CONTESTING ISAAC BANGANI TABATA'S LIVES: NEW DIRECTIONS FOR POLITICAL HISTORY IN SOUTH AFRICA (EXTRACTS)

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Across the memory landscape of South Africa at the beginning of 2002, five sites could be identified where Isaac Bangani Tabata's life was commemorated, and where biographic images and narrations of his life were recovered, projected and contested. Three of these sites were in Cape Town, where Tabata lived as a full-time political activist from the early 1930s until his departure from the country in 1963 for Swaziland, and later Zambia and Zimbabwe. The other two were in the Eastern Cape, where Tabata was born and educated, and where he visited almost on an annual basis for political work between the early 1940s and 1956, when he was banned for five years by the apartheid state. These sites consisted of an office of a small political organisation, a community museum, two university-based archives, and a roadside cemetery, where Tabata was buried after his death in Harare in 1990.

An old, converted, bioscope complex in Salt River, Cape Town was where the African People's Democratic Union of Southern Africa had an office in 2002. The office in Palace House was in a small room in what was one part of the cafeteria of the Palace Bioscope, and was surrounded by hairdressers, shoe shops, fruit and vegetable stores, spice shops and trade union offices at a busy intersection on Albert Road, close to the Salt River Railway Station. This was a modest office, located under a staircase, with little more than a desk, filing cabinet, old photocopying machine and telephone. It seemed to be shut for much of the time, and projected a contradictory image of steadfastness and purpose, and overwhelming political marginality and a scarcity of resources. Among the materials in the office were pamphlets, newsletters and books, the distribution of which seemed to be the central political activity.

Amid the reading materials were piles of publications written by Tabata. On the walls were photocopied poster advertisements: "*Education for Barbarism* On Sale, R5.00 only". Prominent on the posters was a copy of the black and white portrait of Tabata, which graced the backcover of the edition of the book, which had been republished by UMSA in 1980.[1] Photographed from the shoulders up, in three-quarter pose, and dressed up in a grey suit, with horn-rimmed spectacles and a pen prominent in his pocket, this was an image of Tabata as political leader, possibly from the early 1970s. On the back covers of the piles of Tabata books, the late UMSA and APDUSA president was described as an "indefatigable organiser, orator and writer", who had been "very active in the national struggle of the oppressed blacks for over forty years".[2] Amid the evidence of ongoing political work, the name of I.B. Tabata, as late political leader and chief author of the movement, and narrations of his life history, continued to have a prominent position, albeit on the margins of post-apartheid South African political life.

Not far away, in downtown Cape Town, on the edge of District Six, another image of I.B. Tabata was put on display. A large portrait of Tabata was installed as part of a Portrait Gallery, one of the display features of an exhibition, *Digging Deeper*, which opened in the District Six Museum in 2000. Together with a map painting on the floor of the Museum, inscribed and embroidered calico cloth and street name signs incorporated into a memorial sculpture, the enlarged hanging portraits formed part of a display

environment, characterised by “materiality, transparency, flexibility and layering”, through which the Museum reflected upon the social, cultural and political history of District Six with greater nuance and complexity than in its previous exhibitionary work.[3] The portraits which hung over the upper balconies of the Museum were created from prints on a delicate but durable trevira fabric, a light and transparent material, which enabled a quality of airiness that did not block the flow of light or interfere with the unity of the museum space.

Tabata’s image, large, light and transparent, of a young bespectacled man with a neat open-necked collar over a jacket, hung between portraits of Cissie Gool and James La Guma, in the same row as images of Ben Kies and Clements Kadalie, and opposite enlargements of Goolam Gool, Alex La Guma and Abdullah Abdurahman. These images of District Six’s political leaders mingled with those of writers, dancers (Richard Rive, Johaar Mosaval) and those who were seen as “not as well known” (the Schaffers brothers, Armien Dramat) to create a representation of “a broader layer of social experience as well as the agency of ex-residents in the development of the museum project and the collection”. The same Tabata photographic image was also on display downstairs in an exhibition panel, which reflected upon resistance politics and cultural expression in District Six. This time, it was printed in the form that the Museum acquired it, an Anne Fischer portrait from 1941, sellotaped inside a makeshift soft brown frame. In the panel, it was deliberately displayed alongside an image of playwright and author, Dora Taylor in a narrative juxtaposition to indicate a special relationship, a positioning that became a source of controversy in the Museum. In different ways, then, the idea of Tabata as a leader to be commemorated was placed in a display environment, which transcended the frameworks of triumphal pantheon and illustration.[4]

Elsewhere in Cape Town, I.B. Tabata’s life history had also entered the halls of the academy, when a collection of documents pertaining to his political activities in a range of political formations was deposited over a few years in the Manuscripts and Archives Division of the University of Cape Town. A letter written to UCT economist, Francis Wilson by Tabata in 1987 was deemed to be the Tabata Collection’s founding document. In this letter, Tabata had enquired to whom he may send “a few documents” in order to address concerns over the “shortage of sources” on anti-apartheid struggles, which had resulted in “a distorted view of the facts of the situation”. Between 1988 and 1992, 37 bundles of photocopied documents were gathered together in Hemel Hempstead in England, for posting to South Africa. Gradually, in drips and drabs, the parcels of photocopies arrived at UCT, leading the principal librarian of African Studies to express how “highly delighted” they were that “this important material” would at last be available to researchers in South Africa.

The documents fell into different categories of writing: drafts of manifestos, reports of political activities, memoranda, letters to the press, to fellow activists, notes for lectures and speeches, and articles intended for publication. Some were typed, and some handwritten, mostly in a recognisable script, and often both

versions (as well as early drafts) appeared. Also included were copies of the Anti-CAD *Bulletins* for the 1940s, the AAC *Voice* for the period 1946-48, the Proceedings of Unity Conferences, 1944-1951, and political pamphlets. In addition, key texts, such as published writings by Tabata, and copies of the journal *Apdusa* were also forwarded. Included also were Tabata's diaries as three of Taylor's. This collection, referred to variously as the 'UMSA Collection' and the 'Tabata Collection', stood as the foremost narration of Tabata's life, housed in the archive of a university, where it signified the final arrival of the Unity Movement's past and Tabata's biography into the official institutions of history and heritage.[5] There it came to be consulted by scholars working on a variety of projects to document or recover the history of national resistance and socialist politics in South Africa, as well as the particular story of the Unity Movement.[6]

After Temba Sirayi of Fort Hare challenged the University of Cape Town's right to be the custodian of the Tabata Collection, the then Centre for Cultural Studies was given a microfilm copy of the collection. Today the microfilm copy forms part of the records of the "liberation archives" in a newly reconstituted National Cultural Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre (NAHECS), where it is held together with documents of the PAC (110 linear metres), AZAPO/BCM (3.5 linear metres) and the New Unity Movement. In a temporary move, the ANC Collection, all 260 linear metres representing the activities of 33 missions of the organisation, had been moved from NAHECS to the basement of the library.[7]

Established in 1981 as a Centre for Xhosa Literature, the Centre changed its name and focus in 1991 and under Sirayi's directorship, the Centre attempted to position itself as one that promoted "knowledge and understanding of material and human resources pertinent to heritage and culture in South Africa". It was during this phase that a deliberate decision was taken to position itself as the foremost repository for the official documents of all sections of the liberation movement. In 1998, the Centre was renamed NAHECS, with an Archives and Museum Division, and committed itself to becoming "a significant player in the transformation of the … heritage and cultural landscape".[8] In this reconfigured heritage institution in the academy, through which Fort Hare sought to make its mark in the domain of national heritage, I.B. Tabata's papers on microfilm, framed as part of a "liberation archives" had been grafted on to older ethnographic collections (the Hamilton Welsh and F.S. Malan Collections) as well as a collection of artworks by black artists (previously collected as 'bantu art').

While Fort Hare in the Eastern Cape may be a repository of mere copies of the Tabata Collection, with the originals in Cape Town, the Eastern Cape was the setting of the most significant memorial site that commemorated I.B. Tabata's life. This was the site of Tabata's grave in a cemetery alongside the national road, north of Queenstown, just past the entrance to Lesseyton, an impoverished village-township, which had resisted incorporation into Transkei under apartheid, and just before the turnoff to Bailey station, where Tabata grew up. This was the modest Tabata family cemetery, where Tabata had been buried on 27

October 1990 after his death in Harare two weeks before. Tabata had been buried between the graves of his brother George (1893-1977) and his sister Bridget (1909-1986) and in sight of the resting place of his brother Puller Mjikelo (1902-1903). Nearby lay his father Steven (1860-1929) and his mother Amy (1862-1957). Lesseyton, Bailey and the cemetery were part of a district known as KwaTabata, close to the Tabata River, where the whole landscape had been marked by the Tabata family history.

In the cemetery, the inscriptions on the conventional black and grey granite headstones of Tabata's older siblings seemed standard: "Safe in the Arms of Jesus"; "Remembered by Children, Brothers and Sisters"; "Rest in Peace". In this cemetery landscape, the headstones of the older parental graves were more striking, and notably inscribed in Xhosa: his mother's brown marble headstone modestly inscribed – "Lala Ngoxolo"; his father's cement headstone with sheep motif much more elaborate: "Waye Ngumfuyi we Gusha. Sodibana Ngalo Ntsasa Yovuko". Surrounded by older family graves covered with stones, with deteriorating wooden crosses, these well marked burial sites memorialised settled Christian, close-knit family and sheep farming identities. I.B Tabata's mortal remains were interred into this family landscape, with his headstone marked in deliberate, yet contradictory ways. The conventions of the standard black and grey granite had seemingly been reworked. Framed by a floral image and an illustration of a flame, a large image of a book - whose aesthetic origins may have been biblical – had been inscribed with a secular political biography: "Here Lies a Great Politician, President of the Unity Movement of SA and a Great Man". The setting of the modest family cemetery made the claims on leadership and greatness seem incongruous.

This study is about the history of the idea of Isaac Bangani Tabata as a leader with a biography. It is concerned to understand a fuller range of narrations of the life of this activist, intellectual and writer associated with the Workers' Party of South Africa (WPSA), the All African Convention (AAC) and the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM). It is interested to analyse the social and political lives of Isaac Bangani Tabata's biographies and how these have been produced through and across quite varied mediums of history: through writing and visualisation; in the political movement and in the academy; through the politics of exile and in the domain of commemoration; through the creation and institutionalisation of an archival collection, and in the museum setting of heritage creation. My interest also lies in trying to comprehend the relations and conditions of production of these biographies, the circumstances of their reproduction and continued life, how they were put to work at different times, and the ways in which they were contested and contradicted. This study tries to explore new possibilities for the field of political biography in South Africa through opening up questions about the production of political lives and about the place of narrative in the formation of identity. These questions create the possibility of extending the field of South African resistance history beyond documentary realist methodological boundaries of the chronological narrative.

By concentrating on gender as well as *biographical relations,* I.B. Tabata can, in part, be understood as made through his relationships in a *borderland*,[9] a transitional space between the public and the private, which mirrors and runs parallel to the dichotomy between public and clandestine political activity. This study suggests that there is an interplay between the narratives through which various biographical projects about Tabata's life have been produced and those that he drew on in the living and making of his life. In this perspective, it also becomes possible to look at *reciprocal constructions* and the ways in which people have narrated each other in relationships.

As an indigenous emancipatory project with modernist overtones, what is conventionally named as the ‘Unity Movement’ can be seen as an assemblage of forums, publications, relationships and organisational rituals. Together, these constituted. a long range project in public education, with features resembling state-like rituals and practices.[10] Through an analysis of power in society and the conditions of resistance and collaboration, a system of representation was created, complete with its own vocabulary, framing categories, nouns, verbs, activities and procedures through which the nation was defined, the ‘enemy’ named and conceptualised, and through which a moral code of behaviour was counter-posed to that of the ‘enemy’.

These institutional settings also saw the evolution of a repertoire of rituals of research and knowledge-creation and dissemination through speeches at public gatherings in meeting halls (which were like lessons in classrooms) and political tours that were akin to research fieldtrips. A domain of publishing was constituted, of leaflets, newspapers, pamphlets and books which were intended for the circulation of ideas, analyses and concepts for the edification of people, for the development of their consciousness and the construction of an entire social and political imaginary. This was an arena of education beyond the framework of formal schooling, where teacher activists might have looked to other teachers and pupils as an entry point to political work, and where teacher organisations were the mainstay of political advancement. On the contrary, this was an entire programme in public education, with its own pedagogy, through which the nation was ‘taken to school’.

The NEUM and its component political organisations can be seen as a discursive formation with its own vocabulary, body of representations and symbolic practices. It constituted a new public sphere in which subjectivities and identities such as the non-racial subject were produced. This was a space for the “non-citizen” to exercise the politics of citizenship in a republic of letters, with its own institutions, codes and categories. At the same time, this was a field of identity formation, within which black people, figured through the unifying category, ‘non-European’, were invited to become citizens in a supra-organisation, a microcosm of a new nation in formation. These were spaces of identity performance in which selves were constituted discursively. I.B. Tabata was both producer and product of this discourse community. As the non-racial subject was constituted as ‘non-European’, and ‘non-European’ figured as the basis of political

unity, Tabata was himself being constituted in political terms. I.B. Tabata was made both in his relationships with layers of comrades in public and clandestine formations as well as in the 'borderland' spaces between the public and the private.

Tabata's Biography and the Politics of Knowledge

Narrations of Tabata's life began, perhaps for the first time, in tentative ways at the time of his arrest at Mount Ayliff in the Transkei in 1948. However, it was in biographical tributes outlined in speeches and composed in the organisational press eight years later in 1956, at the time of the imposition of a 5-year banning order, that the idea of Tabata as a man with a biography to be reflected on and commemorated, was given vent. Coinciding with the slow development of an organisational rupture in the NEUM and its constituent bodies, this moment in 1956 must have been the occasion when Tabata's biography, narrated as the life of the leader, began to emerge in more assertive ways.

Until those events, Tabata's life, like the lives of other political figures such as Ben Kies, had been submerged within public organisational identities of the Anti-CAD, the AAC and the NEUM as part of what was seen as a 'collective leadership', a cumulative system of ideas. Indeed there was considerable reluctance before the late 1940s and early 1950s to accede to requests from journalists for biographical information of leaders of the Unity Movement. In an article published in *Drum* in 1954, considered by the magazine to be a 'scoop', indeed, an 'exposé', in the light of such media reluctance and individual ambivalence, the leaders of the Unity Movement were described as "intellectuals, shy and retiring and opposed to any sort of publicity". The article went on the report that these leaders believed that "the loyalty of members should be towards the movement and not to individuals; and that the 'building up' of leaders should be avoided". Tabata, himself, was described as the "master mind" of the movement, who disliked photographers.[11]

Later on, particularly from the 1960s, Tabata's biography became a key element of organisation-building and the consolidation of political organisation in exile. In the struggle for recognition from post-colonial governments of African countries such as Zambia and from the newly formed Organisation of African Unity, and within the setting of various fund-raising tours, especially of the United States, Tabata's biography was circulated as that of the remarkable leader of a liberation movement, which to some might have seemed like a government-in-waiting. The telling and retelling of Tabata's biography became a central feature of membership of and commitment to the exiled political organisations, the Unity Movement of South Africa (UMSA) and Apdusa. Biographical essays and appendices usually accompanied the publication and republication of Tabata's writings, often in the pursuit of funds for the organisation. These texts, usually with formal portrait photographs of Tabata on the cover, came to acquire canonical status and often constituted the main public evidence of the existence of Apdusa and

UMSA in exile. The propagation of the existence of the movement in exile often took the form of the propagation of Tabata's biography.

It was a particular narration of his life which the Unity Movement promoted, and which had the backing of Tabata from the 1960s. This was of a coherent life of political action and leadership that began in the 1930s. Tabata's life was narrated as part of a remarkable group, which included Jane Gool, who was publicly his partner, and her deceased brother Goolam Gool. The Unity Movement of South Africa was given a seamless history, which went back to the formation of the Non-European Unity Movement in 1943-4, out of an attempt to create 'non-European unity' through uniting the Anti-CAD and the AAC.

The key methodology of nation-building, though the medium of these organisations, was the federal structure, in which organisations from civic bodies and cultural societies to sports clubs and church bodies could affiliate and be brought into the fold. And it was Tabata who had outlined this 'Basis of Unity' in an address to the Second Unity Conference in 1945. Another methodological breakthrough in organisational terms had been the formation of APDUSA in 1961, a 'unitary organisation', which had been formed to draw in 'workers and peasants'. These organisational forms emerged under Tabata's influence, and it was Tabata who was projected as the leading thinker and orator of the movement, a leader forced into exile under threat of repression.[12]

But Tabata did not always have a biography. Early in 1946, Tabata's insistence on biographical disavowal reared its head at an early stage in the history of the Unity Movement. This was a remarkable set of events, which also reflects many of the themes of this paper. The youthful editor of a newly formed newspaper, *Inyaniso*, B Mnguni wrote to Tabata requesting him to write a review of a pamphlet on influx control, which had been published shortly before.[13] Ironically, the pamphlet, *The Influx of Natives into Towns*, was a piece that Tabata had himself produced under a pseudonym.[14] Realising the "predicament" he was in, and clearly not wanting to do a review of his own book, Tabata nevertheless wanted to give the new publication and the group behind it "every encouragement and help" he could. Mnguni and his colleagues at *Inyaniso* saw themselves as "an independent youth league not connected with Mbede's (sic) group".[15]

Within a few days, Tabata wrote off[16] to his close associate and brother-in-law, Wycliffe Tsotsi, who had earlier complained to him of being "snowed under with work". Tabata nevertheless suggested that Tsotsi could help him solve the problem. He proposed to Tsotsi that he help out "by either fathering or writing the review". Tabata explained that he had asked Dora Taylor to write the review, and proposed to Tsotsi "to do what you like. You have a completely free hand. You can tear the document to pieces. You can alter it, knock it into shape in your own style, use it as a basis, anything you like". Tabata implored Tsotsi

to let “the boys” have the review “under your name”. “For obvious reasons” it could not go under Taylor’s name. Tabata enclosed Taylor’s review, saying that it was already about “10 lines too long”.[17]

But Mnguni and *Inyaniso* had asked for more than just a review from Tabata. They also asked him to write an autobiographical sketch for their forthcoming paper. For Tabata, this request was absolutely “out of the question”. While seeming to “appreciate its implications”, Tabata’s response was to “emphatically reject” the request. In his letter to Tsotsi, Tabata tried to rationalise Mnguni’s request:

> One sees from their request exactly the way they think. They still cling to this “little leader” business. Their little hero much be boosted and have his pictures all over the show. They must [rather] learn to respect and turn their devotion to ides rather than the individual.[18]

In his response to Mnguni, Tabata was moved to enter the mode of the educator and political mentor. After explaining that he had asked Tsotsi, “a very able and well-known man belonging to the younger school of thought”, to do the review for *Inyaniso*, Tabata commended Mnguni and his colleagues for the task which they had set themselves of “unearthing the *Inyaniso* and carrying it to the people”. The “Bantu Press” (*Umteteli* and *Inkundla*) had refused to refer to *The Influx*, much like “the old reactionaries and government agents amongst us”, who “muzzle up the message that such pamphlets carry to the people and cast over them the blanket of silence. However, *Inyaniso* had boldly selected to review pamphlets such as *The Influx*, which were “anathema” to the government, and this was “indicative of the role it intends to play in the life of non-Europeans”.[19]

Mindful of his position as educator, Tabata explained his refusal to submit an autobiographical sketch and photograph. Unlike *Umteteli*, whose reports tended to “boost personalities and splash in their pages the faces of such people”, *Inyaniso* had much more important work to do”. *Inyaniso* was concerned “not just with advertising personalities, but with the spread of ideas”. “Too often in the past”, Tabata continued, “have we concentrated on building up individual leaders”. Individuals, he argued could be “bought and sold”. Tabata advocated that it was time “to teach the people to fix their attention on the idea and to give their devotion and energy to the cause, rather than the leader”. The time of “passionate and slavish obedience to a leader” was over.[20] Tabata urged that *Inyaniso* “bring consciousness to the people” so that “they must know the nature of the forces they are up against; they must know what to fight and how to fight”. Armed with knowledge, the people would be able to support a leadership which expressed their aspirations, so that “the moment a leader departs from the correct road, they will kick him out”.[21]

Paternalism, Patronage and Biographical Relations

A number of issues emerge out of this correspondence. These relate to the relations of paternalism and patronage, which characterised Tabata's structured relationship with young people and organisations of youth on the one hand, and with fellow-activists who held leadership positions in local affiliates of the movement on the other. They also concern the particular place that Dora Taylor occupied in this landscape. More generally, the letters point to the educational features that characterised such political formation. These are the very issues of 'biographical relations' and lives considered as products.

It is clear from the exchange of letters that Tabata's relationship with youth was one of paternalism and patronage. Based perhaps on the metaphor of the school, this was an elaboration of the role of the teacher writ large. Simultaneously, the youth were tied organisationally into a system of patronage. This was the case with the New Era Fellowship, formed in 1937, which was one of the key sites of political education and theoretical training of youth and students in the late 1930s and 1940s. It was in discussions and meetings of the NEF that elements of the leadership exercised their intellectual authority, usually in the setting of the Stakesby Lewis Hostel, situated between Canterbury and Harrington Streets, District Six. From 1951, this patronage also spread to SOYA, a student body formed within Tabata's orbit, to create a student platform for young people away from the NEF, and apart from the influence of other leadership elements in the Movement. Operating through a branch structure, SOYA was also an instrument used to attract politicised youth, who were critical of the conservative ANC leadership, away from the Congress Youth League, which had also been formed in the 1940s.

Tabata also attempted to influence the thinking of young people organised around the Youth League, including Nelson Mandela and Robert Sobukwe, who were critical of ANC policies. He engaged with them at length, in meetings and in correspondence, about the AAC and the Unity Movement's "new road" of "non-European unity", based on a policy of 'non-collaboration', with the boycott as a 'weapon of struggle'.[22] In his letter to Sobukwe, Tabata enclosed a copy of his letter to Mandela, "a young lawyer in Johannesburg" in which he asked Sobukwe to examine his observations on organisational development. He urged that students acquire knowledge "of the past political development of the people and a proper appreciation of each stage reached in their development".[23]

Tabata also specifically cultivated relations of paternalism and patronage with a handful of activists - mainly men - who formed a layer of leadership, or who operated in a range of organisations and local areas in the 1940s and 1950s such as the AAC, the Cape African Teachers' Association (CATA), and the Transkeian Organised Bodies (TOB). Wycliffe Tsotsi was perhaps the foremost member of this broad leadership group, but at different times it also included Cadoc Kobus, Leo Sihlali, Seymour Papert, Livingstone Mqotsi and Neville Alexander. As a number of studies have shown,[24] individuals in this

group were remarkably successful in drawing teacher, student and 'peasant' and other bodies, particularly across the eastern Cape into the organisational fold of the Unity Movement.

On the one hand, some of these relationships derived from formal political portfolios in organisations and the carrying out of organisational tasks. But on the other, they were constructed on the basis of the regular and ongoing ways in which Tabata kept in touch with activists at different levels through correspondence and regular visits. Silence for any length of time was often a cause for concern and possible intervention. Such a web of mainly male political relationships, arranged generationally, and constituted through mentorship, created a system through which the nation was 'mapped'. Through these personal contacts, Tabata adopted the position of mentor, advisor and sometimes father figure in a social unit that often resembled a family. In many cases, these relationships were actual family relations, as was the case with Tsotsi and his wife Nozwe or Blanche, who was Tabata's youngest sister.[25]

But beyond ties of kin, these relationships were developed as close, dependable and intense, and often bore an emotional resemblance to family relations of closeness and authority. Tabata exercised authority as if he were family head. These 'family' relations of politics took on an even deeper form when Tabata and Jane Gool went into exile with Nathaniel Honono in 1964. At this time, the family character of political organisation and the operation of duties and obligations became more exaggerated. A key feature of many of these relationships of direct closeness and accountability was that, in almost every case, the younger male activist also developed a direct and independent relationship with Tabata's closest comrade and confidante, Dora Taylor. When any rupture occurred, as happened with Neville Alexander in Cape Town and with Livingstone Mqotsi in Lusaka during the 1960s, usually when the activist attempted to acquire some independence from or tried to break out of the relationship of paternalism and patronage, it tended to have traumatic organisational consequences.[26]

But the key relationship through which the notions of I.B. Tabata as a leader with a biography were 'produced' was through his association with Dora Taylor, author, playwright and literary critic, and underground member of the Workers' Party. Indeed, without her interventions and mediations in virtually every facet of Tabata's life, there would, perhaps, not have been any I.B. Tabata to talk of, in a coherent biographical sense. These mediations took place in the production of almost every written work that emerged under Tabata's name. They also occurred on a daily basis from the time the two first started working together in the late 1930s or early 1940s in the work they did jointly in strategising public interventions, in drafting correspondence to organisational members and other key political figures, in the production of analytical articles and tracts on key issues for publication in organisational newspapers and circulars and beyond (such as *Trek, Umteteli wa Bantu*, *Inkundla ya Bantu*), in the drafting of speeches and in mediating his relations with other activists.

Archiving Tabata

These efforts on Taylor's part contributed in significant ways to the shaping of an archival collection of papers, now housed at the University of Cape Town. The precise naming of this archive is significant. The Tabata/ UMSA Collection (BC 925) has not been without tribulations and adventures since it entered the walls of Manuscripts and Archives at UCT. Towards the end of 1995, Themba Sirayi, Director of the Centre for Cultural Studies at Fort Hare arranged a visit to UCT to inspect the collection along with R.O. Dudley of the New Unity Movement. He showed an interest in having the documents moved to Fort Hare in accordance with a supposed agreement with the "Unity Movement" as well as the ANC, PAC and Black Consciousness Movement that their organisational documents would be deposited at Fort Hare's Centre for Cultural Studies.

More than a year before this visit, Sirayi had written to UCT asking for copies of all the documents in the Tabata/UMSA Collection to be forwarded to Fort Hare. UCT had agreed to make a microfilm copy of the documents, with the insistence that in accordance with standard archival practice, Fort Hare would pay the costs of having the collection filmed as well as the costs of creating a positive set of the film.[27] But Sirayi's requests went further. In terms of a "written agreement" which he had with the Unity Movement, Sirayi felt that he was entitled to the negatives as well. He also said that he had asked the Unity Movement to transfer the original collection to UCT from Fort Hare, and that the Unity Movement had agreed that "Fort Hare could have the originals". After further discussion however, it seemed that Sirayi began to accept that Fort Hare was entitled only to a positive set of the film.[28]

The Tabata/UMSA Collection, thus became the subject of an entitlement battle over the appropriate heritage location for the archives of resistance movements. Fort Hare, established in 1916 as the "Native College" following on policy debates on black higher education, was seen as "South Africa's principal supplier of black university graduates, including stalwarts like Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela and Robert Mugabe". Fort Hare was therefore "an integral and important element of the political history of much of southern Africa", and it was "entirely appropriate" that the university had been "selected" as "the home for the records of the major political movements".[29] Drawing on this sentiment, Sirayi's efforts had already secured the ANC documentary archive from under the noses of the Mayibuye Centre, the very institution which had seemingly been created at UWC to receive and conserve it. UCT, on the other hand, was eager to put itself forward as an institution responding to the demands of a democratising society. Its archive was a mainstream institution, which had a record of archival expertise, and it was keen to ensure that the archive's viability would be enhanced through increased efforts to collect records of black history.[30]

So, when Themba Sirayi called up to arrange his visit to see the Collection in the setting of Manuscripts and Archives at UCT, and to announce that he would be accompanied by R.O. Dudley, the UCT archivists had a brief moment of panic, and must have had visions of being dispossessed of a prize collection of black history. It was clear that the claims from Fort Hare were being made on the basis of a misunderstanding of the resistance history of the "Unity Movement", and that any agreement that that they had concluded with the "New Unity Movement" did not extend to the "Unity Movement" collection at UCT. Named as the 'Tabata Collection' or the 'UMSA Collection' and not merely as the 'Unity Movement' Collection (as there has been more than one 'Unity Movement'), the documents seemed to be secure in their location. This was especially the case in the light Tabata'a 1987 letter to UCT's Francis Wilson, promising to send key organisational documents to the university.[31]

If this discussion of the trials and tribulations of the Tabata/UMSA Collection is not enough to convince that archives themselves have biographies, it might be more interesting to reflect on the entry of the documentary collection into the Archive. Immediately after documents began to arrive, concerns were expressed that the sender "Mr B Johns" immediately send his invoice for photocopying and postage" so that he could be reimbursed, even though he had indicated that this was not his immediate concern. Noting indications from the sender that he had managed to secure cheap photocopying facilities at "a reasonable rate of 2 pence per copy", she also expressed appreciation for his efforts to "keep costs to a minimum.[32] Eventually, just more than a year after the parcels of documents began to arrive, arrangements were made for payment to be made to a "pensioner" in Port Elizabeth, as a means of satisfying the conditions of anonymity under which the documents were being forwarded.[33]

In the midst of the arrival of the parcels and the seemingly technical work of ensuring an ongoing inventory and creating a chronological arrangement, the librarians and archivists at UCT began to play their mediating role between the documents and potentially interested researchers. The sender, B Johns, was kept abreast of all enquiries or visits that were made including those from Gail Gerhart who had begun the project to update *From Protest to Challenge*, and Allison Drew, who had begun working on the documentary history of radical politics in South Africa.[34] The correspondence from Drew was significant because if they had not known it before, it was revealed that their UMSA correspondent in England was none other than Ronnie Britten, originally from Paarl, exiled UMSA member in Hemel Hempstead, England, who had also spent some time in Zambia in the 1960s.

By the end of 1992, correspondence had dispensed with all pseudonyms, and Britten took advantage of the democratising conditions in South Africa to pay a return visit to Cape Town in order to plan for his permanent relocation. Jane Gool, Tabata's public widow, had returned permanently herself in 1992 at the age of 90, two years after his death in Harare in October 1990, and in 1993, was elected President of UMSA in act of stalwartism, as a mark of respect and seemingly out of continued veneration of leaders of

long vintage.[35] During Britten's visit to Cape Town, he took the opportunity to deliver envelopes with more of Tabata's papers and offered his assistance with the sorting process.[36]

In June 1993, Britten wrote again to say that they had decided upon early September for their return to South Africa. Significantly, he added in parentheses:

> Mrs Taylor's papers have now been sorted out and among them I found some more of Mr Tabata's papers.[37]

At the end of 1993, shortly after settling in permanently in Cape Town, Britten personally handed over "papers, books, photographs, pamphlets etc – the last of Mr Tabata's". He apologised in advance if there were any duplicates among the materials, in which case he asked that materials be passed on to Fort Hare.[38] What is significant is that by this time, the materials and documents that were being handed over to UCT were not merely copies. They were originals.

Naturally, the archivists were profuse in their gratitude. "What an extra-ordinary collection it is", wrote Margaret Richards to Britten. "How indebted we are to you for preserving it and getting it all safely to us". Ten months later, after Britten had submitted even more materials, Richards was moved to refer to "the crucial role" Britten had played in their "safekeeping and repatriation".[39] Now, it might be that this was precisely what Britten had done over a period of 5 years: enabling the repatriation of the records of his political movement, and therefore ensuring that their archiving in a recognised archive would secure a place in history for Tabata and the Unity Movement. This was Ronnie Britten, who had been a favoured member of the Unity Movement in the 1950s, and who had been one of the favoured youth who assembled in the Tabata-Gool home in Milan Street in Cape Town to bask in the warm glow of political knowledge and experience. This was the same Ronnie Britten who had disappointed his mentors in exile when he refused to be part of a cadre of Unity Movement senior members who had been invited for military training in Ghana in the 1960s.[40]

In 1998, it is possible that by sending the first bundle of documents to UCT, Ronnie Britten was discharging the onus of Tabata's promise in his letter to Francis Wilson. By the early 1990s, after Tabata's death, taking charge of the fate of the movement's archive might have been a means of discharging his political loyalties, but it was also seen as akin to taking on an inappropriate "mantle of leadership".[41] The seeming purposefulness with which Britten attended to his tasks of "repatriation" (indeed, and Tabata's 1987 letter to Wilson) can also be understood in part as a response to the creation of a new political structure inside South Africa, styled as the New Unity Movement. The emergence of this body had sought to draw together the old sections and factions of the Unity Movement from the

1950s and early 1960s, and saw the 'defection' of former leading members of Apdusa.[42] The act of archiving was a means of claiming a stake in history, a pre-emptive strike at claiming the soul of the Unity Movement, and trying to assert for it a place of significance.

Variously called the 'UMSA Collection, the 'Tabata Collection', and, at its peril, simply the 'Unity Movement Collection', at every stage of his repatriation efforts, Britten was ensuring the simultaneous creation of a record of a political movement as well as an archive of the political life of its leader, I.B. Tabata. In its framing and in its naming, the history of a movement was rendered as the biography of its venerated leader. If Britten had understood that he was ensuring the entry of the record of his political organisation and the evidence of Tabata's leadership into the official institutions of history and heritage, then he did not completely comprehend what he had unleashed upon South African public culture.

Drawn from movement records in Zimbabwe and England the records also contain significant documents that were held in Dora Taylor's care at her home in Hemel Hempstead in accordance with Tabata's wishes. After Taylor's death in 1976, these documents were taken to Duntish in the south of England where her daughter Doreen Muskett and her husband Michael had cared for them. In 1993, Britten had borrowed materials from the Taylor papers, and chose not to return them. Instead they found their way into the official Tabata/UMSA collection where they told a tale of a passionate relationship of desire and political expression across 40 years of comradeship and mutual yearning. As a history, the Collection can also be understood as representing a biography of a relationship between Tabata and Taylor, conducted over 4 or 5 decades in a 'borderland', a space of intensity and desire between the public and the private. As we shall see, it might indeed be appropriate for the Collection to be thought of as the Tabata-Taylor Collection.

Tabata, Taylor and Desire

> After leaving SA in 1962, exile meant letters to and fro. B would leave his in my keeping. He insisted it should be so. As fascism intensified in SA, the diary had to cease. (extract from DT's Diary, 1953; annotated in the 1960s)

In many ways, Tabata's relationship with Taylor was his primary political relationship, one that also became acutely personal. Many documents in the Tabata Collection, starting from the 1930s are in Dora Taylor's handwriting, which may suggest that she took dictation and that her work was limited to that of a secretary.[43] It is clear, that as a person of letters, much of her work may have involved imparting language skills and skills of expression to the formulation of written tracts such as articles, statements and letters, which were intended for the public political domain. I would suggest however, that, far from

being a secretary, at almost every stage, Dora Taylor was also responsible for the formulation of strategic ideas about political direction.

I.B. Tabata and Dora Taylor encountered each other for the first time in the circles of the Workers Party in the mid-1930s. In 1936 or 1937, Tabata was engaged by Dora Taylor to sing in a cultural production for the Spartacus Club. Shortly after coming to Cape Town from the Eastern Cape in the early 1930s, Tabata had begun to sing in the Reverend Gow's choir. Taylor wrote to him:

> Dear Comrade Tabata, JG suggests coming in to our new hall next Saturday at 7 o'clock, allowing an hour at least for rehearsal before the lecture. That will save you the trouble of coming out this way. Please be on time and know the words of the songs. You know those which are quartets. Let us know if the time does not suit you. Did you look for the article? Yours comradely.[44]

This letter in the Tabata Collection was later annotated, and accorded significance, by Dora Taylor as "my first letter?", as she inscribed herself into the collection. Soon after Tabata arrived in Cape Town, he had found himself in the circles of the Lenin Club and later the Workers Party and its public debating forum, the Spartacus Club. He had encountered the Gools in District Six, where he lived, and with Jane Gool, Tabata went on to have a long relationship, companionship and comradeship, which culminated in them living together in Milan Street in Walmer Estate, Cape Town from the mid-1950s. But, significantly, from the 1930s, it was his ongoing, almost daily, contact with Taylor that profoundly shaped his political development.

It is clear that the relationship between them was initially facilitated by the Workers' Party, which, it seems, authorised Taylor to assist Tabata in his agitational work within and around the All African Convention from the late 1930s or early 1940s. Much of the thinking and writing that they embarked on was conducted in the Claremont home, Kintayre, that Dora Taylor shared with JG Taylor, her psychologist husband, who was also a member of the party. What began as a working relationship as party members grew into a vital intellectual and emotional partnership, which lasted until Taylor's death in England in 1976. The relationship was not a public one, especially after 1939, when the Workers' Party went underground. There was a racial dimension: white party members did not engage in public political work. Dora Taylor's intellectual and political work was necessarily, in the party's terms, covert, and even clandestine.

In this borderland of political and intellectual work, a range articles, books, political historical and literary, were produced. It can be argued that *The Awakening of a People*, authored by Tabata, and published by the AAC in 1950, was produced through the relationship. Sometimes this relationship was extended outside the

Taylor home. Taylor accompanied Tabata on at least one of his political tours of the Transkei in the 1950s, when they travelled together in the disguise of woman traveller and chauffeur.[45]

That this relationship took on significant emotional dimensions is very clear. There are letters and diary entries of heart-wrenching pain and discomfort at separation. Tabata and Taylor communicated with each other constantly about every step of their intellectual growth and exploration. During her tour to Bechuanaland in 1948, Taylor wrote diary entries virtually every day addressed to Tabata, saying in one entry,

> I write home regularly, but I find I do not describe the same things to them as to you (or is it to us). Writing quickly both to them and to you, I do not deliberately make the difference, yet my mind remembers different things as the pen flows towards you[46]

The intellectual and emotional closeness between them is expressed in a letter from Tabata to Dora Taylor about the reception of her book, *The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest*,[47] among teachers at the 1953 conference of the Cape African Teachers Association:

> It has caused a general excitement. It has been sold to the queerest assortment of people - students, teachers, peasants, storekeepers, ministers and school managers. Most people want it translated. What am I supposed to feel about it? Proud or jealous? I must confess I had what I imagine to be the pride of a father when he receives the news in the next room that his wife has successfully delivered a son after a difficult labour. He feels as if he had something to do with it...." AC Jordan's comment was "the author puts forward a thesis and quotes facts to prove it.... Facts and dates are used to support a thesis; unlike Mnguni to whom dates and facts are ends in themselves". This is a document worthy of pride of place in the literature of the movement.[48]

These archival snatches and traces show how intimate Tabata and Taylor's relationship was. Together, they researched national history and plotted the nation. Indeed the spaces and acts of their relationship can be seen as having effectively replaced the Party's position in their political work, after the Workers' Party's demise at the end of the 1940s. Tabata and Taylor were both intellectually and emotionally dependent on each other. It was only in the 1960s, in exile, that Taylor's role became acknowledged in a visible and public way. At this time, Taylor fundraised, edited Tabata's writings for publication and republication, often wrote introductions to them, usually centred on Tabata's biography, and worked the publishing industry in Britain for opportunities to republish Tabata's published work[49] or to publish collections of his speeches or writings.[50] She accompanied Tabata on speaking tours and acquired a visible, almost official presence. Dora Taylor over the years managed, arranged, rearranged and cared for Tabata's writings and the

documentary traces of his political career. As we have seen, this attention occurred in different phases. It was Taylor who was Tabata's primary biographer. She was the person who corresponded with Gwendolen Carter and Tom Karis when they were researching South African resistance history. Taylor sent a biographical tract on Tabata to Carter, written under the name Nosipho Majeke, the only other time she used this pen name. And undoubtedly, it was she who produced the biographies that were circulated in the United States during Tabata's speaking tours undertaken to raise funds.

The most important way in which Taylor has narrated Tabata's life is in the form of the archival collection. The subsequent interventions in the production of this archive, when UMSA activists in Britain, particularly Ronnie Britten, made final preparations for the lodging of the collection at UCT, were not able to create a controlled documentary record. There might have been some attempt to rid the collection of documents of 'uncontrollable' information. But it is clear that this collection is not merely a chronological assemblage of the traces of Tabata's political career. It bears the traces of every intervention and mediation that occurred. And the primary form of mediation (and even authorship), that has left its mark on almost every feature of that archive, was, and still is, the efforts of Dora Taylor. Curiously, in its placement in a university archive, the collection was intended as a record of the political life of the Unity Movement and its primary leader, Tabata. In a university archive, it is meant to be part of the heritage of the nation, a past that is now available for scholarly study. But it was more than that. It also constituted a record of an intense emotional and intellectual relationship, which unfolded in a space of desire, out of which Tabata, in many ways, was made.

Public Education, Citizenship and Knowledge

Through Tabata's correspondence with Mnguni and *Inyaniso* in 1946, it becomes possible for us to understand the educational and knowledge-producing character of organisations like the AAC and the NEUM. These were more than simply resistance movements, which made certain political claims and articulated a particular combination of national(ist) and socialist demands, which political historians can assess according to a balance sheet of achievements and failures, and a record of 'theory' and 'practice'. These and other organised formations with which Tabata was associated - such as the Cape African Teacher's Association (CATA), the New Era Fellowship (NEF), the Society of Young Africans (SOYA) and later, the African People's Democratic Union of Southern Africa (APDUSA) and the Unity Movement of South Africa (UMSA) - can be seen as a public sphere in which the rituals of aspirant citizenship and nationhood as well as the modernist, secular desires and aspirations of a thwarted black intelligentsia were acted out.[51] Here, there was an appropriation of enlightenment notions by this black intelligentsia in an analysis of race and state in South Africa, in an exploration of the meanings of the rights of citizenship and in an imagining of the contours and configurations of the nation.

Considered together, these formations, as well as the different levels of relationships that unfolded within them, constituted a massive programme in public education, consisting of arenas for the production of knowledge of society, spaces of social enquiry and mediums of research dissemination. In these arenas, a dominant - but by no means monolithic - discourse of 'bantu studies' was challenged and engaged with through a cultural politics of race, nation and identity. This 'bantu studies' discursive framework, which had began to consolidate itself from the 1930s, was an entire knowledge system or system of representation through which African people were framed, studied and governed. The fields of political representation, education and ethnography were connected together by this discourse.[52]

The organisations and national web of activists and intellectuals with whom Tabata was associated, and the publishing and propaganda networks which were constructed, considered together, can be understood to have constituted a 'discourse community', through which the non-racial nation in embryo was constituted.[53] They were conjoined by "a shared grid of knowledge" through which "explicit and implicit meanings [were] shared".[54] In its symbolic codes and practices, the Unity Movement can be seen as having generated a theory and method of nation-building. There has been a tendency, perhaps because of it being stigmatised as 'Trotskyite', for intellectuals and organisations associated with the Unity Movement to be understood as being concerned with 'class analysis'.[55] However, I would argue that in being a space of knowledge production, the main thrust of social analysis was the constitution of the nation, and the development of a methodology of nation-building.

Linda Chisholm and Jonathan Hyslop, among others, have argued that the Unity Movement and associated bodies can be seen as a movement largely influenced by teachers and their organisations, educators who were deeply concerned about the effects of bantu education on their students.[56] This emphasis on education by "a mainly teacher base" was both its "strength and failing". The social base of teachers meant the predominance of the petty-bourgeois in its organisations structures. Yet, according to Chisholm, this feature also saw "the creation of a disciplined, critical and oppositional culture in schools and cultural life which placed a heavy emphasis on the subversive and liberating capacities of education".[57] In addition, the radicalisation of teachers in the 1940s and 1950s saw the rise of wage militancy, teacher political activism and community action and "the beginning of a period of political combativeness on the part of teachers".[58] From a base in structures such as the Teacher's League of South Africa (TLSA) and CATA, teachers contested education that promoted ethnic nationalism and class discrimination, and provided a trenchant critique of the system of bantu education.

Through the efforts of Unity Movement teachers, an "academic and political culture in education" emerged.[59] During the 1940s and 1950s, schools were sites for the dissemination of ideas and strategies, in order to politicise other teachers and pupils. Cultural societies were formed at schools as a base for political learning, and teachers ensured that all forms of 'literature' from weekly bulletins of the Anti-CAD, to

newspapers and magazines such as *The Torch* and the *Educational Journal* were widely circulated among students and teachers. It is in schools and in relation to teachers that the political practice was constituted of naming and isolating 'quislings' and 'collaborators' (terms that have World War II origins).[60]

Apart from these studies, though, it is necessary to understand the education work of the Unity Movement, its structures and networks in broader terms. Beyond structures such as the New Era Fellowship, founded "to discuss everything under the sun"[61], the efforts to create a coherent body of symbolic expressions through language and the construction of a 'national lexicon', the development of rhetorical strategies and methods of analysis, and the emergence of an entire repertoire of research, knowledge creation and dissemination can be seen as a massive system of public education, which presented an alternative route to modernity.[62] For Tabata and his fellow activists, meeting halls were their public classrooms and newspapers, leaflets and pamphlets were their worksheets, while political speeches afforded opportunities for history lessons and instructions in creating unity. Longer monographs such as *The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest* by Majeke, *Three Hundred Years* by Mnguni, and *The Awakening of a People* by Tabata were lessons in the history of South Africa.[63] Through these educational rituals, in many ways, the nation was "taken to school."[64]

The campaign conducted at the beginning of the 1950s to organise a mass boycott of the 1952 Jan van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival was perhaps the high point of these educational endeavours. The campaign saw meeting halls turned into mass classrooms on colonial history, citizenship and the nation. Meetings were characterised by ritualised forms of expression and communicative behaviour.[65] During 1951 and 1952, and especially in the final weeks before April 1952, nightly meetings of the campaign were held in every corner of Cape Town. Speakers addressed large gatherings and promoted the campaign to boycott the festival. In many of these speeches, the importance of a principled and programmatic struggle and the necessity of unity was stressed. Amid the criticisms of all aspects of the festival, slogans were used to warn people of the dangers of collaboration with the 'Herrenvolk'. I.B. Tabata was one of the speakers whose history lessons hundreds gathered to hear. In a rousing speech in the municipal hall in Lansdowne, in which metaphorical imagery was used to explain the nature of the festival and its organisation, Tabata ended off by suggesting: 'Let the masters celebrate … for they will never again be able to celebrate. This is their last supper.'[66]

In Langa, Kalk Bay, Lansdowne and elsewhere in Cape Town, speakers cited case studies to assist them in providing lessons of history as a means of advocating the boycott of the festival. AC Jordan referred to the inevitable results of instances of collaboration, while others used the examples of local experiences of dispossession both of land and of the right to fish. I.B. Tatata made reference to the history of slavery in Haiti. The rituals of speeches were met with attentive listening and vociferous agreement as audiences were inculcated into the rites of assembly and citizenship in meeting halls. The classroom of public history was

simultaneously a domain in which an alternative citizenship was performed of those united in boycott, who drew on the appropriate knowledge of history, a shared moral code and discursive grid.

This was a citizenship based on speakers, writers and knowledge-creators on the one hand, and attentive listeners on the other. The process of nationing contained an inherent ambiguity of those who gave their words and those who lent their ears. Leslie Witz and I have referred to the occasions when, after having listened to the lessons in public history, members of audiences were encouraged to participate, almost to demonstrate what they had learnt. 'Van Riebeeck regarded Africans as stinking dogs', asserted one learner-citizen in a Langa meeting. 'The invitation [to partake in the Van Riebeeck festivities] was an insult. It was like a guest taking a dog with him to a wedding party', declared another.[67]

As Leslie Witz and I have argued, it seems that the Unity Movement was slightly uncomfortable with meetings which were characterised by noisy crowds, fist waving and sloganised speeches. The orderly and predictable rituals of the classroom meeting needed to be upheld. Modernity required appropriate modes of behaviour. 'The liberatory movement cannot be built on slogans and mere speeches', it was insisted. Instead, it should be built upon "a scientific analysis and understanding, upon the hard learnt lessons of the past ...[and] on theories derived from that historical understanding." [68] Speeches needed to be driven by rigorous rhetorical systems of persuasion and knowledge dissemination, and the repetition of concepts, forms of analysis and intellectual mechanisms. Public classrooms were sites for revealing the 'truth', with the order of formal knowledge. This was necessary to combat the infectious "disease" of "herrenvolk" ideas.[69]

Apart from the political text and the political meeting, the political device of the political tour of the countryside represents a multifaceted method of nation-building and knowledge production. Every year, Tabata would travel from Cape Town to the eastern Cape and the Transkei in order to mobilise rural dwellers against the state's attempts at betterment and 'rehabilitation'. These were speaking tours conducted according to carefully planned itineraries. Meetings took place in halls in small rural towns, and were often conducted in the open air on village hills. The success of these meetings and rural tours depended upon networks of local leaders and activists with whom Tabata maintained regular contact. Often meetings failed for lack of preparation. Sometimes they drew vast crowds, who came to hear Tabata use the metaphor of a blanket to describe the protection afforded by the AAC. It was after Tabata addressed a large crowd at Mount Ayliff in 1948 that he was arrested and tried for encouraging resistance against stock culling.

While these rural excursions of public meetings had the same purpose of public education and propaganda, they were important in other ways. Tabata's journeys from the city to the countryside served to connect villages and towns together through his route and itinerary. Not only did Tabata move from place to place

while on tour, but he also journeyed from one local activist to the next, creating a web of channels and networks between local leaders, cementing political loyalties. The rural itinerary was a means of mapping and rerouting the eastern Cape through patterns of travelling and learning and teaching circuits. Tabata's political tours were acts of paternalism, offering the patronage of the political movement, and its vision of modernity and an ordered society, replete with its categories and subject positions to be filled. He offered knowledge, a vision of the nation and a methodology of nation-building.

But as much as Tabata brought to the countryside, he also took away. For the rural tour was also a field trip, with Tabata assembing knowledge of the countryside and the conditions of 'the native' into the knowledge-producing world of the modernist political movement. Tabata's rural tours of the Eastern Cape were a type of spatial practice of research, of "travel encounters", of doing surveys and collecting data for later dissemination through writing and speeches. Knowledge of rural processes was brought to the city. Tours were followed by report-back meetings in Cape Town on conditions in the Transkei. These reports, once 'written up' would be disseminated in report-back meetings and through the pages of *Torch*. Readers in Cape Town were made to feel as if they were part of a national movement, which extended into a space of difference.

The Discourse and the Subject

In imagining the nation and building a movement through discourse, undertaking the challenge of knowing society also entailed the enunciation of selfhood and defining one's self into history. Such modes of representation enter into the very constitution of people, a process which is part of the shaping of historical events as well as subjects. The process of defining subjectivities and selves occured through the unifying concepts and identity categories of a shifting discourse.

At first, as the 'new road' was charted, the non-European subject was created, whose identity belonged to the group experience of oppression and the unifying yearnings of a simulacrum or discourse community which had aspirations of nationing. However the denials of individuality in the group identity of contained an ambiguity: of distinctions between speakers and listeners, writers and readers, and implicitly, leaders and followers. Initially this took the form of relations of patronage and paternalism (based initially on a Leninist model of the party and the public organisation), which was the means of cementing the national movement.

Out of the contradictions of this early biographical disavowal, however, came an enunciation of I.B. Tabata's leadership, and the implicit constitution of a biographical project around I.B. Tabata. Tabata was constituted as national leader, whose life history mirrored that of the organisation. Organisational

membership required biographical knowledge of Tabata's oddyssy from rural beginnings in the eastern Cape, through the trials of organisation-building in Cape Town and the tribulations of conditions of exile. Allegiance to the organisation became based on loyalty to Tabata, as his biography performed the work of constituting a system of authority in the construction of an exiled politics. Dora Taylor, as comrade, loyal advisor and partner was central to the fashioning of Tabata as a leader with a biography.

[1] I.B Tabata, *Education for Barbarism: Bantu (Apartheid) Education in South Africa* (London and Lusaka: Unity Movement of South Africa, 1980; first published by Prometheus, South Africa, 1959 and by Pall Mall, UK, 1960). Other publications by Tabata available for sale included *The Awakening of a People*, *Imperialist Conspiracy in Africa*, *The Rehabilitation Scheme: A New Fraud*, *The Boycott as a Weapon of Struggle*, *Freedom Struggle in South Africa* and *Apartheid: Cosmetics Exposed*.

[2] I.B Tabata, *Education for Barbarism*, back cover.

[3] For a history of exhibitions at the District Six Museum, see C Rassool and S Prosalendis (eds), *Recalling Community in Cape Town: Creating and Curating the District Six Museum* (Cape Town: District Six Museum, 2001) and C Rassool, 'Community museums, memory politics and social transformation: histories, possibilities and limits', in I Karp, C Kratz et al. (eds), *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Processes* (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

[4] See T Smith and C Rassool, 'History in photographs at the District Six Museum', in C Rassool and S Prosalendis (eds), *Recalling Community in Cape Town*.

[5]When the collection entered UCT, it was known as The UMSA/Tabata Collection, Manuscripts and Archives, University of Cape Town (BC 925); at the end of 1995, the name of the collection was formally changed to the Tabata Collection, after claims were made on its possession by Temba Sirayi, then Director of the Centre for Cultural Studies at Fort Hare University.

[6]Gail Gerhart, who had begun the project to update *From Protest to Challenge*, and Allison Drew, who had begun working on the documentary history of radical politics in South Africa, made enquiries to consult the collection. See M.P. Richards to B Johns, 31/7/89; A Drew to University Archivist, Manuscripts and Archives Department, University of Cape Town, 15/4/91; Leonie Twentyman Jones to A Drew, 26/4/91 (Tabata Collection, UCT BC 925). Perhaps the most significant recovery history research conducted on the collection is that by former Apdusa youth activist, Robin Kayser, who researched the papers for a Master's degree in History at UCT. In so doing, the intentions of the, showing how the significance of documents and research shifts from outside the academy to inside etc.

[7] University of Fort Hare, 'Background document on the National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre (NAHECS): Prepared for the NAHECS Workshop' , University of Fort Hare National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre Strategic Workshop, Stutterheim, 08-09 May 2003,

[8] University of Fort Hare, 'Background document on the National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre (NAHECS): Prepared for the NAHECS Workshop'.

[9]See the suggestive paper by Anne Digby, `Victorian Values and Women in Public and Private' (presented to the History Department Postgraduate Seminar, University of the Western Cape, 25 August 1992).

[10]See James C Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), especially Ch 5.

[11]Tony Seboni, 'Who's Who in the Unity Movement', *Drum*, April 1954.

[12] See documents of the Alexander Defense Committee; biographical appendices of Tabata's published writings, and the biographical sketch in Karis and Carter, Vol 4.

[13]I B Tabata to B Mnguni, 21 March 1946, Unity Movement of South Africa (UMSA) Collection, Manuscripts and Archives, University of Cape Town (BC 925), (hereafter UMSA Collection). The letter from Mnguni itself does not survive, but it is referred to in Tabata's reply.

[14]B Somvinane (I B Tabata), *The Influx of Natives into Towns: What it means*, All African Convention (WP), May 1944.

[15]I B Tabata to Wycliffe Tsotsi, 12 March 1946, UMSA Collection.

[16]Note that this is not entirely true. The letter in the collection is in Dora Taylor's handwriting, and may have been narrated by Tabata, as if to a secretary. However, it is more likely that the strategy it proposes was the result of careful discussion, planning and resolution by both Tabata and Taylor. See below.

[17]I B Tabata to Wycliffe Tsotsi, 12 March 1946, UMSA Collection.

[18]I B Tabata to Wycliffe Tsotsi, 12 March 1946, UMSA Collection.

[19]I B Tabata to B Mnguni, 21 March 1946, Unity Movement of South Africa (UMSA) Collection, Manuscripts and Archives.

[20]I B Tabata to B Mnguni, 21 March 1946.

[21]I B Tabata to B Mnguni, 21 March 1946.

[22]Tabata's letter to Mandela written in 1948 after a series of meetings and discussions was later highlighted and republished by the Unity Movement as Mandela rose to leadership in the 1960s and 1970s while in prison. Tabata's letter to Sobukwe (13 Aug 1949) in which he congratulated Sobukwe for defending the boycott NRC elections in opposition to the Congress leadership. This letter was also subsequently highlighted as correspondence with the man who would subsequently become president of the PAC.

[23]I B Tabata to Sobukwe, 13 Aug 1949, UMSA Collection.

[24]See Colin Bundy, 'Land and Liberation: popular rural protest and the national liberation movements in South Africa, 1920-1960', in S Marks and S Trapido (eds), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa* (London, 1987); Allison Drew, 'Social Mobilisation and Racial Capitalism in South Africa, 1928-1960', Ph.D Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1991, ch 7.

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[26]Interview with Neville Alexander 8/12/92; interview with Livingstone Mqotsi, 3/3/92; see also Deirdre Levinson, *Five Years: An Experience of South Africa* (London, 1966).

[27] Fax from Leonie Twentyman Jones, Manuscripts and Archives, UCT to Mr Mona, Centre for Cultural Studies, University of Fort Hare, 28.9.94 (Tabata/UMSA Collection, BC 925).

[28] Note from Margaret Richards to Tony Hooper, 18 October 1994 (Tabata/UMSA Collection, BC 925).

[29] 'The Fort Hare People's Museum and Archives', *Optima*, July 1997.

[30]A similar effect was achieved at the University of the Witwatersrand through the absorption into it of the South African History Archive, which had its beginnings as an independent resistance archive in Zimbabwe, into the William Cullen Library.

[31]I.B. Tabata to Francis Wilson, UCT, 29/4/87, Tabata/UMSA Collection. This letter is seen by the archivists at UCT as the founding document of the Collection.

[32] B Johns to Margaret Richards, 17/4/88; 2/7/88; M.P. Richards to B Johns, 11/5/88; 15/6/88; 14/3/89 (Tabata/UMSA Collection).

[33] B Johns to Margaret Richards, 24/3/89; M.P. Richards to B Johns, 7/4/89; 13/6/89; M.P. Richards to A Snyman, 13/6/89 (Tabata/UMSA Collection).

[34] M.P. Richards to B Johns, 31/7/89; A Drew to University Archivist, Manuscripts and Archives Department, University of Cape Town, 15/4/91; Leonie Twentyman Jones to A Drew, 26/4/91 (Tabata/UMSA Collection).

[35] 'Jane Gool-Tabata' (Unity Movement of South Africa, 18 May 1996). Jane Gool died in Cape Town on 18 May 1996.

[36] Ronnie Britten to M.P. Richards, 8 November 1992.

[37] Ronnie Britten to M.P. Richards, 4.6.93 (Tabata/UMSA Collection).

[38] Ronnie Britten to M.P. Richards, 1/12/93.

[39] Margaret Richards to Ronnie Britten, 3/12/93; 31/10/94 (Tabata/UMSA Collection).

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[41] Indeed, this view of Britten's duties was expressed to me by Jane Gool over lunch in 1994.

[42] Some of the key activists who expressed allegiance to the "New Unity Movement" were former UMSA members Livingstone Mqotsi and Alie Fataar, as well as ex-political prisoner from Kwa-Zulu-Natal, Kader Hassim (the husband of Jane Gool's niece).

[43]This was indeed how Jane Gool described Dora Taylor's relationship to Tabata, although there was also an acknowledgement of a friendship on the part of the whole group.

[44]Dora Taylor to I B Tabata, nd, (1936/7), Tabata/UMSA Collection.

[45]Interview, Cadoc Kobus, Qumbu, July 1993

[46]Dora Taylor to I.B. Tabata, 12 Sept 1948, UMSA Collection.

[47]Dora Taylor wrote *The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest* under the pseudonym of Nosipho Majeke (a Nguni-fied adaptation of her maiden name, Dora Jack) in 1952.

[48]I B Tabata to Dora Taylor, 1/7/53, UMSA Collection; 'Mnguni' was the pseudonym for Hosea Jaffe, with whom Taylor and Tabata were beginning to have political differences in the mid-1950s.

[49]This was the case, for example, with *Education for Barbarism*, which was republished by Pall Mall in London in the 1960s.

[50]See for example, I B Tabata, *Imperialist Conspiracy in Africa* (1970s).

[51]The use of the notion of a `public sphere' follows that developed by Jurgen Habermas. See Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Enquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Cambridge, Massachussetts: MIT Press, 1991, as well as Craig Calhoun (ed), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, Cambridge, Massachussetts: MIT Press, 1992. See especially the critique developed by Nancy Fraser in `Rethinking the Public Sphere: a Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', in Craig Calhoun (ed), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*.

[52]In general, see Saul Dubow, *Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid in South Africa, 1919-36* (London, 1989) and Adam Ashforth, *The Politics of Official Discourse in South Africa* (Oxford, 1990).

[53]See David E Apter and Tony Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic* (Cambridge, Massachussetts, 1994).

[54]See Amina Mama, *Beyond the Masks: Race, Gender and Subjectivity* (London, 1995), p 98.

[55]See for example Bill Nasson 'Political Ideologies in the Western Cape', in Tom Lodge and Bill Nasson, *All, Here and Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s* (New York, 1991).
[56]Linda Chisholm, '"Making the pedagogical more political and the political more pedagogical": Educational Traditions and Legacies of the Non-European Unity Movement, 1943-1985', *Perspectives in Education*, 1992 (Do Proper Ref); Jonathan Hyslop, *The Classroom Struggle: Policy and Resistance in South Africa, 1940-1990* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1999), Ch 2. See also Alan Wieder, 'Informed by Apartheid: Mini-Oral Histories of Two Cape Town Teachers'.
[57]Chisholm, p
[58]Hyslop, p 32-3.
[59]Wieder, p
[60]Interviews with R O Dudley, 11/11/92, Alie Fataar 19/7/92, Irwin Combrink, 19/10/95.
[61]Joe Rassool, 'Personal reflections' article, Revolutionary History website.
[62]The analogy I am thinking of here is the reorganisation and restructuring of the museum in the 19th century as an institution of order, classification and public instruction. See Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1995).
[63]For a full discussion of the Festival and its opponents, see C Rassool and L Witz, 'The 1952 Jan van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival: Constructing and Contesting Public National History in South Africa', *Journal of African History*, 34, 1993. This section of the article draws on this research.
[64]I first encountered this concept in a discussion with former teacher and TLSA member, Joe Rassool in 1987.
[65]On ritual and meetings see Susan Herbst, *Politics at the Margin: Historical Studies of Public Expression Outside the Mainstream* (Cambridge, 1994).
[66]*The Torch*, 5/2, 18/3/1952.
[67]*The Torch*, 9/10/51; 5/2, 1/4/1952, cited in Rassool and Witz.
[68]*The Torch*, 29/4/52, cited in Rassool and Witz.
[69]See *The Torch*, 16/9/46 in which the ruling ideas were referred to as a 'disease'. [check again].