country in fear for their lives.

The CATA Creed published on *The Teachers’ Vision* covers reads;

- *I believe in the education of the whole community wholly finance by the state.*
- *I believe in the efficiency and the ability of my people to rise to the highest standard of learning.*
- *I believe in equality of opportunity, equal pay for equal work.*
- *I believe the best for my people will be attained when they are represented by their own people in Advisory, Governing Councils, School Committees, and any other bodies exerting on African uplift.*¹⁴

CATA and the TLSA totally rejected the educational and political machinations of the rulers. The combined work of these two organisations in the Cape Teachers’ Federal Council (CTFC) opposed the work of the unholy trinity of Eiselen-Verwoerd-De Vos Malan. These three apartheid theorists had finalised the tribalising of education into what was labelled as Bantuisised, Colouredised and *Indianised* education. At the same time the ruling class had staged countrywide Van Riebeeck tercentenary celebrations of colonial rule. This was opposed by the CFTC and the other teachers’ organisations. For their opposition to Bantu Education, Zeph Motopheng, Es’kia Mphahlele and Isaac Matlare were sacked from teaching. In the period 1954 – 56, Ben Kies, Editor of the Educational Journal, and WP Van Schoor, the President of the TLSA, were also sacked from the profession. More than 200 (some highly) qualified teachers were hounded out of teaching¹⁴ and later out of every job imaginable. Many were “encouraged” by the

NEUM to leave the country. Others were either harassed or imprisoned without being charged or informed of reasons for their detention.

Dr HF Verwoerd had this to say about the teachers, particularly those in opposition to the state,

“People who believe in equality are not desirable teachers for the Natives...When I have control of Native Education, I will reform it so that Natives will be taught from childhood to realise that equality with Europeans is not for them.”¹⁴

In the inaugural address to the CTFC at a mass meeting in Cape Town, Leo Sihlali, at the time President of the CTFC, CATA and the NEUM mercilessly exposed the malicious intent of the ruling class by calling for a total war, inside and outside the classroom, against all schemes to vulgarise and tribalise education. The demands of the influential CTFC were for an unsegregated system of education at all levels including the universities. This was a landmark declaration by the CTFC which included such luminary educationists as JL Mkentane, LL Sihlali, BM Kies, T Honono, C Mciteka, RO Dudley, Bransby Vusani, Helen Kies, Livingstone Mqotsi, WP Van Schoor and Zantsi Mzimba and Ali Fataar (the joint secretaries of the CTFC). They opposed the apartheid regime when it was dangerous to do so, when the dreaded Security Branch would call on them in the dead of the night and arrest teachers without warning, without anyone knowing whether that person would be seen again. This was the calibre of teacher that drove the political struggle in CATA and the TLSA.

THE EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL & TEACHERS’ VISION (Later known as THE NEW TEACHERS’ VISION)

Whilst *The Teachers’ Vision* (or *The New Teachers’ Vision* after the banning of *The Teacher’s Vision*) has ceased to exist, the *Educational Journal* has continued to be published to this day. It is also noteworthy that the *Journal* has only had two editors since the TLSA took the “new road” in 1943. Ben Kies became the first editor in 1943,

to be followed by his wife, Helen Kies in her own right, who became editor in 1959, after the banning order imposed on her husband. Helen Kies has been editor of the *Journal* for more than fifty years. Helen Kies the current editor of the *Journal*, normally reluctant to be interviewed agreed to an interview by former student, Raa Gelant.

Helen Kies states, (and the content holds good for the *New Teachers' Vision*):

It is not an Education Journal, but an Educational Journal. As such the Journal is not about running lessons and what to do in the classroom, it is intended to educate people. To give them as broad a grasp as possible about what is going on in the country and why it is happening so that teachers know the context in which they are teaching. We deal with just about every aspect (of society), political and economic, and which could affect education in this country.¹⁴

Raa Gelant concludes

In all respects, the struggle for true liberation from racism, poverty and inequality continues unabated in the pages of the Journal. In a very personal way the struggle also continues for Mrs Kies, not only in her continuous dedication to the above ideals, but also in her battle to ensure the raising up of a new generation that will keep the fire of the Journal burning for as long as the contradictions of capitalism persist in South Africa¹⁴

Copies of the *Journal* can be accessed at the University of Cape Town (UCT), Fort Hare University (FHU) and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU).

The Teachers' Vision followed much the same pattern as the *Educational Journal* and Leo L Sihlali in the October – December 1954 issue makes it clear that CATA has opted for the “New Road” with the AAC and the NEUM.¹⁴ Throughout the pages of copies of *The Teachers' Vision* and *The New Teachers' Vision* the message is clear – the teachers should be involved in the day-to-day struggles of the oppressed.

In his presidential address to the TLSA conference, MS Williams in March 1999 identifies the continuing challenges faced by our teachers; *“In the years ahead teachers will have to fight a much more difficult battle than the one waged in the apartheid era. This time the poison is much more insidious – and thus much more difficult to identify*

and combat. For the money ethic has replaced the racial ethic as the ideological tool to undermine concepts and strategies that promote socio-economic justice: there is now an economic determinant to separate the privileged from the disadvantaged.”¹⁴

CONCLUSION

By 1998 it was clear that the TLSA would not be able to survive as an organisation on its own. It began negotiations with the Health Workers' Union (HWU) in an attempt to survive. At the time, unknown to the TLSA, the HWU had begun negotiations with other smaller unions to merge and forge a bigger union. The TLSA then found itself in the National Unions of Public Service Allied Workers (NUPSAW) and has established NUPSAW Educator Sector which now functions exclusively (for teachers) in the Western Cape. In other provinces individuals may belong to NUPSAW but are there more out of allegiance to the former TLSA as no benefits actually accrue to these individuals. The *Educational Journal*, now known as the *NUPSAW Educational Journal* (has merely undergone a name change) is issued as an occasional publication.

In the Educational Journal of June 2001 commentary in “*Notes in School*” in support of a teacher in the KZN Education Department who had appealed to the Human Rights Commission after refusing to complete a section classifying her learners into racial categories, reads as follows;

The correspondence reproduced in earlier pages of the Journal between a KwaZulu-Natal Nupsaw Education Sector member and Karen Stone of the South African Human Rights Commission, highlights a serious problem. It is not just the incongruence that the process of “racial” classification has survived the demise of the hated apartheid government and its vicious laws. It is much more. The problem is the failure on the part of the present government to remove from the body of South African society every last cell of the cancer of racism that has through the ages been such a source of trouble and humiliation. The granting of recognition and continued existence to this cancer is a

*shameful compromise with untruth and injustice and can only be a retreat into our inglorious past and a threat to our future.*¹⁴

The striving for, and the eventual attainment of a non-racial society will catapult us onto a trajectory that will enable us to eradicate the cycles of poverty and degradation that engulfs our society and puts us firmly on the road of socialist transformation.

The teachers in CATA and the TLSA never sought glory, recognition or self-aggrandisement. Their lives as teachers, scholars, activists were an inspiration to thousands. They taught us to confront the ruling class on our terms and above all, they taught us dedication and commitment.

The importance of the dictum so appropriately penned by WP Van Schoor in his monograph on the Origin and Nature of Segregation in South Africa is certainly not diminished by the more than six decades since it first appeared in print. The approaches and tactics in struggle constantly need to be revised, redefined and sharpened in the throes of battle. It is with this in mind that the battle cry of *The Teachers' League of South Africa "Let Us Live for Our Children"* should reverberate in all classrooms of learning in South Africa.

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