

“In my stride”: a life-history of Alie Fataar, teacher.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis employs a life-history approach to investigate how a teacher-identity is cohered under conditions of education resistance in South Africa. The life-history is situated within the broad rubric of narrative studies, but extends this to investigating a teacher's life within its complex locations of class, race, gender and religion. Alie Fataar was a legendary teacher at the Livingstone High School in Claremont, Cape Town, was a founder-member of the Non European Unity Movement (NEUM), General-Secretary of the Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA), founder-member of the African People's Democratic Union of Southern Africa (APDUSA), and Joint-Secretary of the Unity Movement of South Africa (UMSA) in exile. He was banned in 1961 under the Suppression of Communism Act, and went into exile in 1965. The study tracks his teaching and political journeys in South Africa, and across three fledgling post-colonial African countries, namely Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The primary data employed in the study are the transcribed narratives of more than fifty hours of semi-structured interviews conducted with the teacher, Alie Fataar. The study also employs secondary data in the form of life-history documents sourced from the respondent, and is supplemented by photographs sourced from the respondent, as well as archival materials which supplement the narrative data. This vast body of data is analysed using a constructivist grounded theory approach. Data analysis was facilitated by the employment of QSR-NVivo 10, a qualitative data-analysis computer software package well suited to a grounded theory analysis. The study is the first known doctoral work in South Africa to utilise a life-history framework to explore the contextualised life of a teacher associated with the TLSA as this life engages with legislative frameworks, official policies, professional teacher associations, local communities, colleagues, personal networks, political movements and other social actors in the context of resistance in South African education. The study helps us understand the fluid discursive dimensions of a teaching life as it navigates complex personal, political and professional fields in the broader context of education resistance in fiercely contested social and political arenas. The study's main finding is that Alie Fataar resists several essentialising social forces, including class, racial and religious identities, and, in doing so, the study finds that Alie Fataar holds consistently to a central, life-organising identity of the teacher as the supreme public intellectual under conditions of resistance in education and the broader socio-political-economic framework in South Africa. The study contributes to the still-sparse academic literature on the teachers of the TLSA, and simultaneously contributes to Cape social history and the politics of intellectual marginalisation in the Muslim community in the Cape from the first quarter of the twentieth century. The study makes theoretical contributions to the academic fields of life-history and the literature on exile, and contends that the researcher-researched continuum must be made explicit throughout a life-history study if the authorial voice of the subject of such a study is not to be subjugated. In terms of teacher-policy formulation, the study finds that the complex and nuanced identity-formation of teachers makes it imperative that the teacher-policy arena incorporates the voices of teachers in policy formulation. This avoids policy mismatches with regard to the very group, teachers, who are expected to adopt and implement these policies in schools.

DECLARATION

I declare that *'In my stride': a life-history of Alie Fataar, teacher*, is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used and quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Yunus Omar
June 2015

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First I wish to acknowledge the warmth and generosity of Mrs. Ursula Fataar, who, with her husband Alie, opened their doors and lives to me unconditionally from the moment I began this study. Since that first meeting in Wynberg, my life has been enriched through the research and personal engagements with both Alie and Ursula Fataar. This study was made possible through the comradely willingness of two unassuming people who gave me a gift few receive: the gift is one of trust. I extend my deepest thanks and respect to Mrs. Fataar, who continues her activism in the progressive arenas of our country. Hers, too, is a story that deserves to be told, alongside that of Alie Fataar and the many comrades who fought anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-segregationist and anti-imperialist struggles throughout their adult lives.

“But let’s talk.” From the moment that Professor Crain Soudien penned these words at the end of an assessment-comment on an HDE assignment of mine many years ago, he has been an enduring source of intellectual direction and guidance. I was not fortunate enough to have encountered Professor Soudien at the Harold Cressy High School where he taught and I was a student. Happily, my postgraduate journey was dotted with learning encounters with Professor Soudien. His diary groans under his punishing daily schedule, yet he remains the model of soft-spoken mentorship that has allowed me to bring this study to completion. His belief in youth agency and their capacity for positive, radical social change is a project I have embraced all my working life, and I suspect that much of my optimism in this regard stems from readings of his works, and the discussions with him that I have been privileged to be a part of. I convey my deep sense of indebtedness to Professor Soudien via these few words.

Inevitably during the writing of this study, memories of my teachers have been foregrounded. From Mrs. Smith’s pre-school in Little Lesar Street, District Six, then a few metres further west to the now-destroyed Sydney Street Primary School; through Harold Cressy High School on the upper reaches of the District, and to UCT, teachers have been pivotal and decidedly influential in the formation of my identities. At every stage, teachers at these institutions taught me explicitly to understand that I was part of one human race, and taught me to disavow the many markers of negative discrimination which were appended to us all. I take this opportunity to relate one incident to exemplify what my teachers stood for. After my application for a teaching post at my high school *alma mater* had been processed, my principal informed me that my application had been rejected on the basis of my ‘race’. He had me sit in his office while he walked down Roeland Street to the Liberty Life Towers which housed the education department offices. He returned a while later, reached out his hand, and welcomed me to the staff of Harold Cressy High School. He had already announced his retirement as principal, yet continued to go the extra mile in pursuit of what he had always taught. He accepted no thanks. It was something that needed to be done, and he went about showing me what leadership is able to effect when courage and a commitment to education is required. I stand in awe of Victor Ritchie and all my teachers. Harold Cressy High School in District Six was one of the few remnants of my childhood after most of District Six had been bulldozed. My teachers kept the flame of resistance and hope alive, even as I floundered

in a glorified, overtly racially-inscribed township on the Cape Flats. I could return ‘home’ each morning as we travelled to school.

I would not have completed this study without the constant thought that its completion was one of the ways in which I could demonstrate that I value what all my teachers have contributed to my life. I trust this study does not undermine the depth of their contributions to the lives of so many people.

My wife first lit the flame of my thinking about a teaching-life. It is from her that I first heard about the ‘social constructions of reality’. It is from her that I first learnt of ‘Mr. Smith’ and the subtleties and complexities of mathematics pedagogy in the classroom. Those were the sparks which led me to first encounter education as something of mystery and unique wonder. The values we seek to bring to our family of four have informed my approach to this study: there can be no growth without honesty, and there is space for an interrogation of what we hold as taken-for-granted truths. I thank her, and I thank our two sons. They have endured the peaks and troughs of my life, and I am mindful that I appreciate very little of the scars I have left behind in this regard. I gratefully dedicate this study to my wife and our two sons. Our elder son displays a commitment to intellectual rigour, decency and social justice that makes me proud. I hope he will continue to grow into his academic persona, and make the contributions he is capable of. Our younger son displays a maturity I admire, forges new paths, and opens windows into worlds we have not before encountered. *Carpe diem*, young men. Alongside others, the world is your responsibility and your pleasure.

My parents taught me much. My mother drilled home the necessity to pursue a high-school education, while my father resisted attempts to have me schooled in a new ethnic institution in the township to which we were moved after District Six was destroyed. I first heard the name Alie Fataar from my father, who described to me a tall, fiery teacher who delivered a talk in the Hyman Liberman Institute Hall a few doors from our home in Muir Street, District Six. My mother first enrolled me as a member of the Hyman Liberman Library, where I spent hours sitting among the shelves reading as much as I could before closing time. I learnt from them to respect those who were ‘un-like’ me, and to see myself as part of those who were described as ‘different’. Factory-worker and hawker... a life of privilege would, I believe, not have led me to type these words today. I wish my father was with us still. I hope I have not brought dishonour to their good selves.

My brother brings artistry to whatever he does, and his attention to detailed excellence is something I struggle to emulate. His tales of Harold Cressy High School brought schooling to life for me in ways I only realised much later in my life. He created, with Mr. Victor Ritchie, a piece of Cressy-ana with his prodigious sketching talents. If anything, his moment of daring created an opportunity for the legend of Mr. Ritchie to emerge even more powerfully in our corner of District Six. These moments of schooling hilarity brought with it moments of insight into the subtleties of thoughtful educational leadership. My thanks to my brother, his family, my wonderful nieces, and such a lovely new human being who captivates us all with each new day. For little persons like her we need to build a sane, beautiful, creative and just world.

Many others warrant my thanks. Every student, library colleague, every teacher-colleague, every parent and guardian, every participant in a seminar... your generosity and willingness to share knowledge have made huge impressions on me. I hope I have been able to conduct myself in that same spirit, and if not, that is due to my shortcomings in spite of your fine examples.

I have been fortunate to meet and work with a range of people who exhibit numerous strengths. One person stands out for his generosity, meticulousness, and a willingness to revisit what seemed to me to be a well-worked-through text. Toyer Nakidien has been a positive, unassuming, generous colleague and friend. We encountered each other at a time in our country's history that education was sacrificed at the altar of neoliberal economics. Those who defended the 'right-sizing' of the public sector called us traitors. I deem it a great privilege to have worked alongside Toyer, Russell Bell, Fazilét Bell, Brian Isaacs, Willie Leith, Dr. Everard Weber, Lionel Scholtz and so many others who continue to work tirelessly in the interests of a progressive education and social system which places people at the heart of its project.

Morgan Morris: you made me look at library shelves in extraordinarily different ways. I appreciate the cosmic moment that brought you through that door. From Bosnia to Campbell, Hammett to *Batman*, and white horses I still don't understand, you are a huge presence to me and us all. (In the contradiction that is capitalist excess and footballing beauty, I hope that Monsieur Wenger can deliver the League for you.)

A familiar face from District Six re-entered my life when I was at my lowest ebb after our forced removal from our home in 1977. He brought with him lost memories and feelings, and, unknowingly, helped me navigate somewhat the deep dislocatedness I felt. He was, quite simply, the best person I ever knew. He did not live to see his twenty-fifth year, but he remains an enduring presence, nudging and encouraging. This humble and modest student's Friday afternoon 'potential subjunctive' triumph in Mrs. Helen Kies' Latin classroom was re-told to greater mirth with each telling. I celebrate his life, and mourn our loss. His name is Salim Vallie. He was my friend.

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GLOSSARY

AAC	All-African Convention
ANC	African National Congress
Anti-CAD	Anti-Coloured Affairs Department
APDUSA	African People's Democratic Union of Southern Africa
APO	African Peoples Organisation
AWC	Anti-War Coalition
CAFDA	Cape Flats Distress Association
CATA	Cape African Teachers' Association
CTFC	Cape Teachers' Federal Council
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
HUC	Head Unity Committee of the NEUM
NEF	New Era Fellowship
NEUM	Non European Unity Movement
NLF	National Liberation Front
NUM	New Unity Movement
NUPSAW	National Union of Public Service and Allied Workers
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SACP	South African Communist Party
TLSA	Teachers' League of South Africa
UCT	University of Cape Town
UMSA	Unity Movement of South Africa
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WPSA	Workers' Party of South Africa
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front

PART ONE: LIFE-HISTORY AND THE COHERING OF A TEACHER IDENTITY IN SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION RESISTANCE HISTORIOGRAPHY: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL SCAPES

Introduction

The title of the study is “‘In my stride’: a life-history of Alie Fataar, teacher.”¹ The title is taken from a refrain used by the respondent to explain decisions taken at various critical moments in his life.

Embedded in the title are three key elements of the study. First, life-history as the principal research-design, i.e. the unit of study is a single individual, whose recorded and analysed narratives, as well as various documents issuing from the respondent, are the data utilised in the study. Second, the respondent is Alie Fataar, a native of Claremont, a suburb in Cape Town, whose teaching career began in 1937, and ended in June 1988, when he retired from teaching after a marathon spell of 51 years. Third, the life-history centres around the *teaching* life of the respondent, while holding a research position that the specific focus on a teaching life within a life-history study cannot, and does not, remove from the study the confluences of the multiple trajectories of a life.

Rationale of the study

Wieder and Soudien indicate that in the South African intellectual tradition, “(A)lmost no scholarly attention has been paid to the community of intellectuals who worked in

¹ Jerrold Levinson (1985: 35) posits that one of the main functions of a title is to focus attention on a particular aspect of a work. A title “...select(s) from among the main elements of core content one theme to stand as the leading one of the work... What a focusing title does then is suggest which of the contending themes should be given center place in interpreting the work and organizing one’s appreciation of it.”

political, social, and educational circles in Cape Town, South Africa, outside of the academy, in the last hundred years.”² This general statement by Wieder and Soudien is clarified and particularised:

From about the middle of the 1930s, a steady stream of intellectuals emerged in Cape Town, working in left-wing political and cultural structures. They brought to the assemblies in which they moved a fierce commitment to social analysis buttressed by a concentrated interest in political theory. This commitment was expressed in activist work, in polemics in debating circles, and also in writing sometimes reproduced in formal journals, newspapers, and books, but, much more often, in polemical tracts. These tracts and pamphlets constituted the grist of the intellectual work holding up the particular outlooks and perspectives emerging in those parts of the Western Cape that were not White. They contained what came to be the characteristic postures of the Unity Movement, the Fourth International of South Africa, the Teachers’ League of South Africa (TLSA), and a whole range of Trotskyist and Leninist movements...³

The primary aim of this study is to understand how Alie Fataar, a key intellectual in the Non European Unity Movement (NEUM) and Teachers’ League of South Africa (TLSA), coheres a teacher identity for himself in the midst of the complex forces swirling around him. Deriving from the primary research question is an ancillary question which asks what this progressive teacher identity constitutes. This study situates itself within a scholarly project which asks “questions about the production of political lives, about the place of narrative in the formation of identity (which) open up the possibility of

² Wieder, A. and Soudien, C. (2010) Teacher as Public Intellectual: Richard Dudley and the Fight Against South African Apartheid. In J.A. Sandlin, B.D. Schultz and J. Burdick (eds.) *Handbook of Public Pedagogy: Education and Learning Beyond Schooling*. New York: Routledge, p. 604.

³ Wieder, A. and Soudien, C. (2010) Teacher as Public Intellectual: Richard Dudley and the Fight Against South African Apartheid. In Sandlin, J.A., Schultz, B.D. and Burdick, J. (eds.) (2010) *Handbook of Public Pedagogy: Education and Learning Beyond Schooling*. New York: Routledge, p. 604.

extending the field of South African resistance history beyond documentary realist methodological boundaries.”⁴

Outside of the main research aim and the ancillary aim, the study makes a contribution to the limited scholarship on the ambiguous role of Muslim (organic) intellectuals in early and mid twentieth-century Cape Town. In exploring the (dis-)locatedness of the young, modernising Alie Fataar within a community defining itself in primarily religious terms, the study also makes a contribution to Cape social and socio-educational history in exploring Alie Fataar’s narrative constructions of his increasing alienation from the lived ‘Muslim’ experience in Claremont, and his identification of the Cape Muslim religious leadership⁵ during his youth as virtually irrelevant to his increasing sense of working for social justice through his teaching life.

Teachers as members of broader society are poorly represented in terms of literature which seeks to explore narratives about their own perceptions, ideals, tensions and experiences. In this vein, Ivor Goodson asserts that “such study seeks to understand and to give voice to an occupational group that have been historically marginalized. Yet, as a group, teachers retain considerable power, and as is often the case much truth resides in

⁴ Rassool, C.S. (2004) *The Individual, Auto/biography and History in South Africa*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of the Western Cape, p. 2.

⁵ See, for example, Taliep (1982) and Aslam Fataar (2007) for detailed academic insights into the religious, cultural, intellectual and political worlds articulated by the religious leadership of the Cape Muslim community.

the margins.”⁶ In keeping with Goodson, this thesis seeks to explore the ‘truth which resides in the margins’.

This study arose out of a research interest in teacher professional identity in the post-apartheid era, as new education laws and frameworks were promulgated by the ruling party, the African National Congress. My Masters mini-dissertation investigated the discursive construction of teachers’ professional identity in the South African Council for Educators (SACE) Act of 2000, and the initial research focus of this study involved interviewing several teachers with a view to discerning their discursive constructions of their professional teaching identities.⁷

I began the initial scoping of the doctoral study by identifying several teachers, current and retired, who I could possibly approach as respondents. As I began to propose these ideas to various seminars, the idea began to take shape to focus on the educational archive of a single respondent, who could speak to several decades of educational participation in the education resistance political milieu of the segregated South African educational scene. The teachers of the TLSA provided an immediate research focus. There were several reasons for this initial focus on teachers of the TLSA.

I had schooled at the Harold Cressy High School in District Six, one of a handful of schools characterised by the presence of senior teachers of the TLSA. Further, I had been

⁶ Goodson, I. (ed.) (1992a) *Studying Teachers’ Lives*. New York: Teachers’ College, Columbia University, p. 15.

⁷ Omar, Y. (2002) *Discourses of professionalism and the production of teachers’ professional identity in the South African Council for Educators (SACE) Act of 2000: a discourse analysis*. Unpublished MPhil (Educational Administration, Planning and Social Policy) mini-dissertation, University of Cape Town.

a member of the TLSA and its later iteration as the National Union of Public Service and Allied Workers (NUPSAW) Education Sector during my teaching career at my *alma mater*.⁸ A discussion with Professor Crain Soudien of UCT shifted my research focus into the arena of conducting intensive live interviews with one TLSA teacher. This type of study, a life-history, would be a unique contribution to the small but growing literature on the teacher-intellectuals of the TLSA. Further, the theoretical challenges thrown up in a research project that primarily utilised the narratives and documents of a single respondent were enticing.

I chose Alie Fataar as respondent of the study for several reasons. First, he had taught at Livingstone High School in Claremont, a school famous for its association with the TLSA, from 1938 until his leaving (without notice) at the end of December 1964, as he was readying to go into exile. He was a founder-member of the NEUM in 1943, had been Joint-Secretary of the NEUM, was Secretary of the post-1943 radicalised TLSA⁹, was Secretary of the Cape Teachers' Federal Council (CTFC), a founder-member of the African People's Democratic Union of Southern Africa (Apdusa), and Joint-Secretary of the Unity Movement of South Africa (UMSA) in exile. He had been banned in 1961 under the Suppression of Communism Act.

Second, he had taught in several countries in Africa during his exile years, adding a unique possible set of personal insights into the educational and political circumstances of post-independence sub-Saharan countries. Third, he had returned to South Africa from

⁸ Teachers in the post-apartheid educational era were compelled to register membership of a recognised teacher-body, such as a union or association.

⁹ See Adhikari, M. (1986) for a detailed account of the radicalisation of the TLSA in the 1940s.

political exile after a period of twenty-eight years, and, well into his seventieth and eightieth years, his public profile was punctuated by contributions to his life-long political affiliations, community radio, community newspapers, as well as new forms of political associations in the form of, for example, the anti-imperialist Anti-War Coalition (AWC). His profile was rich with research possibilities. His name provoked several conflicting responses to whomever his name was mentioned, and whenever he was heard.¹⁰ Alie Fataar seemed a uniquely suited possible respondent to the study. I secured his telephone number from the local telephone directory, called him on a Thursday morning, and secured my first interview with him for the following Monday. He was extremely positive about the request to be the sole respondent of a doctoral study in education resistance studies, and offered the flat he shared with his wife, Ursula, in Wynberg, as our meeting place. Alie Fataar was 86-years old when I first met him.

The teachers of the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) and the Teacher's League of South Africa (TLSA) have been described in the following terms by Bill Nasson. Writing about his own teachers of the 1960s, Nasson writes that these teachers were

(M)ostly older men of towering personality and effective educational organization (who) poured out a vivid freewheeling rhetoric... Above all, as socialists, they had an intuitive grasp of the primary value of 'history' and of their own historical function. Whatever their specialist teaching subjects... they constituted a collective forum which molded a process of historically aware learning among pupils.¹¹

¹⁰ Community radio had burgeoned with the advent of the post-apartheid order. Alie Fataar was a regular, articulate, confident and often strident contributor to Radio 786, particularly as a live caller-in to several of the radio-station's current-affairs debates.

¹¹ Nasson, B. (1990) The Unity Movement: Its Legacy in Historical Consciousness. *Radical History Review*, 46/7, p. 190.

One of those teachers associated with the TLSA and NEUM was Alie Fataar, the respondent of the study.

Alie Fataar: a brief biographical overview

Alie Fataar¹² was born in Claremont, a suburb of Cape Town on 26 March, 1917, the youngest of twelve children born to Salamudien Fataar, a tailor, and Janap Moosa. The young Fataar attended several primary schools, whereafter he began an association with Livingstone High School in 1930 that was to define him as a leading teacher-intellectual in the Claremont and wider Cape Town oppressed communities. Livingstone High School was established in 1926, and was the first government-established school for non-whites in Claremont. Fataar registered at the Zonnebloem Teacher Training College on the edge of District Six in Cape Town in 1935, obtaining a first-grade Teachers' Higher Certificate. On graduation in 1936, Fataar was appointed (in 1937) as the first teacher at a new government primary school for 'non-white' children.

1938 was a watershed year for the young teacher. He was appointed to Livingstone High School, his *alma mater*, as a specialist Standard Six teacher, and began a 27-year period of unbroken service to the Livingstone and Claremont community, terminated at the end of 1964 by his leaving without notice as he went underground as he prepared for a run into exile. At Livingstone he was the stuff of legend. Tall and with a commanding bearing, Fataar poured himself into teaching and politics, and established himself first as

¹² This section briefly introduces Alie Fataar's life, in broadly chronological form. The short narrative on the next few pages is taken from a mimeo passed on to me by Alie Fataar, after my request to him for a document that captured significant dates and moments in his professional life. He indicated at the time that he had prepared such a document, and would pass it on to me. The bibliographic citation is: Fataar, Alie (undated) *Alie Fataar: a short biography*. Mimeo, 2 typed pages.

a science teacher and later, as a teacher of English to senior classes, and one of the senior figures amongst an array of fine teachers.

During his early period as a teacher at Livingstone High School, Alie Fataar attended, *inter alia*, regular New Era Fellowship meetings, which

involved deep preparation, particularly for public engagements such as making a speech or, more intensely, when giving a formal talk... this meant that one's verbal references, one's quotes, the context against which one was invoking an allusion, had to be not only absolutely correct, but pertinent. There was a fastidiousness about those in control of the shaping process which demanded of the individual an almost complete re-imagination of his or her identity as a human being. One had to be asking oneself "what it meant to be a full, active and self-fulfilling human being".¹³

As Chapter Five will show, Fataar wove teaching and politics into a way of life, encompassing virtually every aspect of his existence. Chapter Five concludes with a nuanced discussion of Alie Fataar's complex decisions around going into exile, and leads on to Chapter Six, his period of exile.

Chapter Six is, in many ways, the marker of Alie Fataar's uniqueness amongst many of his teacher-comrades. He traversed three African countries, teaching in each of the three countries which offered him refuge. Fataar's narratives around how he saw his teaching in relation to his exiled status are particularly insightful. His exile-orientation, if there is such a singular construction, is developed in his narrative as a seeming counterpoint to the exile-theory of the renowned Palestinian intellectual Edward Said, late Professor of

¹³ Soudien, C. (2011) The contribution of radical Western Cape intellectuals to an indigenous knowledge project in South Africa. *Transformations*, Number 76, pp. 49-50. Soudien references interviews with Richard (RO) Dudley and Neville Alexander to generate an astounding learning regimen and a re-imagination of the young NEUM and TLSA intellectuals as they were trained in formations such as the New Era Fellowship (NEF) and the South Peninsula Education Forum (SPEF).

Comparative Literature at Columbia University. It was during his period of exile that Fataar achieved a life-long desire to study at the universities of Cambridge and Lancaster respectively. These discourses, as narrated by Alie Fataar, are deeply inscribed in his persona, and its importance to his identity as a teacher is examined in Chapter Six.

After the unbanning of the South African liberation movements in 1990 and the release of high-profile political leadership, Fataar was able to enter South Africa on a number of occasions, attending and speaking at New Unity Movement conferences and other meetings. He returned to South Africa, no longer an exile, in December 1993. Chapter Seven, the last of the 'life-history' narrative chapters of the study, explores the highly complex return from exile of Alie Fataar. Chapter Seven, instead of 'closing down' a life as rich and nuanced as Alie Fataar's was, actually generates a quite astonishing set of lenses through which his last years, as well as his previous life-experiences, can be viewed, analysed and critically assessed.

Having provided a brief biographical overview of Alie Fataar, the next section provides an overview of the research paradigm in which this study is situated.

The research paradigm of the study

This study situates itself in a qualitative research paradigm, broadly involving "the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials... that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives."¹⁴ It is premised on a non-positivist theoretical orientation, which commits "the researcher to a critique of (the)

¹⁴ Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 3-4

positivist or postpositivist project.”¹⁵ The specific research methodology employed in this study is the life-history approach, exemplified in this study by Goodson¹⁶ and Plummer.¹⁷

A life-history study is “always the history of a single life, told from a particular vantage point,”¹⁸ here the narrative constructions of Alie Fataar. Although life-histories are included in the rubric ‘narrative studies’, they are qualitatively more nuanced, in that

(I)n so much as life histories are stories of people’s lives, they are narratives; but it is the connection of one’s life events to social events that distinguishes life history from other forms of narrative. The life is seen as being lived in a time, place, and under particular social circumstances rather than a single collection of events.¹⁹

Extending the concept of life-history as a contextualised research endeavour, Sparkes refers to life-history’s “ability to focus upon central moments, critical incidents, or fateful moments that revolve around indecision, confusions, contradictions, and ironies...”²⁰ Goodson states that, “successfully” implemented, “the life history forces a confrontation with other people’s subjective perceptions.”²¹ This confronting of personal subjectivity is a key analytical concept in the study, drilling down to the issue of power in the research matrix. Life-history needs to “attend to the silences as well as what is said... we need to attend to how the story is told as well as what is told or not told, and to attend to the

¹⁵ Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 7

¹⁶ Goodson, I. (ed., 1992a) (1992b), (1992c), (1995), (1999), (2001), (2013)

¹⁷ Plummer, 2001

¹⁸ Lincoln, Y. (in Hatch and Wisniewski, 1995: 115)

¹⁹ Schempp, P. (quoted in Hatch and Wisniewski, 1995: 115)

²⁰ Sparkes, A. (in Hatch and Wisniewski, 1995: 116)

²¹ Goodson, 2001: 131

tensions and contradictions rather than succumb to the temptations to gloss over these in our desire for ‘the’ story.”²²

Several data-sources are utilised in the study, all of which were solicited from the respondent, bar the archival documents contained in the I.B. Tabata Collection (BC 925) and the Zonnebloem Papers (BC 636).²³ The data sources utilised in this study are the transcript data from more than fifty hours of semi-structured interviews conducted with the respondent over a six-month period; photographs solicited from the respondent; documents, including political writings, educational-material writings; personal documents, including testimonials in favour of the respondent; and the already alluded-to archival documents sourced from the University of Cape Town’s Manuscripts and Archives Department.

The principal analytic device employed in the coding of the transcribed interview-data is constructivist grounded theory as formulated by Charmaz.²⁴ Chapter Two provides a detailed account of constructivist grounded theory and its methodological imperatives, theoretical possibilities and its value in determining reliability and validity in a life-history study. Second, the analytic tools of Pierre Bourdieu, namely field, capital and habitus, are employed in complementary ways alongside constructivist grounded theory. The photographs are analysed utilising a theoretical orientation that suggests that

²² Munro, 1998: 12-13

²³ Sourced from the University of Cape Town’s Manuscripts and Archives Department.

²⁴ Charmaz, 2000, 2006 and 2008

“pictures have a different story to tell than words.”²⁵ Each of these research orientations is fleshed out in Chapter Two.

Having outlined in broad sweep the research framework in which the study is situated, as well as the data sources and methods of data analysis, the next section outlines the scope of the study.

The scope of the study

This study is presented in two complementary parts comprising theoretical and methodological foundations (Part One) and the respondent’s constructions of a teacher-identity within the contexts of complex social forces (Part Two).

Part One consists of three chapters, and Part Two is made up of five chapters. The final chapter (Chapter Eight) is a theoretical reflection on the study. Part One examines the theoretical and methodological scope of this life-history study, while Part Two is an extension of Part One, inscribing into the academic record the narrative productions of Alie Fataar’s teaching life.

Chapter One focuses on the literature that informs the study, namely, the literature around the NEUM and TLSA; socialism and the South African left; the literature on intellectuals; and the literature on exile, particularly the work of Edward Said. Chapter One then discusses the theoretical framework emerging from the literature. The

²⁵ In Hayes, 2005: 520. Given the limitations of a doctoral study, and the decision to privilege the vast amount of data contained in the oral narratives of Alie Fataar generated during more than fifty hours of recorded interviews, I note here that a more extensive inscribing into the academic record of photographs and the life-narratives of Alie Fataar will be a key focus of my post-doctoral studies.

theoretical framework incorporates several key strands. First, the study invokes a political understanding of South Africa as existing under non-interrupted “indirect rule”²⁶ through the twentieth and into the early twenty-first centuries. This understanding has important implications for the study, as it opens up a “Third Space”²⁷ or Fanon’s moment of “occult instability” in which the respondent’s educational life-narratives are located. The personal-political matrix of a life is explored within this context. The final concept in the theoretical framework is the issue of exile and the Saidian notion of the intellectual as consciously adopting the notion of marginality in order to more clearly recognise the responsibilities of the intellectual.

Chapter Two focuses on the research design and methodology adopted in the study. This chapter is, in part, a detailed account of the multiple research-positives that arise from a life-history study. The strengths of the method are established, as are its limitations and potential weaknesses. Chapter Two then moves on to discuss the sources and quality of the data utilised in the study. Five data sources are identified and explicated, namely transcript data from semi-structured interviews; photographs; educational-political writings of the respondent; personal documents; and archival data. All data, outside that of the archival data, were sourced directly from the respondent. Sampling issues, as well as the data analysis techniques, constitute the final section of Chapter Two. Kathy Charmaz’s²⁸ constructivist grounded theory elaborates on the classic works of Strauss and Corbin.²⁹ Charmaz holds that adopting a constructivist approach to grounded theory

²⁶ Mamdani, 1999

²⁷ Bhabha, 2004

²⁸ Charmaz, 2000

²⁹ Strauss and Corbin, 1990

“celebrates firsthand knowledge of empirical worlds, takes a middle ground between postmodernism and positivism, and offers accessible methods for taking qualitative research into the 21st century.”³⁰

Chapter Two then moves on to discuss Pierre Bourdieu’s conceptual analytic tools, field, capital and habitus, before moving on to a discussion of the sources and types of data utilised in the study. Bourdieu’s insistence on a practical rather than an abstracted sociology is a key element in the theoretical repertoire which will be used in the study. The final section of Chapter Two explores the use of photographs as discrete, integral and data-heavy research-items. This section adopts the position of utilising photographic data as primary, rather than adjunctive, secondary data-sources.

Chapter Three is a discussion of validity, reliability, and the ethical challenges related to conducting life-history studies. Amongst the key elements of Chapter Three are the views of Rogers *et al*, who suggest that “a fundamental criterion of validity in qualitative research is that interpretations and conclusions follow a trail of textual evidence that originate in the data source(s).”³¹ In addition, Hammersley and Atkinson posit two general criteria for testing validity in narrative studies: first, plausibility and credibility of the account, and second, the “contribution of the study to the field, previous findings, methods, theory or social policy”.³²

³⁰ Charmaz, 2000: 510

³¹ Rogers, *et al*, 1999

³² Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983

Mishler asserts that a focus on “trustworthiness rather than truth displaces validation from its traditional location in a presumably objective, non-reactive, and neutral reality and it moves it to the social world – a world constructed in and through our discourses, and actions, through praxis”.³³ Charmaz suggests several criteria for working with constructivist grounded theory that are applicable to the validity and reliability issues arising in life-history studies, each of which are elaborated in Chapter Three.³⁴ Chapter Three concludes with a discussion around the ethics and challenges of working with narratives and life-history.

Part Two of the Study commences with Chapter Four. This chapter discusses Alie Fataar’s formative years. It traces his family roots and influences, including the class, religio-social, political and spatial contexts in which he narrates his life. It discusses his first years of primary and secondary schooling, his approaches to his schooling and learning; teachers; institutions; and a discussion around Alie Fataar’s differential experiences regarding his secular schooling and his short-lived madrasah (traditional Muslim afternoon-school) sojourn.

Chapter Five explores Alie Fataar’s coming into being as a teacher and radical intellectual. It traces its origins from the powerful examples of his first schoolteachers, though his contact with persons such as E.C. Roberts at Livingstone High School, to Ben Kies (a contemporary), Isaac Bangani Tabata and Dr. Goolam Gool. This chapter engages Alie Fataar’s narrative expositions of the characters, institutions, debates and

³³ Mishler, 1990: 240

³⁴ Charmaz, 2000: 510-528

intellectual work that went into “taking a nation to school.”³⁵ Further, the narratives around the splits within the NEUM and TLSA, and the impact on the work of the NEUM and on Fataar, are explored in this chapter.

Chapter Six traces the multidimensional aspects of Alie Fataar’s period of exile from 1965 to 1993 inclusive. It is during this period of exile that Alie Fataar indicated he lived out his most productive years as an educationist.³⁶ The continuum and complexity of the teacher/full-time political worker is explored, particularly in the context of his Zambian exile-period. Before that, his experience in Botswana, especially with Patrick Van Rensburg, is detailed, as it offered Fataar the first opportunity back into teaching after going into exile. This chapter also explores his political work for UMSA, and the fractures that occurred vis-à-vis his privileging of teaching rather than full-time work for UMSA. His educational experiences at the universities of Cambridge and Lancaster are included here, as is his work in Zimbabwe - with Robert Mugabe's Zanu-PF, radio-work with teachers, and the flowering of his curriculum-oriented education writing.

Chapter Seven discusses Alie Fataar’s repatriation in post-apartheid South Africa under the auspices of the UNHCR in 1993, and the resumption of resistance in South Africa. Fataar's experiences on his return to South Africa in 1993 are complex and multi-directional. It includes the renewing of political and personal engagements with old comrades in the TLSA and reconstituted NEUM in the form of the New Unity Movement (NUM); engaging with a new post-apartheid democratic order; engagement with

³⁵ Rassool, 2001

³⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

grassroots movements like the Anti-War Movement; educational and political engagements via newspaper columns and community-radio appearances; his attempts at getting his biography written and published; confronting illness and his end years; and his continued engagement with a mix of leftist movements asserting themselves globally and locally. Fataar's visible adoption of a 'Muslim' persona during this period of return is explored in the context of the lived realities of post-apartheid political realities, age, and the emergence (from the early 1980s) of a more radical political activism locating itself in the Iranian Revolution which culminated in 1979, which arguably animated the political agencies of anti-apartheid and anti-colonial activists who had their roots in the Muslim community. The chapter explores Fataar's continued activism, in spite of crippling illness which would lead to his death in June 2005, and his determination to continue contributing intellectually and bodily to the multi-faceted global struggles centred around anti-capitalism and the anti-war movement, as well as his continued exploration of an ecological dimension to left politics.

Chapter Eight is an analysis of the tropes emerging from Alie Fataar's narratives, and a reflection on the study in terms of the issues of validity, reliability and replicability discussed in chapter three. The chapter explores the study's potential contribution to the limited field of teacher life-histories as contributing to South African education resistance historiography and education policy-making in the arena of teacher-policy. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the contribution of the study to the theory of life-history, educational resistance historiography in South Africa, teacher-identity formation, and South African social history. Throughout Part Two, I indicate areas which hold potential for further studies.

Having outlined the scope of the study, the next section reviews the literature pertinent to the proposed study. The literature review is conducted in order to locate the study in its intellectual and historical contexts, as well as to facilitate the construction of a cogent theoretical framework which will orient the study.

Chapter One: Literature review and theoretical framework

Introduction to the literature review

This section reflects on four key areas of the literature which inform this study. The first part of this review of the literature is an exposition of the history of the NEUM and the TLSA. The works of Khan,³⁷ Alexander,³⁸ Jeppie³⁹ and Rassool⁴⁰ are of particular, though not exclusive importance. Following the literature survey of the NEUM and TLSA is an important (second) literature which traces the roots of socialism in South Africa, as arguably the dominant mindset from which the intellectuals of the NEUM and TLSA were to draw.⁴¹ The works of Drew⁴² and Van der Spuy⁴³ are located within the framework of Rassool⁴⁴.

The third aspect of this literature review is to track the strands of literature which critically evaluate the social function of intellectuals, more particularly the role of the public intellectual. This is effected as I locate and critique the respondent of the study as a public intellectual, acting as he did outside statutory bodies from the period 1940 onwards.

³⁷ Khan, F. (1976) *The Origins of the Non-European Unity Movement*. Unpublished B.A. (Hons.) dissertation, University of Cape Town.

³⁸ Alexander, N. (1989) Non-collaboration in the Western Cape, 1943-1963. In WG James and M Simons (eds.) *The Angry Divide: Social and economic history of the Western Cape*. Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, in association with the Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town.

³⁹ Jeppie, M.S. (1990) *Aspects of the Popular Culture and Class Experiences in Inner Cape Town, circa. 1939-1959*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Cape Town.

⁴⁰ Rassool, C.S. (2004) *The Individual, Auto/biography and History in South Africa*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of the Western Cape.

⁴¹ Alexander, 1989

⁴² Drew, A., 1996; 1997; 2000

⁴³ Van der Spuy, P. (2002) *Not only 'the younger daughter of Dr Abdurahman': A feminist exploration of early influences on the political development of Cissie Gool*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cape Town.

⁴⁴ Rassool, 2004

The fourth section of this review of the literature is the experience of exile. As stated in Part One, the respondent was forced into exile during the period 1965 to 1993 inclusive. A review of the literature of exile will be central to the study, as the literature should provide concepts which will inform the theoretical framework of the study.

The TLSA and NEUM in historical perspective

Khan asserts that

(I)n most political histories of South Africa, the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) has usually been accorded a short paragraph or a dismissive few lines, in contrast to the detailed chronicling of the activities of other political organizations such as the African National Congress (ANC). This, together with censorship, the banning of certain political literature and the general repression of the post-Sharpeville/Langa period has led to ignorance and misunderstanding of the aims and objectives of the NEUM.⁴⁵

The context into which the NEUM was born in 1943 is outlined by Khan,⁴⁶ Jeppie,⁴⁷ Chisholm⁴⁸ and Adhikari.⁴⁹ The African Peoples Organisation (APO) was founded in 1902. Its first aim “was to establish a sectarian unity among Coloureds”⁵⁰. Khan quotes the leader of the APO, Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman, in his 1910 Presidential address:

The black races must be allowed to develop in their own way. Their views of improved civilization may not agree with European views. But as we, however, meet as an organization of the Coloured people only of South Africa, the discussion of that point is somewhat outside of my province... it is my duty as President of the APO, on the present

⁴⁵ Khan, 1976: 1 - Preface

⁴⁶ Khan, 1976

⁴⁷ Jeppie, 1990

⁴⁸ Chisholm, 1990

⁴⁹ Adhikari, 1994

⁵⁰ Khan, 1976: 19

occasion, to deal with the rights and duties of the Coloured people of South Africa as distinguished from the native races.⁵¹

Abdurahman's APO also supported the white South African Party and the United Party (UP). This was to lead to "a revolt against him, led ironically by members of his own family".⁵² The politics of the APO are crudely illustrated in an address by an APO member, speaking on behalf of the organisation, in support of a United Party (UP) candidate in the 1938 General Elections: "...we as Non-Europeans have very little to be thankful for to the U.P... but it is for that little that I ask our people to vote for the U.P... Despite all the things we suffer and need, we are not unmindful, we are grateful for the crumbs which have fallen from the table."⁵³

The impact of World War II was to have a significant effect on the politics of the Cape. In contrast to the 'grateful for the crumbs' discourse of the APO, political activists began to imbibe the notions of libertarianism which had been part of the discursive arena during WWII. The position of the UP under Smuts was equivocal. In public forums, in which he sought to garner the votes of the then franchised land-owning Coloured voters (represented in the main by the APO), the UP paid lip-service to the 'grateful for the crumbs' adherents of the APO. In 1943, Smuts stated:

If I look back, I see effort and progress on your part – very often unassisted effort – to raise yourselves up to a higher standard. When I see this, I feel that it is worthwhile. Despite all bars and barriers the Coloured people have moved on and you have staked your claim. It's yours. You have earned it! I am expressing the thanks and gratitude of the

⁵¹ Van der Ross, R.E. (1975) The Founding of the APO in Cape Town in 1902 and the Role of Dr. Abdurahman. *Munger Africana Library Notes*, No. 28, pp. 11-12, quoted in Khan, 1976: 23

⁵² Khan, 1976: 24

⁵³ Van der Ross, R.E. (1973) *A Political and Social History of the Coloured People 1880-1970*, Part One, p. 178, quoted in Khan, 1976: 25

whole of South Africa for the part you have (played) in great human struggle in which we are engaged. Dig for gold in years to come.⁵⁴

The official position of the UP, though, was stated in less equivocal terms in the South African Parliament in 1948.

Equal rights has never been our policy... our policy has been European paramountcy in this country. Our policy has not been equal rights. We have never had any truck with equal rights... we stand and have always stood for European supremacy in this country. We have said that we have a position of guardianship, of trusteeship over the Non-European peoples in this country... we have always stood and we stand for social and residential separation in this country, and for the avoidance of racial mixture... There is a great deal about apartheid which is common to all parties in this country.⁵⁵

A battery of discriminatory legislation passed in 1936 and 1937 gave further impetus to the political activists who opposed the assimilationist subordination of the APO. The 'Native Bills' as they came to be known were:

1. Natives Representation Bill (1936);
2. Native Trust and Land Bill (1936);
3. Urban Areas Amendment Bill (1937).

The formation of the All Africa Convention (AAC) in December 1935 in Bloemfontein is a significant event in the struggle for non-European unity in South Africa. The AAC,

⁵⁴ *The Cape Standard*, 9.2.1943, p. 1. See also *The Anti-CAD, War on the Traitors*, p. 3, quoted in Khan, 1976: 34-5

⁵⁵ Kruger, D.W. (1960) *South African Parties and Policies 1910-1960: a select source book*. Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, p. 426, quoted in Khan, 1976: 34

formed with representatives of the APO in its ranks “formed the basis of fostering non-European unity”.⁵⁶

However, an early blow to unity in this regard surfaced in June 1937, when the African National Congress (ANC) questioned the permanency of the AAC. This occurred in spite of what Khan states was “the fact that the AAC had been founded because of the political impotence and the lack of national prestige of the ANC in 1935.”⁵⁷ In 1940, the ANC’s annual conference, in fact, called for the disbandment of the AAC, and called for it to merge with the ANC.⁵⁸ The AAC’s political acumen was seemingly misplaced when, at the 1937 December conference, it recognised members of the Native Representative Council (NRC), which had been established to give effect to the racial disruption of the ‘Native Bills’. Thus, asserts Khan, the AAC was destroying its own “political credibility”⁵⁹ by taking on board representatives of the organs which the AAC had been formed to oppose. Furthermore, the 1937 conference resolved to meet every three years – “This would mitigate against its effectiveness as a national body, and lessen its potential as a serious rival.”⁶⁰

In December 1941, at the AAC Conference in Bloemfontein, Isaac Bangani Tabata was a delegate from the Young Men’s Ethiopian Society of Cape Town. At the conference, Tabata addressed crucial arguments which heralded “the future path of boycott, non-

⁵⁶ Khan, 1976: 7-8

⁵⁷ Khan, 1976: 10-11

⁵⁸ Khan, 1976: 13

⁵⁹ Khan, 1976: 11

⁶⁰ Khan, 1976: 12

collaboration and unity”.⁶¹ His address included “past failures and shortcomings of the AAC”.⁶² Tabata’s address

was supported by the individuals, who, along with Tabata, would play a vital role in contributing towards the founding of the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM). These individuals included Dr. G. Gool, Jane Gool and B.M. Kies, a teacher, who were delegates from the Cape Town-based New Era Fellowship (NEF).⁶³

When Smuts proposed the formation of a Coloured People’s Commission (CPC) in 1943, along similar lines to the Native Affairs Commission, the *Cape Standard* opposed its formation in the following terms: “Leaders who are prepared to sit on such a commission will sacrifice their own people for the sop of a large salary and the shameful title of Member of the Permanent Cape Coloured Commission.”⁶⁴ The CPC, which evolved into the Coloured Advisory Council (CAC), and the formation of the Coloured Affairs Department (CAD), was the impetus which “left-wing groupings made use of” to mobilise.⁶⁵ Gavin Lewis posits that

young radicals found the issue they had been searching for throughout the 1930’s... it catapulted them into prominence as they mobilised Coloureds with a policy of black unity, non-compromise, and non-collaboration...”⁶⁶

The anti-CAD movement, and the AAC, constituted the main groupings which, in 1943, formed the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM). Khan states:

...the NEUM was very much a product of its time – the inheritor of the anti-Abdurahman, anti-sectarian ideas of the ’thirties expounded by such organizations as the

⁶¹ Khan, 1976: 14

⁶² Khan, 1976: 13

⁶³ Khan, 1976: 14

⁶⁴ *The Cape Standard*, 2.2.1943, p. 3, quoted in Khan 1976: 42

⁶⁵ Jeppie, 1990: 132

⁶⁶ Lewis, 1987: 173

All African Convention (AAC), Non-European United Front (NEUF), and the New Era Fellowship (NEF). These ideas would give rise to new formulations of policy and tactics which, together with such factors as the new political climate engendered by World War II and the impact of fresh discriminatory legislation, would bring about the increasing calls for Non-European unity resulting in the formation of the NEUM.⁶⁷

An NEF public meeting on 11 February 1943 adopted a resolution to “unanimously... reject unreservedly both the Coloured Affairs Department and the Commission (Coloured Peoples Commission)....”⁶⁸

Neville Alexander⁶⁹ asserts that one of the main intellectual thrusts behind the formation of the NEUM came from disenchanted members of the Communist Party of South Africa (hereinafter CPSA), who opposed the Stalinists. Alexander indicates that “members or supporters of the Spartacist faction of the Lenin Club” had broken from the CPSA “shortly after Trotsky was exiled from the Soviet Union”.⁷⁰ In delineating the ideological reasons for the split from the CPSA, Alexander states:

The marxists in what later became the NEUM were opposed to the collaborationist and petitionist politics of Jabavu and Abdurahman for the same reason that revolutionary marxists throughout the capitalist world have opposed reformist strategies... The essence of their position was the need to formulate and to translate into practice a policy of class independence of the working class as opposed to a policy of class collaboration.⁷¹

The NEUM, in the view of a substantial body of critical scholars,⁷² did not achieve their stated political goals, although

⁶⁷ Khan, 1976: 3

⁶⁸ Khan, 1976: 44-5

⁶⁹ Alexander, 1989: 182

⁷⁰ Alexander, 1989: 182

⁷¹ Alexander, 1989: 182

⁷² Alexander, 1989; Jeppie, 1990; Khan, 1976

(F)or a few brief years, between 1943 and 1948, a mass movement flourished in the Western Cape as it had never done before. The Anti-CAD movement applied the weapon of the boycott with devastating effect and ruined the careers and reputations of those who dared to work the CAC or pleaded for a CAD.⁷³

The political programme of the NEUM was articulated, on a theoretical level, by I.B. Tabata and Ben Kies,⁷⁴ who were intent on “pursuing a programme of militant working class mobilisation”.⁷⁵ In this regard, Tabata and Kies “urged the formation of a black United Front of workers and peasants”.⁷⁶ We will return to Ben Kies’s formulation of the leadership role of the intellectuals. First, however, historian Ciraj Rassool’s⁷⁷ ideas around the making of the biography of Isaac Bangani Tabata are considered. Rassool’s initial aim in the pursuance of an extended biography of Isaac Bangani Tabata⁷⁸ initially “aimed to recover I.B. Tabata as a means of addressing serious shortcomings in a historiography of resistance that paid little attention to the Unity Movement.”⁷⁹

This was to change as his research began to show that

the fields of resistance history and political biography in South Africa seemed dead set against the consideration of theoretical issues of the relationship between biography and history, the individual and society, and of issues of narrative, subjectivity and discourse. This did not mean that there weren’t theoretical propositions that underpinned the research of historians of South African resistance politics. The history of a life tended to be approached as a linear human career formed by an ordered sequence of acts, events

⁷³ Alexander, 1989: 183

⁷⁴ See Soudien, C. (2011) The contribution of radical Western Cape intellectuals to an indigenous knowledge project in South Africa. *Transformations* Number 76, 44-66, for a detailed exposition of the contributions of Ben Kies and Neville Alexander to the “thinking around race and identity of the theorists associated with the non-racial movement that evolved amongst Cape Town intellectuals in the 1930s and that continues to inform the political and cultural work of contemporary scholars and activists” (p. 44).

⁷⁵ Jeppie, 1990: 132

⁷⁶ Jeppie, 1990: 134

⁷⁷ Rassool, 2004

⁷⁸ Rassool, C.S. (2004) *The Individual, Auto/biography and History in South Africa*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of the Western Cape.

⁷⁹ Rassool, 2004: 1

and works, with individuals characterised by stability, autonomy, self-determination and rational choice.⁸⁰

The culmination of Rassool's thinking around the biographical production of I.B. Tabata offered new theoretical scope to the fields of biography, resistance history and historiography in South Africa. Rassool proffers that I.B. Tabata's biographical production was facilitated in a "hybrid space":

This intense space of authorial production, political intervention and biographic narration was a meeting place of the self and the movement, the individual and the collective, the personal and the political. It is here where private lives and public identities intersected. Political desires about "full and democratic rights for all people in South Africa"⁸¹ were honed and nurtured behind the scenes in this borderland. This was also a hybrid space of cultural expression and of theorising a politics of location and identity of the self and nation.⁸²

Rassool's position with regard to the discursive nature of identity construction, as indicated, is quoted here to indicate that this study is cognisant of, and veers away from the tendency towards a naïve realism and a teleological approach to the making of biography.

Of great significance for my study is the following characterisation by Rassool of the NEUM:

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, almost state-like project in public education, whose objective was the constitution of a new public domain as a rational form of social order, peopled by suitably conscious proto-citizens. Through an analysis of power in society and the conditions of resistance and

⁸⁰ Rassool, 2004: 4

⁸¹ I.B. Tabata to Mr Lehmann (*The London Magazine*), 29 June 1957, I.B. Tabata Collection, BC 925 (original footnote number 43 in Rassool, 2004: 411)

⁸² Rassool, 2004: 411

collaboration, a system of representation was created, complete with its own vocabulary, framing categories, concepts, 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'.⁸³

Having introduced Rassool's important contribution to the literature of the NEUM and the TLSA, and the membership of these bodies, we return to a key conceptual construct in the history of the NEUM and TLSA, namely, that of the teacher as a leadership figure in the struggle against oppression. TLSA and NEUM ideologue Ben Kies articulated a leadership role for the "intellectuals" of the movement. Kies' definition of "intellectuals" was that the intellectuals "consisted almost entirely of teachers".⁸⁴ At the first national anti-CAD conference, Kies stated: "...the only persons amongst the non-Europeans who have more than a mere smattering of education, are the teachers. They are certainly the only ones to have a certain amount of leisure."⁸⁵ This formulation was to have a profound bearing on the nature of the struggle against oppression waged by the NEUM. Jeppie⁸⁶ states that the NEUM "drew its leadership from the ranks of the 'coloured' petty bourgeois, particularly the teachers". But, Jeppie further asserts, the materialistic interests of teachers militated "against active political involvement."⁸⁷

Neville Alexander suggests that there are some "less well-known reasons" for the Anti-CAD movement and their policy of non-collaboration. In this regard, Alexander states:

Clearly, the inspiration, for the youth especially, that went out from the struggles waged by nationally and colonially oppressed people in Europe, Asia and Africa during the

⁸³ Rassool, 2004: 321

⁸⁴ Lewis, 1987: 215

⁸⁵ Jeppie, 1990: 135, quoted in Mary Simons, in Van der Merwe, H.W. and Groenewald, C.J. (eds.) (1976) *Occupational and Social Change Among Coloured People in South Africa*. Cape Town: Juta. Page 225.

⁸⁶ Jeppie, 1990: 134

⁸⁷ Jeppie, 1990: 135

Second World War was a major progressive influence, one which naturally made the youth of the oppressed people of the Western Cape gravitate towards the young vanguardists of the NEF and related organisations. *The Westernising aspect of Marxism appealed to the youth who were being threatened with a retrogressive policy of tribalisation via the CAC and the CAD.* In this, they expressed not only the interests of the progressive intelligentsia but those of the rapidly growing urban working class as a whole; they were counteracting the attempts of the ruling class to disorganise the incipient proletariat along ethnic lines.⁸⁸

As radical as this rhetoric was, and taking into consideration that the programme of the NEUM had “(I)n its initial phases...implied mass struggle (and) mass mobilisation”, Alexander asserts that the “conservative base on which much of the Anti-CAD’s popularity rested was an essentially petty-bourgeois one”.⁸⁹ Thus, when calls were made (after the coming to power of the National Party in 1948) for participation in what the NEUM “called ad hoc campaigns,”⁹⁰ the NEUM component of the Train Apartheid Resistance Committee (TARC) stated the following:

We were not prepared to send into action the few volunteers whose self-sacrifice would not make any impression on the train-apartheid issue, as their small number could only lead to their imprisonment WITHOUT anything being achieved thereby, except the fizzling out of the movement in a miserable defeat. The issue is much too big and much too important for all the Non-European oppressed, for any display of individualistic heroics. And as responsible leaders, we can think only in terms of MASS resistance, MASS action...⁹¹

The critique of this withdrawal from the organised popular struggles which emanated from the Charterist movement suggests that the strategy emanated from a crucial conflation of popular workers’ struggles and the struggle of the rural peasantry.⁹² Any struggle, in this case of the urban working class, which sought to harness mass support

⁸⁸ Alexander, 1989: 186 (own emphasis)

⁸⁹ Alexander, 1989: 186

⁹⁰ Alexander, 1989: 187

⁹¹ Mokone, S. (1982) *Majority Rule: Some Notes*. Cape Town: Teachers’ League of South Africa. Quoted in Alexander (1989: 187). (Original emphasis)

⁹² See Alexander, 1989, p. 187

for aspects of the struggle, as opposed perhaps to challenging the “fundamentals of South African society as understood by the leadership of the NEUM” was condemned by that leadership as collaborationist.⁹³ This vision all but “destroyed any revolutionary potential their movement might have had.”⁹⁴ Jeppie quotes Neville Alexander, who has argued that the NEUM in practice “...made very little connection between the day to day struggles of the urban poor and the medium-to-long-term objectives of the political struggle”.⁹⁵

Jeppie juxtaposes Alexander’s assertion of the political programme of action of the NEUM with the Gramscian understanding of immersing one’s political programme into the “importance of understanding popular culture with the ordinary people’s ‘common-sense’ conception of the world”.⁹⁶ Gramsci’s formulation of the concept ‘organic intellectual’ emerges from “a class and articulates the world view and aspirations of that class.”⁹⁷

In terms of this, the ‘coloured’ teachers in the NEUM – whose class origins were with the working classes – were supposed to fulfil the role of the ‘organic intellectuals’ in Cape Town. Gramsci envisaged a role for such people which was at once one of political leadership and as cultural organisers. Popular cultural practices can serve the ruling classes, or at least obstruct the creation of a new order, and for these reasons Gramsci argued that popular culture should be understood by revolutionary parties in their construction of an alternative hegemony⁹⁸. Such ideas, however, were not on the agendas of oppositional groups in Cape Town, and least of all the NEUM...⁹⁹

Jeppie elaborates on this assertion by quoting Neville Alexander, who “points out that by approximately 1952 the NEUM and anti-CAD were not participating in ‘any mass

⁹³ Alexander, 1989: 187

⁹⁴ Alexander, 1989: 190

⁹⁵ Jeppie, 1990: 143

⁹⁶ Jeppie, 1990: 152

⁹⁷ Jeppie, 1990: 153

⁹⁸ Landy, M. (1986) Culture and Politics in the Work of Antonio Gramsci. *Boundary 2*, 24(3), p. 60

⁹⁹ Jeppie, 1990: 153

struggles of the working class.”¹⁰⁰ The history of the NEUM and the TLSA (its teacher body affiliate) is thus not unproblematic. Given its stated aim of mobilising the working class and the peasantry, its articulation (by Ben Kies) of teachers as *de facto* leaders of this revolutionary corps, is, in Gramscian terms, counter-revolutionary and elitist. “And yet,” states Neville Alexander, whose critique has featured prominently in this section of the review of the literature, “the NEUM has left a legacy, one which only special pleading would deny.”¹⁰¹ Linda Chisholm asserts that

(T)he political culture of the Western Cape... is distinctive from that characterising the rest of the country. Wherever one stands on the organised political spectrum, it is distinctive for its combativeness, its intellectual assertiveness, and its critical disposition.¹⁰²

This historical appreciation of the political forces which helped shape the politics of the Western Cape is critical to this research project. It is critical in that it acknowledges the existence in the Western Cape of an intellectual tradition which is at once characterised as combative and rigorous. Chisholm also contextualises the emergence of the NEUM and TLSA traditions as non-homogenous in terms of the complexities of the shaping forces at play in the Western Cape.¹⁰³

At the heart of this study is a central question: why study teachers’ lives at all? Goodson asserts that “such study seeks to understand and to give voice to an occupational group that have been historically marginalized. Yet, as a group, teachers retain considerable

¹⁰⁰ Alexander, 1989: 12, in Jeppie, 1990: 153

¹⁰¹ Alexander, 1989: 190

¹⁰² Chisholm, 1990: 241

¹⁰³ Chisholm, 1990: 241

power, and as is often the case much truth resides in the margins.”¹⁰⁴ It has been argued that the intellectual legacies of the NEUM and the teachers of the TLSA have largely been relegated to the politics of the marginalised.¹⁰⁵ One of the contributions of this study will be to critically assess the extent to which the constructed educational narrative, in the form of the life-history of Alie Fataar, can play a role in (re)stimulating/(re)inventing positive identities for teachers in the contemporary South African (and international) teacher-policy and teacher-practice landscape, in which teachers increasingly seem to be searching for professional and personal meaning.

The overwhelming corpus of work of these teacher-intellectuals, of which the respondent of this study, Alie Fataar, is included, is not yet inserted into South African scholarly regimes. These works “contained what came to be the characteristic postures of the Unity Movement, the Fourth International of South Africa, the Teachers’ League of South Africa (TLSA) and a whole range of Trotskyist and Leninist movements”.¹⁰⁶

The next section deals in some detail with a key historical process in terms of its influence on the NEUM and TLSA, namely socialism, and its complex origins and development in South Africa. In presenting this literature, I draw extensively, but not

¹⁰⁴ Goodson, 1992a: 15

¹⁰⁵ Khan (1976), Chisholm (1990), Rassool (2004), Wieder and Soudien (2010)

¹⁰⁶ Wieder and Soudien, 2010: 604

exclusively, on the work of Allison Drew,¹⁰⁷ Patricia Van der Spuy¹⁰⁸ and Ciraj Rassool.¹⁰⁹

Socialism and the South African left

Drew points out that the literature about the origins of the South African left has more often than not been the preserve of “South African Communists or former Communists.”¹¹⁰ Essentially, what is at the heart of the ongoing and complex debate between elements of the left in South Africa deals with issues around class and national struggles, and the corresponding differences in ‘struggle’ methodology based on these different leftist perspectives. The origin of socialist thought in South Africa is predicated in the belief in the inevitability of progress,¹¹¹ a perspective decentred by postmodern thought. This belief contained two components:

Along with teleological views went a quest for – if not an obsession with – the ideal of scientific truth. The scientific methods of the nineteenth-century – methods of production and of analysis – made the discovery of truth seem feasible. Armed with a self-consciously scientific method, many nineteenth-century socialists set out in search of the socialist utopia; in the twentieth century, they tried to engineer social revolutions. But science did not have a monopoly in its search for the truth or for the good life. Nineteenth-century socialism had an ethical component as well, arising out of moral repugnance for the excesses or evils of capitalism; socialism became intertwined with religion, as well as science.¹¹²

Though Marx disavowed orthodox religion, Drew posits that “(E)ven before the First World War many British socialists criticized continental European Marxism for having

¹⁰⁷ Drew, 1996; 1997; 2000

¹⁰⁸ Van der Spuy, 2002

¹⁰⁹ Rassool, 2004

¹¹⁰ Drew, 2000: 1

¹¹¹ Drew, 2000: 1

¹¹² Drew, 2000: 1

‘turned Marx’s writings into liturgy’ and for its ‘various dogmatic tendencies.’”¹¹³ But it was through the Comintern, which existed from 1919 to 1943, that the interpretations of Marxism became ritualized in an elaborate hierarchical style reminiscent of Catholicism.¹¹⁴

Part of the complexity of leftist origins in South Africa is a common tendency to see socialism as the ‘natural’ or indeed, sole opponent of capitalism on a global scale. In this context, the success of the Russian Revolution in the early twentieth century, and the absence of an indigenous socialist base in South Africa (socialist thought having been imported to this country by Russian Jews, as refugees from the pogroms of ‘civilised’ Europe, as well as by British socialists), led to a *de facto* situation in which political doctrine was sought from elsewhere. In this regard, Drew states:

South African Communists were awed by the Comintern’s apparent theoretical mastery and political accomplishments. They identified Moscow as the headquarters of their international movement. This was not peculiar to the CPSA, even if their acceptance of Moscow’s authority took, at times, a more extreme form than in many other countries.¹¹⁵

One outcome of this reliance on Moscow, apart from the obvious self-assessment of South African intellectuals as less able to interpret complex Marxist thought than the Soviet intellectuals, was the personal fractures caused by this reliance on external think-tanks. Drew writes:

¹¹³ Stuart Macintyre, *A Proletarian Science: Marxism in Britain, 1917-1933*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, 220. (original endnote in Drew’s text is number 3)

¹¹⁴ See, for example, Leon Trotsky, *The Third International after Lenin*, London: New Park, 1974... (Drew’s original endnote is number 4 – she lists various sources)

¹¹⁵ Drew, 2000: 2

There is little doubt that the Comintern had a destructive impact on the CPSA through its interventions. Most critically, it distorted the way South African socialists perceived and related to each other, both inside and outside the CPSA. Local Communists suffered from a divided loyalty, as rival individuals and factions appealed to the Comintern to buttress their own arguments against each other. They adopted the Comintern's demonization of socialists who criticized Moscow's attempt to control its affiliates and the political repression within the Soviet Union. South African Socialism became rigidly bifurcated between Third International Communism and Trotskyism – a division that, because of the influence of socialist activists and of socialist ideas, came to permeate the entire national liberation movement. Moreover, both socialist tendencies saw themselves as the bearers of the true socialist ideal and the correct interpreters of Marxist doctrine.¹¹⁶

This study, an education life-history of Alie Fataar, draws on this rich history to inform and contextualise the life of one of the key teacher-intellectuals who was a key figure in the movement that infused marxist and socialist ideas into the nexus of the national struggle for liberation.

Drawing largely on feminist theory, Van der Spuy¹¹⁷ assesses the life of Cissie Gool¹¹⁸ in an unpublished doctoral dissertation,¹¹⁹ and quotes NEUM founder-member, and respondent of this study, Alie Fataar, about his recollections of Cissie Gool: “The community had a great respect for her, because she was a woman and no other woman, non-white, was a member of the (Cape Town City) Council. In that respect she was a pioneer.”¹²⁰ Given the context of the colour-bar in South Africa, and legislation which forbade relationships across the colour-line, Van der Spuy illustrates the inter-relatedness of the private and the political when she writes about the lives and experiences of the left

¹¹⁶ Drew, 2003: 3. The Communist International was also known as the Third International. Leon Trotsky and his followers formed the Fourth International in September 1938. (Drew's original endnote is number 10)

¹¹⁷ Van der Spuy, P. (2002) *Not only 'the younger daughter of Dr Abdurahman': a feminist exploration of early influences on the political development of Cissie Gool*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, UCT, March 2002.

¹¹⁸ Cissie Gool was born Zainonesa Abdurahman, and married Dr Abdul Gool.

¹¹⁹ Patricia van der Spuy, 2002

¹²⁰ Alie Fataar, interviewed on video tape by Gairoonisa Paleker, for her Masters dissertation, a documentary film about Cissie Gool, 2002. The tapes are lodged in the Centre for Popular Memory, University of Cape Town. (Van der Spuy's, 2002, footnote is no. 17, p. 4.)

in South Africa in terms of “debates around miscegenation and in terms of relationships between activists”.¹²¹

The experience of the ‘left’ was thus also defined by more intimate markers, which, as this study shows, impacted markedly on ‘historical processes’ which have most often been decontextualised in the South African academy. This educational life-history of Alie Fataar, then, attempts to chart new ways of understanding the complex and important professional lives of one of the key, ‘invisible’ leftist intellectuals in South Africa, and will do so in ways that foreground the interplay of the public, the private, the political, and the interpersonal, as these aspects work to construct the educational identities of one of these leftist intellectuals, Alie Fataar, teacher.

The next section surveys the literature on intellectuals, with an emphasis on the works of Edward Said and Alvin Gouldner.

The literature on intellectuals

Edward Said, confronting the dilemma of what constitutes a (public) intellectual (and writer), posits that since his presentation of the 1993 Reith Lectures, collected as *Representations of the Intellectual*, “who or what a writer and intellectual is has become more confusing and difficult to pin down.”¹²²

Addressing the debate about the nature and role of the public intellectual, Said writes that, since his (acclaimed) 1993 Reith Lectures

¹²¹ Van der Spuy, 2002: 162

¹²² Said, 2002: 19-20

...there have been major political and economic transformations... Central to the changes has been the deepening of an unresolved tension as to whether writers and intellectuals can ever be what is called non-political or not, and if so, obviously, how and in what measure. The difficulty of the tension for the individual writer and intellectual has been paradoxically that the realm of the political and public has expanded so much as to be virtually without borders. We might well ask whether a non-political writer or intellectual has much content to it.¹²³

In an interesting exchange of ideas (with his readers), Said attempts to define the ‘intellectual’ in the languages with which he is familiar. We are thus able to take account of the intellectual in ‘Arab-Islamic’ terms,¹²⁴ in that the two words used in Arabic for ‘intellectual’ derive from concepts which denote the intellectual as, firstly, “a man of culture”¹²⁵ and a “man of thought”.¹²⁶ The gender-specificity of the definitions are, somewhat surprisingly, not addressed by Said in the specific text. The French concept of the *intellectual*, writes Said, “unfailingly carries with it some residue of the public realm in which recently deceased figures like Sartre, Foucault, and Aron debated and put forward their views for very larger audiences indeed”.¹²⁷ The English origins of the term ‘intellectual’, continues Said, are immersed in “mostly negative connotations.”¹²⁸ Citing the work of Raymond Williams, Said suggests that, in English, “after the mid-twentieth century, the word takes on a new, somewhat wider, set of associations, many of them having to do with ideology, cultural productions, and the capacity for organized thought and learning”.¹²⁹

¹²³ Said, 2002: 20

¹²⁴ Said, 2002: 21

¹²⁵ Said, 2002: 21

¹²⁶ Said, 2002: 21

¹²⁷ Said, 2002: 21

¹²⁸ Said, 2002: 21

¹²⁹ Said, 2002: 21

Writing as an exile in the United States, he states that the term ‘intellectual’ enjoys far less discourse currency than in Europe or the Arab world. Part of the reason, posits Said, “is that (in the US) professionalism and specialization provide the norm for intellectual work more than they do in Arabic, French, or British English”.¹³⁰ More incisively, perhaps, Said points to possible reasons for the lesser discourse value of ‘intellectual’ in US life. He is worth quoting at length:

...even though the USA is actually full of intellectuals hard at work filling the airwaves, print, and cyberspace with their effusions, the public realm is so taken up with questions of policy and government, as well as with considerations of power and authority, that even the idea of an intellectual who is driven neither by a passion for office, nor by the ambition to get the ear of someone in power, is difficult to sustain for a second or two... Yet it is also overwhelmingly true that in America there is no shortage in the public realm of partisan policy intellectuals who are organically linked to one or other political party, lobby, special interest, or foreign power (and whose)... whole bears centrally on the acceptance of neo-liberal post-welfare state responsive neither to the citizenry nor to the natural environment, but to a vast structure of global corporations unrestricted by traditional barriers or sovereignties.¹³¹

Why this (fairly) lengthy engagement with Said’s thoughts about what constitutes an intellectual? The teachers in the TLSA, one of whom, Alie Fataar, is the ‘unit of analysis’ in this study, defined themselves as standing outside of official state pre-apartheid and apartheid structures, labelling those elements which established working, and other more dubious, relationships with the apartheid apparatus, as ‘quislings’ and ‘traitors’. These TLSA intellectuals did not aspire to political office (no self-respecting liberation organisation or movement could), nor did they seek ‘the ear of someone in power’. On the contrary, the TLSA’s key strategy, enunciated as a principle, was that of ‘non-

¹³⁰ Said, 2002: 22

¹³¹ Said, 2002: 22

collaboration'¹³² with apartheid's ideologues and functionaries. Part of what this life-history study hopes to bring into sharper focus is how, if at all, Alie Fataar saw himself as part of a continuum of Edward Said's 'men of culture and thought' (see the earlier description of the Arabic etymology of the term 'intellectual').

What, then, as an initial enquiry, was the political project of the TLSA/NEUM intellectuals in the period under review? Rassool declares that one can read the TLSA/NEUM and its political programme as an "indigenous emancipatory project with modernist overtones".¹³³ If one reads this 'emancipatory project' as a discourse, Foucault¹³⁴ provides us with an understanding of discourse as a relation between desire and the institutions. Fanon's¹³⁵ *Black Skin White Mask* marks his movement from a desire ("All I wanted was to be a man among other men")¹³⁶ to the enigmatic realisation/observation that "The Negro is not. Any more than the white man."¹³⁷

Fanon is the (black) intellectual from Martinique, whose sojourn in France (in which he seeks to realise the desire to 'be a man among other men') brings about the moment of crisis in the words of the young French boy to his mother: "Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!"¹³⁸ – the same Fanon who later begins to view the anti-colonial fighter of the FLN in Algeria as the embodiment of 'a man'. In all of these, desire is central to the

¹³² Hendricks, P.R. (2010) *A Principled Engagement? Non-collaboration and the Teachers' League of South Africa in the Western Cape, 1990-2003*. Hendricks' study examines the historicity of 'non-collaboration' as a concept and practice of the TLSA.

¹³³ Rassool, 2004: 3-4

¹³⁴ Inaugural lecture at the College de France, 2 December 1970. In R. Young (ed.) (1981) *Untying the text: A post-structuralist reader*. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p. 52

¹³⁵ Fanon, F. (1967) *Black Skin White Mask*. Transl. Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Weidenfeld.

¹³⁶ Fanon, 1967: 112

¹³⁷ Fanon, 1967: 231

¹³⁸ Fanon, 1967: 112

identity-making process. The ‘occult instability’ which Fanon¹³⁹ has observed in the moment/interstice between the colonial condition and post-coloniality is recalled. The recognition is not only one in which this pivotal moment (Bhabha’s Third Space)¹⁴⁰ is to be realised; the moment has also to be recognised as garnering the desire of the momentarily de-colonised in shaping the new post-colonial state.

Alvin Gouldner’s *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class*¹⁴¹ analyses the emergence of intellectuals as a new class “who, in late capitalism, would compete with the older, more established economic elite...”¹⁴² The book presents sixteen theses, which encompass Gouldner’s ideas on the rise of this “class” of intellectuals. These sixteen theses consist of thoughts on, *inter alia*, “Defects of the Marxist Scenario” (Thesis 1), “The New Class as a Cultural Bourgeoisie” (Thesis 5), and “Revolutionary Intellectuals” (Thesis 10). I will attempt to present, in brief, the gist of Gouldner’s views in this section of the literature review.

As an “outlaw Marxist,”¹⁴³ Thesis One of *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* deals with Gouldner’s appraisal of the “inadequacies”¹⁴⁴ of Marxism, which he deems to be its inability to account for the role of the peasantry in revolutionary movements in the twentieth century, as well as Marxism’s inability to “account for itself” in terms of “(W)here did the *theorists* of this class struggle fit into the supposed cleavage

¹³⁹ In Bhabha, 1994: 35

¹⁴⁰ Bhabha, 1994: 35

¹⁴¹ Gouldner, A.W. (1979) *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class: A Frame of Reference, Theses, Conjectures, Arguments, and an Historical Perspective on the Role of Intellectuals and Intelligentsia in the International Class Contest of the Modern Era*. London: Macmillan.

¹⁴² Chriss, J.J. (1999) *Alvin W. Gouldner: Sociologist and Outlaw Marxist*. Aldershot: Ashgate, p. 157.

¹⁴³ Chriss, 1999 (from title)

¹⁴⁴ Gouldner, 1999: 9

between proletariat and capitalist class?”¹⁴⁵ In Thesis Five, Gouldner posits that the new class of intellectuals asserts moral superiority over the “old class” (the economists) by foregrounding professionalism as purveyor of technical credentials, possessed by intellectuals, while the old class are driven by base economic imperatives.¹⁴⁶ While this positioning is “a bid for prestige *within* the established society,” it simultaneously presents the intellectual “as an *alternative* to the old.”¹⁴⁷

But it is Thesis Six (“The New Class as a Speech Community”) which I believe best captures Gouldner’s belief that intellectuals have a critical role to play in the envisioning of a new, more humane world order. His views on MIT’s Noam Chomsky¹⁴⁸ are valuable to the proposed study, as Gouldner points to an inherent contradiction (although he is quick to point out that he regards Chomsky as a “vanguard” of the New Class)¹⁴⁹ in Chomsky’s derisive appraisal of intellectuals in the United States. For one, Gouldner takes exception to Chomsky’s implied belief that intellectuals are required to be morally superior to the old class.¹⁵⁰ While deriding this notion of a “moral elite,”¹⁵¹ Gouldner’s views on the efficacy of intellectuals to influence change can be detected from his dismissal of Chomsky’s concept of intellectuals in the service of the system (Chomsky

¹⁴⁵ Gouldner, 1999: 9 (original emphasis)

¹⁴⁶ Gouldner, 1999: 19

¹⁴⁷ Gouldner, 1999: 19 (original emphasis)

¹⁴⁸ Gouldner, 1999: 39-42

¹⁴⁹ Gouldner, 1999: 42

¹⁵⁰ Gouldner, 1999: 40

¹⁵¹ Gouldner, 1999: 40

seemingly asserting that a veneer of democracy is accorded the centralised state by virtue of intellectuals participating in public debates).¹⁵²

The issue here is not Chomsky; rather, I wish to point to Gouldner's central belief in the necessity for intellectuals to participate in the public domain, free of the idea that they are, in fact, in the service of the system, albeit unwittingly. In the context of the proposed study, an immediate point of reference is that of the NEUM's policy of 'non-collaboration' with the instruments of one's own oppression.¹⁵³ In concluding this discussion of Gouldner, I point to his treatment of the public education system, and the role of intellectuals as both products of, and agents within, this system.¹⁵⁴ This is important for the proposed study, in that the respondent is situated explicitly into this configuration.

The study now turns its focus to the literature of exile, exemplified in the work of Edward Said.

¹⁵² Gouldner, 1999: 41

¹⁵³ *see* Alexander, 1989

¹⁵⁴ Gouldner, 1979: 43-7

The experience of exile in the work of Edward Said

The final section of this literature review appraises the literature and condition of exile, which J.M. le Clezio once likened to “leaving your island (*ile*) of ‘belonging’ for the continental shores of facelessness.”¹⁵⁵

It is perhaps apposite at this juncture to lead in the next section, i.e. an appraisal of exile as embodied in the work of Edward Said, by quoting an excerpt from *Representations of the Intellectual*,¹⁵⁶ in which Said links, quite beautifully in my opinion, the role of the intellectual and the condition of (conceptual) exile. He writes that

(E)xile is a model for the intellectual who is tempted, and even beset and overwhelmed, by the rewards of accommodation, yea-saying, settling in. Even if one is not an actual immigrant or expatriate, it is still possible to think as one, to imagine and to investigate in spite of barriers, and always to move away from the centralizing authorities towards the margins,¹⁵⁷ where you see things that are actually lost on minds that have never travelled beyond the conventional and the comfortable.¹⁵⁸

It is hoped that the focus of this section of the study will add to an understanding and critique of the condition of exile and the continued relevance for home-based activists, and on a broader conceptual level, to add to an understanding and critique of exiles and their significance in other areas of our common world.

¹⁵⁵ Quoted by ‘Breyten Breytenbach, Bantry Bay, 23 April 2001’, on blurb of Marie-Noëlle Anderson’s *Exiles: 13 South Africans tell their stories*. Athlone: Realities, 2001.

¹⁵⁶ In Bayoumi, M. and Rubin, A. (eds.) (2000) *The Edward Said Reader*. New York: Vintage Books, p. 380.

¹⁵⁷ It is a curious irony that the proposed study attempts to situate people like the respondent of this study into the centre of South African resistance historiography, while, in a broad theoretical sense, part of the study itself will be to assess to what extent the respondent (and hopefully other studies will supplement the ‘findings’ of this study) was/is willing to incorporate the Saidian concept of the spatially-resident intellectual in a deliberate conceptual exile.

¹⁵⁸ In Bayoumi and Rubin (eds), 2000: 380

One of the persons whose works have led me to this study of the intellectual in resistance, and in exile, is Edward Said. In his *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*,¹⁵⁹ Said pens the following insights in an essay from which the title of the aforementioned collection of essays takes its name:

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unbearable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home; its essential sadness can never be surmounted. And while it is true that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, even triumphant episodes in an exile's life, these are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever.¹⁶⁰

The seeming paradox of the experience of exile is succinctly captured by Said in the extract quoted above. The questions which this extract will pose to the oral recollections or re-articulations of the respondent will be of the following type:

1. Was exile “an unbearable rift” between “the self and its true home”?
2. Can the nature and extent of an “essential sadness” be discerned in the educational life-history of Alie Fataar? If so, does this correspond to, or deviate from, the experience of exile as articulated by Said?
3. Does the respondent romanticise, glorify or otherwise deny the “sadness” which Said writes so poignantly about? What are the tropes he employs to convey these possible romanticisations?

¹⁵⁹ Said, E.W. (2002) *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

¹⁶⁰ Said, E.W. (2002: 173). [The essay *Reflections on Exile* was originally published in *Granta*, 13 (Winter 1984)].

4. What forms, if any, did the feeling of “estrangement” take? Which areas of the life of the respondent were most affected by this “estrangement”, and how were these these feelings mediated and transcended, if at all?

5. What was “left behind”, and what, if anything, was retrieved after the respondent’s return from exile in 1993, at the age of 76, having gone into exile at the age of 47?

Said writes poignantly: “(T)o see a poet in exile – as opposed to reading the poetry of exile – is to see exile’s antimonies embodied and endured with a unique intensity.”¹⁶¹ It is this human face of exile that first attracted me to the writing of Said, and I found myself listening intently, and with increasing amazement, as Alie Fataar first began speaking about exile in terms that were at once about his life, and yet strangely removed from it, in the sense that a blanket of objectivity seemed to have settled on the memories of exile as experienced by the respondent. This was to change quite dramatically in subsequent sessions, as I will to show in Part Two of the study, by highlighting and discussing various extracts from the transcribed interviews and documents from the archival record.

During the interviews, the respondent indicated that he had joined a political party while in exile in Zambia¹⁶². The respondent attested to the fact that he tried to make his life as ‘normal’ as possible during the latter twenty or so years of his exile period. Said writes about this attempt at normality in the following words:

¹⁶¹ Said, 2002: 174

¹⁶² The respondent’s exile in Zambia endured from 1969 to 1980, whereafter he relocated to a newly-independent Zimbabwe.

There is the sheer fact of isolation and displacement, which produces the kind of narcissistic masochism that resists all efforts at amelioration, acculturation, and community. At this extreme the exile can make a fetish of exile, a practice that distances him or her from all connections and commitments... More common is the pressure on the exile to join – parties, national movements, the state. The exile is offered a new set of affiliations and develops new loyalties. But there is also a loss – of critical perspective, of intellectual reserve, of moral courage.¹⁶³

Even before any substantive analysis of the interview transcripts had occurred, it appeared as if the respondent had indeed forged “new affiliations” (joining a political party in exile; proudly wearing the Zambian national tie).

The next section elucidates the theoretical framework informing the study by summarising the key moments in the literature review.

Theoretical framework emerging from the literature review

In this section, I wish to consolidate the major concepts which will be invoked in the study, as these have arisen from the review of the literature. This will be effected by revisiting the literature review, and to point to the significance of each of the main sections for the study. In effect, I will attempt in this section to produce a coherent conceptual map of the issues foregrounded in the literature review, without revisiting the details of those literatures.

The literature review foregrounded the concept that the NEUM and TLSA, and the intellectuals who made up the activist corps, derived their ideological programme from an imported socialism.¹⁶⁴ Chisholm importantly pointed to the non-homogenous

¹⁶³ Said, 2002: 183

¹⁶⁴ Adhikari, 1994; Alexander, 1989; Drew, 1997, 1997, 2000; Khan, 1976

emergence of the NEUM and TLSA in the period 1940 onwards, and showed that the era and its political outcomes were the result of complex interplays between external political and economic forces on the one hand, and between complex individuals and their ideological affiliations on the other.¹⁶⁵

The teachers of the TLSA (affiliated to the NEUM) are characterised by Chisholm,¹⁶⁶ Khan¹⁶⁷ and Alexander¹⁶⁸ as occupying a marginal existence in South African resistance historiography, a theoretical issue which is addressed by Goodson who indicates that teachers, “historically marginalized”, need to be understood and given a voice, as teachers “retain considerable power”.¹⁶⁹ In the case of the teachers of the TLSA and NEUM, this process of marginalization is at once historical (in terms of the overall academic marginalization of teachers as a group), while in South African resistance historiography these TLSA and NEUM teachers are further marginalized and misunderstood.¹⁷⁰

The All African Convention (AAC) period, particularly its conference in 1941, is important as it brings to the surface such personalities as Isaac Tabata, Dr Goolam Gool, Jane Gool, Alie Fataar, and Ben Kies, who were to become key NEUM ideologues. The personal-political matrix in all of these relationships is at the heart of this educational life-history of Alie Fataar, and establishes the key focus of this life-history study, namely, teacher agency under conditions of political, economic, psychological and social

¹⁶⁵ Chisholm, 1990

¹⁶⁶ Chisholm, 1990

¹⁶⁷ Khan, 1976

¹⁶⁸ Alexander, 1989

¹⁶⁹ Goodson, 1992a: 15

¹⁷⁰ Khan, 1976: 1 *et al*

subjugation. The final theoretical issue, then, to emerge from the appraisal of the history of the NEUM and TLSA concerns the production of biographies, and the inter-relatedness of the political and personal.¹⁷¹

Gouldner, whose contribution to our understanding of the role of intellectuals has been documented in the literature review, is the subject of an analytic work by James Chriss, who states¹⁷² that, as he embarked on the project, “a number of his friends and colleagues” were happy that such a work was being contemplated, but they were equally unanimous that the author “should concentrate on his *ideas*, not his private life” (original emphasis). My theoretical point of departure in the proposed study is akin to that of Chriss who writes further:

This sentiment bothered me. It bothered me because the notion that one can or should separate a man’s ideas from the life he led seemed to me to be as naïve as the positivistic conceit that the “facts” speak for themselves, and that there is no intrinsic connection between theories and the theorists who formulate them. Why would anyone want to examine Gouldner’s ideas without attempting to tell a story about the life he led, about the type of person he was? Is it because, as one person told me (who shall remain nameless), it would “open old wounds”?¹⁷³

Chriss¹⁷⁴ juxtaposes his position with that of Horowitz, who, in penning the “intellectual biography” of C. Wright Mills, wrote that “apart from a deep belief that often apocryphal stories add little to our fund of information on Mills... they may actually detract from our sense of Mills as social scientist, political actor, and American utopian”.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Rassool, 2004

¹⁷² Chriss, 1999: vi

¹⁷³ Chriss, 1999: vi

¹⁷⁴ Chriss, 1999: vi-vii

¹⁷⁵ Horowitz, 1983: 4-5

The proposed life-history study (the methodology is detailed in the next chapter) of the respondent takes the position of Chriss¹⁷⁶ as opposed to that of Horowitz,¹⁷⁷ and as part of a larger South African project, follows that of Rassool whose doctoral study investigated the making of Isaac Tabata's biography, in the space between the personal and the public spheres.¹⁷⁸

The cadres of the NEUM and TLSA were heavily influenced by the tenets of socialism, as these were imported into South Africa by European immigrants early in the twentieth century.¹⁷⁹ The lack of a home-grown ideology was to play havoc with relationships between two main groups within the South African left during this time, namely those who adhered strictly to outside ideological directives (from the Third International), and those who opposed Stalinism, the group now termed as the Trotskyites by most commentators of the period.¹⁸⁰ Alie Fataar's political persona is thus characterised by the marker 'Trotskyite'. Part Two of this study explicates the respondent's own narrative construction vis-à-vis this categorisation. In the South African 'left', then, the role of a home-grown intelligentsia assumed great importance, as did those intellectuals' capacity/willingness to engage with their own political agendas.

The role of the NEUM and TLSA intellectuals, in the case of this study the role of one of the key members of the NEUM and TLSA executive structures, Alie Fataar, will be

¹⁷⁶ Chriss, 1999

¹⁷⁷ Horowitz, 1983

¹⁷⁸ Rassool, 2004

¹⁷⁹ Drew, 1996, 1997, 2000

¹⁸⁰ See, for example, Khan, 1976; Drew, 1996, 1997

teased out within the contexts of the writings of Said¹⁸¹ and Gouldner.¹⁸² Said, whose works have arguably advanced the Gramscian concept of the “organic intellectual”, will be a key figure in this appraisal.

Said’s essay probed the etymological roots of the term “intellectual,” and established, across varying cultural lines, that the term resonated with denotative values such as “man of culture,” “man of thought,” and connotatively located the intellectual in the public realm.¹⁸³

Further, the term “intellectual” also takes on labels such as “ideology,” cultural production,” and “a capacity for thought and learning.” Said suggests that much of the present debate centres around the notion of the intellectual as part of establishment structures, such as political parties, university think-tanks and the like.¹⁸⁴ As described in the literature review, the cadres of the NEUM and TLSA positioned themselves outside of statutory bodies.

Finally, the literature review has foregrounded the concept of exile. The most interesting and important aspect of this literature has been Said’s linking of the concept of exile, and the occupation/vocation of the intellectual, in which Said models the ideal intellectual as one who, like the geographical exile, adopts a position of marginality, standing

¹⁸¹ Said, 2002 *et al*

¹⁸² Gouldner, 1979

¹⁸³ Said, 2002: 20-24

¹⁸⁴ Said, 2002

consciously outside of the “conventional and the comfortable,” in order to see anew the responsibilities of the role of the intellectual.¹⁸⁵

This study is framed by an understanding of South Africa in the twentieth century (and into the twenty-first) as non-interrupted “indirect rule,”¹⁸⁶ updating earlier models of colonial occupation (direct rule). In this framework, the intellectuals who emerged as champions of the oppressed were Westernised “clones who would lead the assimilation enterprise.”¹⁸⁷ Following this line of thought, the work of Homi Bhabha,¹⁸⁸ in enunciating a “Third Space” (following what Frantz Fanon had famously described as that moment of “occult instability” between when the colonial occupier departs and the former revolutionaries take up the reins of ‘power’) is crucial for the proposed study. It is in the “Third Space,” the interstice between the personal and the political that I wish to explore the educational narrative constructed by the respondent, Alie Fataar, teacher.

The research design and methodology utilised in this study is the central focus of the next chapter, to which I now turn.

¹⁸⁵ In Bayoumi and Rubin, 2000: 380

¹⁸⁶ Mamdani (1999) There Can Be No African Renaissance without an Africa-focused Intelligentsia. In: M.W. Makoba (ed.) *African Renaissance*. Cape Town: Mafube Publishing and Tafelberg Publishers.

¹⁸⁷ Sanders, M. (2002) *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, p. 12.

¹⁸⁸ Bhabha, 1994

Chapter Two: Research design and methodology

Introductory remarks: qualitative research

Denzin and Lincoln state that qualitative research “involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials... that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual’s lives”.¹⁸⁹ In addition, they posit that qualitative researchers often “deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand.”¹⁹⁰ While qualitative studies frequently meet with resistance, this resistance “reflect(s) an uneasy awareness that the traditions of qualitative research commit the researcher to a critique of the positivist or postpositivist project.”¹⁹¹ While constituting a potential weakness in the study, I will argue that a critique of positivist tendencies within grounded theory is important for this study, and for other studies which utilise grounded theory, given the popularity of the analytic method in the realm of qualitative research. I hope to show that it is possible to move towards the use of more “flexible, heuristic strategies” in grounded theory rather than (positivist) “formulaic procedures.”¹⁹²

The structure of the rest of this section is as follows. First, I will outline the research method to be employed in this study, namely life-history. Problems in the field of memory research will be dealt with in this section. Second, I will outline the sources/types of evidence/data this study will employ. Third, the analytic techniques to be employed in the study will be explicated.

¹⁸⁹ Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 3-4

¹⁹⁰ Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 3-4

¹⁹¹ Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 7

¹⁹² Charmaz, 2000: 510

Life-history studies

Yvonna Lincoln states succinctly that “life history is always the history of a life, a single life, told from a particular vantage point...”¹⁹³ Lincoln was one of several life-history scholars invited to contribute to a study investigating the links between life-history study and narrative.¹⁹⁴ In the same study, the authors posit that “(L)ife history... offer(s) exciting alternatives for connecting the lives and stories of individuals to the understanding of larger human and social phenomena.”¹⁹⁵ Further drawing a link, and distinction, between life-history and narrative studies, Paul Schempp states:

In so much as life histories are stories of people’s lives, they are narratives; but it is the connection of one’s life events to social events that distinguishes life history from other forms of narrative. The life is seen as being lived in a time, place, and under particular social circumstances rather than a single collection of events.¹⁹⁶

The process of the life-history study is not linear and predictable. Andrew Sparkes reflects on the passage and ‘findings’ of a life-history study. He asserts that

(T)he ability of life history to focus upon central moments, critical incidents, or fateful moments that revolve around indecision, confusions, contradictions, and ironies, gives a greater sense of process to a life and gives a more ambiguous, complex, and chaotic view of reality. It also presents more “rounded” and believable characters than the “flat,” seemingly irrational, and linear characters from other forms of qualitative inquiry.¹⁹⁷

Since the 1920s, the life history method has been increasingly utilised in qualitative research by researchers in the humanities. Goodson quotes a “mammoth” study published in the period 1918-1920 by Thomas and Znaniecki as representing the “main landmark in

¹⁹³ In Hatch, J.A. and Wisniewski, R. (eds.) (1995) *Life History and Narrative*. London: The Falmer Press, p. 115

¹⁹⁴ In Hatch and Wisniewski, 1995

¹⁹⁵ In Hatch and Wisniewski, 1995: 113

¹⁹⁶ In Hatch and Wisniewski, 1995: 115

¹⁹⁷ In Hatch and Wisniewski, 1995: 116

the development of life history methods". It was this study, relates Goodson, that established the method as "a bona fide research device."¹⁹⁸

The data gleaned in a life history study, states Goodson, cut to the heart of the issue of power in the research matrix. For, "successfully" effected, "the life history forces a confrontation with other people's subjective perceptions."¹⁹⁹ The postmodern turn has not left life history studies unscathed. Concerned as it is with the disruption of our "constructed selves" and our stories, the postmodern turn is most useful in foregrounding the multiple selves that may emerge from a life history study. Munro suggests that

(N)arrative does not provide a better way to locate truth, but in fact reminds us that all good stories are predicated on the quality of the fiction. We live many lives... my understanding of a life history suggests that we need to attend to the silences as well as what is said, that we need to attend to **how** the story is told as well as what is told or not told, and to attend to the tensions and contradictions rather than succumb to the temptations to gloss over these in our desire for "the" story.²⁰⁰

Here Munro points to the same issues raised by Sparkes,²⁰¹ quoted earlier. Far from attempting to reconcile the ostensibly irreconcilable, a critical appraisal of the role of memory in the life history trajectory needs to be enacted. In the following segments, I wish to foreground the issue of the fallibility of memory, and link it to the postmodern turn.

¹⁹⁸ Goodson, 2001: 130

¹⁹⁹ Goodson, 2001: 131

²⁰⁰ Munro, 1998: 12-13 (own emphasis)

²⁰¹ In Hatch and Wisniewski, 1995: 116

Life history and the vagaries of memory

In the 1970s, methods which privileged oral testimony were subjected to fierce criticism, chiefly on the grounds that “memory was unreliable as an historical source.”²⁰²

Especially pertinent for this study is the assertion that memory is “distorted by physical deterioration and nostalgia in old age, by the personal bias of both interviewer and interviewee, and by the influence of collective and retrospective versions of the past.”²⁰³

Historian A.J.P. Taylor indicates that “...memoirs of years ago are useless except for atmosphere... old men drooling about their youth – No.”²⁰⁴

But of greater concern to critics of research based on oral testimony was the shift to a more democratic application of the “historian’s craft – O’Farrell derided oral history’s ‘ideological base in the cult of the common man.’”²⁰⁵ Here too, writes Thomson, much concern was expressed by traditionalists about the propensity for the new emphasis in academic research “in favour of women, workers and minority groups”.²⁰⁶ It was only from the 1970s onwards that the ‘weaknesses’ of oral histories started to be viewed as particular strengths of the method. Luisa Passerini’s work with members of the Italian working class suggested that oral history’s contribution to life history studies can be located in its “potential to reveal not only an individual’s reconstruction of his/her subjectivity but also a reconstruction of the social and ideological world in which those

²⁰² Thomson, A. (1998) Unreliable memories? The use and abuse of oral history. In W. Lamont (ed.) *Historical controversies and historians*. London: UCL Press, p. 26

²⁰³ Thomson, 1998: 26

²⁰⁴ Quoted in Thomson, 1998: 26

²⁰⁵ Thomson, 1998: 26

²⁰⁶ Thomson, 1998: 26-7

memories were formed.”²⁰⁷ It is this “dual layering of the subjective and the social” that is crucial to a nuanced life history study, in that “(I)t not only allows for the important contradictions between the individual and the social/ideological world, (but) also makes a space for contradictions.”²⁰⁸

Limitations of life-history studies

The limitations of life-history studies are well-documented.²⁰⁹ Sandelowski speaks to the lack of generalisability of such studies, focused as they are on the singular narratives of an individual, although he asserts that “cogent generalizations about a single account and comparative generalizations about many life histories, across cultural lines, can usefully be made.”²¹⁰ In these terms, the work of Wieder²¹¹ and Wieder and Soudien²¹² offer the possibilities of comparative research. Hagemaster suggests other limitations, such as language barriers, different times and contexts of interviewer and interviewee, and gender differences “which can affect the degree to which information of a sensitive nature is volunteered between the subject and the investigator.”²¹³

It is critical to note that the very limitations of life-history studies simultaneously provide its strengths, in that the subjective narrations of individuals allow us to investigate ‘why individuals construct their memories in particular ways’, and therefore impels researchers

²⁰⁷ Norquay, N. (1990) Life History Research: Memory, Schooling and Social Difference. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 20(3), p.3

²⁰⁸ Norquay, 1990: 3

²⁰⁹ The limitations of life-history studies can be found in the works of, amongst others, Passerini (1979), Sandelowski (1986), Norquay (1990) and Hagemaster (1992).

²¹⁰ Sandelowski, M. (1986)

²¹¹ Wieder, A. (2002 and 2013)

²¹² Wieder, A. and Soudien, C. (2010)

²¹³ Hagemaster, J.N., 1992: 1124

to investigate what lies in the complex spaces that exist ‘between’ the explicit individual narrations. In theorising the space between narration and meaning, authorial voice and its inflections on meaning-making in this study are addressed in the next section.

Life-history and authorial voice

The concerns raised by Rassool²¹⁴ regarding the largely positivist record of life-history writing in South African resistance historiography are the focus of this section of the study. While there has been a great deal of scholarship detailing the lives of South Africans in the sphere of resistance historiography, Rassool states:

In this approach, the conception of politics and resistance has remained characterised by a focus on organised bodies, led by great men whose leadership has been largely taken as given. These histories of political organisations have been told through the lives, speeches and opinions of leaders. Political documents and the documentary collection, in the form of statements, speeches or minutes of meetings, viewed transparently as storehouses of facts of a story of resistance, have remained the essence of their methodology.²¹⁵

This approach, explains Rassool, “has proven to be enduring.”²¹⁶ This study attempts to steer a way through the positivist approach to political biography as critiqued by Rassool, whilst simultaneously attempting to inscribe Alie Fataar, via his narrative constructions, into South African educational resistance historiography. This study attempts to effect this in ways that, first, allow his multi-faceted complexities to be inscribed, rather than a simplistic, chronological, unproblematised narrative. Second, the study seeks to inscribe

²¹⁴ Rassool, 2004; 2010

²¹⁵ Rassool, C. (2010) Rethinking Documentary History and South African Political Biography. *South African Review of Sociology*, 41(1), p. 29

²¹⁶ Rassool, 2010: 29

his life in ways that do not purposefully isolate his voice from that of the “organised bodies”²¹⁷ with which he is most closely associated, the TLSA and NEUM.

In keeping these research aims foregrounded, it is necessary to explicate the manner in which these research aims can be realised in this study. I do so here by reflecting critically on a celebrated addition to South African historiography, Charles Van Onselen’s *The Seed is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper, 1894-1985*,²¹⁸ and then proposing an alternative writing strategy to offset these limitations.²¹⁹

In the case of Van Onselen’s *Kas Maine*, Rassool states that “oral history was a means of generating evidence about the facts of Maine’s life” rather than “...how these instances of orality as life history told their own story of remembrance, forgetting and narrativity”.²²⁰ Rassool states:

Maine’s life history, drawn from oral testimony, and rendered as a life document, stood as a ‘body of historically verifiable facts’, and a building block of collective experience. It was sifted, ordered, verified, referenced and cross-referenced, evaluated and processed by the historian to stand as consciousness, the remembrance of real collective experience.²²¹

²¹⁷ Rassool, 2010: 29

²¹⁸ Van Onselen, C. (2006) *The Seed is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper, 1894-1985*. Cape Town: David Philip.

²¹⁹ While this section can be logically inserted in the ‘research design and methodology’ chapter of this study, the importance of its insertion here is to foreground, at the earliest appropriate instance, how the choices of the life-history theorists and critics appropriated in this study allows, in fact necessitates, the type of writing that Rassool (2004 and 2010) indicates is necessary if we are to draw more fruitfully from studies that focus on the lives of persons who are located in the political/resistance canon in South Africa.

²²⁰ Rassool, 2010: 83

²²¹ Rassool, 2010: 83

For Van Onselen, states Rassool, “memory was not Kas Maine’s medium of history”.²²² Crucially for this study of Alie Fataar’s life, “(T)he narrative voice that emerged in (Van Onselen’s) book through the employment of the third person singular was Van Onselen’s.”²²³ As Rassool further states:

...the ironic consequence of this ‘epic’ attempt at ‘restoring Kas Maine to the historical record’ (Van Onselen, 1996: back cover) was the deepening of his subordinate status through being named, categorised and naturalised as marginal and typologised as special. Kas Maine was inserted into Van Onselen’s history largely as ‘contextual device’ and, in crucial ways, continued to be silenced within the realm of the academy.²²⁴

As Rassool further elaborates, Kas Maine was “(C)onstrained within the ready-made, fixed category of his recovery – as sharecropper-resister...” and “was made to stand for the collective social and economic experience of rural society in twentieth century South Africa”.²²⁵ Kas Maine’s narratives were

...mined for literate facts, which were inserted into a dominant genre of historical realism. This was achieved through the ‘autocratic author who hides his control over the text behind the third person singular, the chronological unfolding of the story that creates the illusion of a natural, temporal development of the lifelike and detailed description of how it really was.’²²⁶

This study therefore is alert to the potential subjugation of Alie Fataar’s narratives under the authorial gaze of the writer. This alertness regarding authorial voice is carried into the

²²² Rassool, 2010: 83

²²³ Van Onselen, C. (1993) The Reconstruction of a Rural Life from Oral Testimony: Critical Notes on the Methodology Employed in the Study of a Black South African Sharecropper. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 20(3), p. 510-3. Quoted in Rassool, 2010: 83.

²²⁴ Rassool, 2010: 83

²²⁵ Harries, 1994: 130, quoted in Rassool, 2010: 84

²²⁶ Harries, 1994: 130, quoted in Rassool, 2010: 84

discussion of validity in Chapter Three of this study, specifically the imperatives of writing enunciated by Charmaz.²²⁷

Rassool's concerns are therefore addressed directly in this study by the adoption of a writing style in Part Two in which Alie Fataar's narrative constructions explicitly frame chapters four through seven. A dialogical writing frame is established through my voice, as researcher, being inserted as a critical voice interrogating Fataar's narratives. I do so by indicating how this dialogical structure is achieved throughout the semi-structured interviews by means of my questioning Fataar's narratives, as well as through various devices such as clarity-seeking questions, my own preferred interpretations of his narratives, and his speaking to my interruptions of his narratives.

Having delineated the appropriateness of life-history, particularly as expounded by Goodson,²²⁸ the complexities around life-history, memory and authorial voice, as well as the conscious writing style adopted in Part Two in order to privilege Fataar's own narrative constructions, the next section outlines and details the data-sources utilised in the study.

Sources and quality of data

I will first list the hybrid data forms to be used in the study, thereafter taking each one in turn, and indicating the procedures for sourcing the materials as well as the ease of accessibility to these materials.

²²⁷ Charmaz, 2000

²²⁸ Goodson, 2000: 2002

The data utilised in this study are:

1. Transcript data from semi-structured interviews.
2. Photographs from the respondent's own archive, as well as a small selection of photographs from other sources.
3. Educational, politico-economic writings of the respondent, and documents of a personal nature, from the respondent's own archive.
4. Personal documents, primarily related to the educational life of the respondent, sourced from Alie Fataar.
5. Archival documents, relating to the respondent's period in exile.

Transcript data from semi-structured interviews

The respondent participated in over fifty-five hours of interviews, conducted at his home in Wynberg, a suburb of Cape Town. The interviews were semi-structured, in the sense that no formulaic tick-list of questions was utilised. However, Robert Atkinson provides a useful, and detailed, template of questions which was adapted and utilised to give effect to a series of life history interviews with Alie Fataar.²²⁹ The complete set of original questions as proposed by Atkinson is appended as Appendix One. I provided Alie Fataar with this list as an indication to him of the nature of the interviews.

²²⁹ Atkinson, R. (1998) *The Life Story Interview*. Sage University Papers Series on Qualitative Research Methods, Vol. 44. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

The interviews were conducted at the interviewee's home between the period March 2003 to September 2003, and recorded on a digital voice recorder. These recordings were transcribed under my supervision. The transcription process proved extremely challenging, given the code-switching (English to Afrikaans), as well as the employment of Afrikaans-Arabic terms employed by the respondent. I compiled an authority list for the transcriber, and worked through each transcription with the transcriber in order to ensure that the primary data of this study, namely the interview-transcripts, contained a faithful, detailed, rich capture of the recorded interviews, attempting to capture intonation, mood, and significant pauses. The word-processed interview transcripts comprise over 550 A4 pages, typed in 10-point Arial, single-spaced.

Photographs

After months of my requests for photographs, Alie Fataar contacted me early on the morning of June 16, 2003, to ask me to make sure that I turned up for the scheduled interview session at 9.00 a.m. (I had not missed one at all), as he had something for me which I would like! On arrival at the respondent's flat in Wynberg at 9.00 a.m., he showed me into the living room, where we normally sat and conducted the interviews. On the table were visibly old cardboard boxes, not labelled, and out of these Alie Fataar took photograph albums, some leather-bound, obviously aged. The respondent indicated that the albums containing photographs which had been taken before 1964, i.e. the beginning of almost three decades of exile, had not been opened since that time, i.e. not since 1964.

The photographs presented as part of this study represent copies of the photographs I was able to glean from Alie Fataar. It is important to note that the selection of photographs I

was able to digitally scan and return to Alie Fataar represents a miniscule fraction of the large amount of photographs that were shown to me and otherwise spoken of during the interviews I conducted with Alie Fataar.²³⁰ As Part Two of this study will show, the respondent's memories were particularly stimulated by his foraging through these collections of black-and-white and colour photographs, and he mused about, and narrated (in detail) aspects of his life that he had only fleetingly alluded to during previous interview sessions.

The photographs were digitally scanned in high-resolution (300dpi), and transferred to compact discs for high-quality printing at a later stage. I photo-bureau printed A4 copies of the photographs I had scanned from Alie Fataar, and gave him a full set during our interviews, as well as a compact-disc on which 300dpi and 75dpi electronic versions of the scanned photographs were stored.

Documents solicited from the respondent

I received a number of documents from the respondent's archive²³¹. Alie Fataar worked through a number of boxes which had been carted through the exile period, and had remained unopened since that period. The documents have been categorised under the following headings:

²³⁰ Throughout the interviews, as reflected in various sections of this study, Alie Fataar would ask me: "Have I shown you the one...?" He would also ask me whether he had not already told me something, quite often expressing surprise that I had not heard a story or an experience Alie Fataar thought he had told me. The transcripts indicate that photographs had been given to other researchers who had not returned the items, invoking the ire of Alie Fataar.

²³¹ All documents were photocopied and/or digitally scanned, and the originals returned into the care of the respondent.

1. ***Educational writings*** – contributions to the *Educational Journal*, the organ of the TLSA, in which capacity the respondent served as General Secretary. A few of these documents have personal notes of the respondent clearly visible (he loved writing in red ink – a teacher’s signifier, perhaps?).
2. ***Politico-economic writings*** – these writings were the product of the later exile years, particularly the Zimbabwean period (1980 – 1993). These appeared in the *SAPEM Journal*, as well as in publications of UMSA, APDUSA and the NEUM after its reconstitution in 1985, when it became the New Unity Movement (NUM).
3. ***Personal documents*** - these documents include original typed correspondence in the respondent’s capacity as UMSA Joint-Secretary, addressed to the Syrian Ba’ath Party, soliciting political and other assistance for UMSA cadres in camps in Africa (dated 1968) *et al*; testimonials from persons the respondent worked with in Africa (at Swaneng Hill in Botswana, Evelyn Hone College in Zambia), as well as a magnificently preserved testimonial from E.C. Roberts, Livingstone High School principal, in favour of a young Alie Fataar, dated 30 October 1936, received from the respondent on 23 June 2003.

Archival documents

While the primary data used in a classic life-history study relies on the sole use of a respondent’s narratives or life-documents, this study also accesses archival materials from two separate archival records. The first is the ‘BC925 Unity Movement of South Africa (UMSA)/I B Tabata Collection,’ housed at the University of Cape Town’s

Manuscripts and Archives Department. The second, accessed in order to source data on the tertiary education period of the respondent, Alie Fataar, was the 'BC636 The Zonnebloem Papers,' also housed at the University of Cape Town's Manuscripts and Archives Department. The overriding consideration for accessing the archival record was the dearth of documents, primarily the correspondence by the respondent as General-Secretary of the Unity Movement of South Africa (UMSA) during the respondent's exile period from 1965 to 1993, inclusive.

After months of fruitless requests for copies of, or examples of such correspondence, I made the decision to augment the primary data used in the study, namely the respondent's narratives and documents sourced from the respondent, with archival data. I entered the archival search initially ignorant of the complexities of the BC925 UMSA/IB Tabata archival deposits. My research aim in approaching the BC925 UMSA/IB Tabata archive was to glean any information about Alie Fataar during his exile period, as the issue of professional work versus/and political work had arisen on several occasions during the interviews with the respondent.

The use of archival records in academic studies, here particularly the BC925 UMSA/IB Tabata Collection, is not without its attendant criticism. According to Rassool, Robin Kayser²³² "...mined the Tabata Collection as merely a repository of facts of resistance, to enable records to be set straight. In the process, he overlooked prior processes of narration and authorship, and indeed the mediated nature and storied character of the

²³² Kayser, R. (2002) *Land and Liberty!: The Non-European Unity Movement and The Land Question, 1933-1976*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation, Department of Historical Studies, University of Cape Town.

Tabata archive.”²³³ The “mediated and storied character” of the BC925 UMSA/I B Tabata archive is extensively documented in University of the Western Cape historian Ciraj Rassool’s doctoral thesis,²³⁴ which investigates, in part, and interrogates, the “production and contestation of Isaac Bangani Tabata’s biography.”²³⁵

It is important for my study that the archival retrieval I undertook be understood as partial, in that the archival record deposited as ‘BC925 The Unity Movement of South Africa (UMSA)/I B Tabata Collection’ is a mediated, contested and necessarily incomplete record of the life of I B Tabata. The data about the respondent of this study, Alie Fataar, retrieved from this archive, therefore, is even more fragmented, potentially tangential and sparse, given that Fataar is not the ‘object’ of the archival collection. Crucial to this study, then, is that the archival records concerning Alie Fataar, as contained in the BC925 UMSA/I B Tabata Collection be regarded as framed in a complex interplay of the personal and the political. Having listed and described the sources and quality of the collected data, I now turn attention to the sampling strategies employed in the study.

Sampling

Mouton suggests that life-history studies lend themselves to theoretical sampling. Typical/representative items will be selected for inclusion in the study.²³⁶ The rule of thumb in this regard is: rather fewer documents and more meaningful discussion and

²³³ Rassool, 2004: 9

²³⁴ Rassool, 2004

²³⁵ Rassool, C.S. (2004) *The Individual, Auto/biography and History in South Africa*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of the Western Cape, partial heading of “Part Two” of the dissertation.

²³⁶ Mouton, J. (2001) *How to succeed in your Master’s and Doctoral Studies: A South African Guide and Resource Book*. Pretoria: Van Schaik, p. 172

analysis of representative samples of data, than more documents and only a cursory discussion and analysis. In broad sweep, the chapter headings in Part Two of this study encapsulate the primary categories which emerged during the data coding process, which I outline in the next section of this chapter as part of the discussion of the modalities of the data analysis employed in the study.

Data analysis

The hybrid data forms utilised in the study necessitate that multiple analytic techniques be employed in the study. The principal technique is constructivist grounded theory, in relation to the interview transcripts, which form the core of the data utilised in the study. Supplementary analytic techniques are described for the secondary data items listed in the previous section. Each of these are described in the pages which follow.

Constructivist Grounded theory

Strauss and Corbin define grounded theory as “one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents.”²³⁷ Glaser and Strauss,²³⁸ regarded as the ‘fathers’ of grounded theory, believe that “universality of meaning” and “generalizing” was indeed possible from an analysis of a set of data.²³⁹ At the start of this section, I indicated that a discussion of grounded theory potentially entangles one in a positivist-constructivist loop. What I wish to do here is first to outline the specific grounded theory techniques of

²³⁷ Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 23

²³⁸ Glaser and Strauss, 1968

²³⁹ Price, J. (1999) In Acknowledgment: A Review and Critique of Qualitative Research Texts. In R. Josselson and A. Lieblich (eds.) *Making meaning of narratives*. (The Narrative Study of Lives, Vol. 6). Thousand Oaks and London: SAGE.

Strauss and Corbin²⁴⁰ and thereafter to discuss the ways in which it is possible to move towards the use of more “flexible, heuristic strategies” in grounded theory rather than (positivist) “formulaic procedures.”²⁴¹ Grounded theory analytic techniques include the following:²⁴²

1. ***Simultaneous collection and analysis of data***: Data collection and data analysis is a reflexive process, in which new questions emerge out of an initial analysis, based on a close reading of texts. In this way the initial analysis assists the researcher in filling in gaps in the data set, as well as to alert the researcher to possible contradictions that may fruitfully be explored in later interviews.

2. ***Data coding and data comparison processes***: Strauss and Corbin suggest that coding is premised on two processes, namely 1) asking questions and 2) making comparisons. One looks at a piece of text, for example, and asks questions such as: “What is this?” or “What does this represent?”²⁴³ Once answers to these questions are derived, one begins to look at other text segments “to find those which have similar answers to your questions.”²⁴⁴

3. ***Memo writing aimed at the construction of conceptual analyses***: Strauss and Corbin²⁴⁵ define memos as “written records of analysis related to the formulation of

²⁴⁰ Strauss and Corbin, 1990

²⁴¹ Charmaz, 2000: 510

²⁴² From Charmaz, 2000: 510-511.

²⁴³ Strauss and Corbin, 1990

²⁴⁴ Babbie, E. and Mouton, J. (2001) Qualitative data analysis. In E. Babbie and J Mouton *The Practice of Social Research*. Oxford and Cape Town: Oxford University Press, p. 499.

²⁴⁵ Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 197

theory”. They identify three types of memos, namely 1) code notes, which “contain conceptual labels and indications of process;”²⁴⁶ 2) theoretical notes, which contain “the products of inductive or deductive thinking about relevant or potentially relevant categories, their properties, dimensions, relationships, variations, processes and conditional matrix,”²⁴⁷ and 3) operational notes, which, in the context of this study, necessitates penning memos to myself “regarding sampling, questions, possible comparisons, leads to follow up on, and so forth.”²⁴⁸

I employed a combination of computer-software to effect the grounded analysis of the interview data in the form of the generated interview transcripts: QSR NVivo version 10 for line-by-line coding, and MS-Word’s powerful tables’ functionality. Epistemological and other issues are foregrounded here, *inter alia*, to indicate that analysis-enabling software is “often used to *legitimate* rather than to conduct a study” and the software may offer the “illusion that interpretive work can be reduced to a set of procedures.”²⁴⁹ It is important to emphasise that the computer software did not conduct the data analysis. Rather, the software facilitated the storage and whole-text visual retrieval of data segments, which would otherwise be stored in shoe-boxes and other manual storage methods.

I now wish to discuss Charmaz’s contention that the positivistic (formulaic) features of grounded theory’s analytic techniques may be ameliorated by adopting a different

²⁴⁶ Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 501

²⁴⁷ Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 501

²⁴⁸ Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 501

²⁴⁹ Charmaz, 2000: 520, original emphasis

research mindset.²⁵⁰ Charmaz asserts that what she terms “constructivist” grounded theory “celebrates firsthand knowledge of empirical worlds, takes a middle ground between postmodernism and positivism, and offers accessible methods for taking qualitative research into the 21st century.”²⁵¹ She offers suggestions in this regard, which I summarise below.²⁵²

First, reflexivity will allow grounded theorists to view their own work as “constructions rather than as objectified products.”²⁵³ Secondly, our own epistemological preferences need to be foregrounded in our studies, to enable an explicit acknowledgment of “the limits of our studies and how we shape them.”²⁵⁴ Third, constructivist grounded theorists need to seek, simultaneously, reflexively and explicitly, the meanings brought to the research by both the respondent and the researcher.²⁵⁵ Fourthly, axial coding lends itself to the production of jargon. A constructivist approach to grounded theory will constantly alert the researcher to the risk of “cloaking analytic power in jargon.”²⁵⁶ This is especially so in terms of the careless production of “(P)rocessual diagrams and conceptual maps.”²⁵⁷ Finally, Charmaz suggests that the act of writing itself must not be downplayed in the research process.²⁵⁸ She asserts that “(C)onstructivist grounded theory spawns an image

²⁵⁰ Charmaz, 2000

²⁵¹ Charmaz, 2000: 510

²⁵² Charmaz, 2000

²⁵³ Charmaz, 2000: 528

²⁵⁴ Charmaz, 2000: 528

²⁵⁵ Charmaz, 2000: 525

²⁵⁶ Charmaz, 2000: 525

²⁵⁷ Charmaz, 2000: 525

²⁵⁸ Charmaz, 2000: 526-528

of a writer at a desk who tries to balance theoretical interpretation with an evocative aesthetic.”²⁵⁹

Charmaz advocates the use of “words that reproduce the tempo and mood of the experience;” the use of analogies and metaphors to “explicate tacit meanings and feelings subsumed within” analytic categories; the use of simple language to render meaning accessible,²⁶⁰ and finally exhorts the non-positivist practitioner of grounded theory to “aim for curiosity without condescension, openness without voyeurism, and participation without domination.”²⁶¹

Arising out of the holistic coding processes are the chapter-frames, in the form of the chapter-headings that delineate the parameters of Part Two of this study. Part Two of the study inscribes into the academic domain the educational life-narratives of Alie Fataar, and while the chapter-framing in the form of the chapter-headings infer a chronological approach, this is a sense-making device employed for the purposes of establishing a readable ‘biographical’ account of Alie Fataar.

The coding process ‘lifted’ the following main categories from the narrative data (the categories which now form the chapter-headings of Part Two) The chapter headings are ‘Educational foundations’ (chapter four); ‘Teaching and politics in and beyond the South African classroom’ (chapter five); ‘More useful outside than inside: education and politics in exile’ (chapter six); and ‘Return, continued resistance, two roads, and a fiery

²⁵⁹ Charmaz, 2000: 526

²⁶⁰ Charmaz, 2000: 527

²⁶¹ Charmaz, 2000: 528

sunset’ (chapter seven). A final chapter, ‘Reflections and suggestions for further study’ (chapter eight), completes the dissertation.

Having expounded the centrality of constructivist grounded theory in analysing the hybrid data utilised in the study, attention is now turned to the conceptual analytic tools of Pierre Bourdieu, which are used complementarily alongside constructivist grounded theory tools in Part Two of the study.

Field, Capital and Habitus: operationalising Bourdieu’s analytical tools

Pierre Bourdieu’s insistence on a sociology of the practical rather than an abstracted sociology is a key component in the operationalising of Part Two of this study. Bourdieu’s analytical power will be expounded in detail over the following pages. Bourdieu’s own social origins in rural France are most useful for this study to consider. In the context of the social origins of the respondent of this study, Alie Fataar, Bourdieu’s own origins inform this study in meaningful ways, impacting as it does on Bourdieu’s understanding of, and detailed explication of, his sense of “never feeling fully justified as an intellectual” in that most elite of French academic institutions, the Ecole normale supérieure of the Rue d’Ulm in Paris.²⁶² Alie Fataar’s narrative constructions will reveal, in Part Two, how his class position impacted materially, in the form of tertiary-study opportunities, access to bursaries and his academic trajectory, his life-opportunities, and how his origins continued to inflect other aspects of his life in important ways.

²⁶² Bourdieu and Acquaint, 1992: 208. It is significant to note, as contained in the question posed to Pierre Bourdieu by Loic Wacquant, the luminaries in French intellectual circles who are also alumni of the Ecole normale supérieure of the Rue d’Ulm: Jean-Paul Sartre; Emile Durkheim; Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida.

Bourdieu posits that “three types of biases may blur the sociological gaze,”²⁶³ namely the “*social* origins and coordinates (class, gender, ethnicity, etc.) of the individual researcher” (original emphasis); the “position that the analyst occupies... that is, the objective space of possible intellectual positions offered to him or her at a given moment, and, beyond, in the field of power,” and third, “the *intellectualist* bias which entices us to construe the world as a *spectacle*, as a set of significations to be interpreted rather than as concrete problems to be solved practically” (original emphases).

Pierre Bourdieu emphasises the use of his conceptual tools as facilitating good social research, rather than using his conceptual tools abstractly. “There is no doubt a theory in my work, or, better, a set of *thinking tools* visible through the results they yield, but it is not built as such... It is a *temporary construct which takes shape for and by the empirical work...*” (original emphases)²⁶⁴ Following Maton²⁶⁵ and Soudien,²⁶⁶ I deploy Bourdieu’s conceptual tools in terms of its “usefulness... *for this research study*, rather than its capacity for synthesis or philosophical closure.”²⁶⁷

Bourdieu’s conceptual tools ‘field’, ‘capital’ and ‘habitus’, form a set of “inter-defined concepts.”²⁶⁸ In this study, I appropriate Bourdieu’s conception of “field” as per his “conception of society (or ‘social space’) as constituted by relations between fields of

²⁶³ Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 39-40

²⁶⁴ Wacquant, 1989: 50. In Maton, K. (2004) *The Field of Higher Education: A sociology of reproduction, transformation, change and the conditions of emergence for cultural studies*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, St. John’s College, University of Cambridge, p. 36.

²⁶⁵ Maton, 2004

²⁶⁶ Soudien, 2006

²⁶⁷ Maton, 2004: 36

²⁶⁸ Maton, 2004: 36

practice...”²⁶⁹ These fields of practice, under the conditions of the “division of labour, have increasingly differentiated to become relatively autonomous.”²⁷⁰ In the context of this study, the fields of education (specifically school education) and politics (of resistance) are key framing devices. Fields “share homologous features... including relative autonomy, relational and hierarchical structures, and struggles.”²⁷¹ Within fields are ‘agents’, which can comprise “individuals, groups of actors or institutions... struggling over status and resources to maximise their positions.”²⁷² The field’s structure is determined by “relations between these positions.”²⁷³

Within the field, Bourdieu’s second conceptual tool, namely ‘capital’, and its distribution, defines the “relational position” between agents.²⁷⁴ Soudien²⁷⁵ appropriates Bourdieu’s concept of ‘capital’ in a study that looks at modern cities and how “they work as sites for domination and subjugation, for inclusion and exclusion.”²⁷⁶ Soudien states:

During the long years of disenfranchisement of Capetonians of colour in the city, it was the teaching community, from the early twenties, who made it their responsibility to teach the ideals of civic-mindedness and citizenship. Most of these teachers, not all it must be said, were in the Teachers’ League of South Africa... Like (W.E.B) du Bois, they resisted the attempts of the apartheid state in the 1960s to introduce an inferior and vocationally oriented education in African and coloured schools.²⁷⁷

²⁶⁹ Maton, 2004: 36

²⁷⁰ Maton, 2004: 36

²⁷¹ Maton, 2004: 36

²⁷² Maton, 2004: 37

²⁷³ Maton, 2004: 37

²⁷⁴ Maton, 2004: 37

²⁷⁵ Soudien, C. (2006) The city, citizenship and education. *Journal of Education*, Number 40, 103-118.

²⁷⁶ Soudien, 2006: 106

²⁷⁷ Soudien, 2004: 112

In his study,²⁷⁸ Soudien appropriated the Bourdieuan term ‘capital’, and explains its conceptual and analytical utility in looking at the modern city as a site of struggle for citizenship in which education and teachers play a key role. Focusing on Bourdieu’s assertion that it is not the “ownership of financial capital” (Bourdieu’s ‘economic capital’) that forms “the basis of domination in the city,”²⁷⁹ Soudien uses Bourdieu’s²⁸⁰ concept of ‘capital’ in the wider sense to include ‘social capital’, ‘symbolic capital’ and ‘cultural capital’ to argue that the working class is dominated by all these capitals in turn. Capital, writes Maton, “...conceptualises resources which confer power, authority or status upon their holders.”²⁸¹

It is crucial to note the inter-relatedness of Bourdieu’s conceptual apparatus, as fields “...are structured homologously to social space as a whole”²⁸² by the volume and type of capital in respective fields. By ‘volume of capital’ is meant “the amount of status and resources possessed by agents” to distinguish dominant and dominated classes”²⁸³ while ‘type of capital’ refers to the “fractions within the dominant class” that “distinguishes dominant and dominated class fractions.”²⁸⁴

The four principal types of capital utilised as analytic tools by Soudien²⁸⁵ are economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital. For the purposes of this study, economic capital

²⁷⁸ Soudien, 2006

²⁷⁹ Soudien, 2006: 106

²⁸⁰ Bourdieu, P. (1986) The forms of capital. In Richardson, J.G. (Ed.) *Handbook of theory and research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood Press.

²⁸¹ Maton, 2004: 37

²⁸² Maton, 2004: 37

²⁸³ Maton, 2004: 37

²⁸⁴ Maton, 2004: 37

²⁸⁵ Soudien, 2006: 103-118.

(wealth, land owned, access to finance, *et al*) is of lesser importance than cultural and social capital. Cultural capital (knowledge, academic achievements and academic status, experience in the workplace), social capital (professional associations, friendship circles, group alignments) and symbolic capital (prestige accorded persons, e.g. as a leading university researcher, state-honoured individual) are of immense analytical value in Part Two of this study.

Soudien, as already explicated in this section, indicates how the teachers of the TLSA were a major social force in infusing a sense of citizenship in their students, i.e. bringing into their classrooms the cultural capital in the form of desired knowledge in a rapidly modernising apartheid South Africa.²⁸⁶ These teachers, writes Soudien, inscribed in their writings, public speaking and classroom engagements with the oppressed “a distaste for the colouredisation and bantuisation”²⁸⁷ of their existences when the notorious Group Areas Act forced hundreds of thousands out of the city centre to township ghettos established for ‘designated’ racialised and ethnicised ‘groups’.

The teachers of the TLSA, of which Alie Fataar was a leading member, were crucial in a “counter-official discourse during the long period of the 1960s to the 1990s.”²⁸⁸ The teachers infused in their pupils the cultural capital that the apartheid machinery overtly removed from the national syllabuses for the various racialised and ethnicised departments of education. Soudien writes:

²⁸⁶ Soudien, 2006

²⁸⁷ Soudien, 2006: 113

²⁸⁸ Soudien, 2006: 113

Strident as these counter-official attempts were, they contained within them a strategic understanding of what it meant to live in Cape Town. Their children received the cultural capital they needed to make their way through the complexities of the city. In the persons of their teachers, the young boys and girls would have been provided models and examples of what they themselves could be.²⁸⁹

Linked organically to fields, economic, social and cultural capitals is symbolic capital. For the purposes of this study, the notion of symbolic hegemony²⁹⁰ by the socially-powerful over the oppressed is crucial. Bourdieu writes that

...the symbolic or the imaginative world of the working class is heavily influenced by professionals and their view of the world. In the new cities they dominate the processes of advertising, design and marketing. They determine what education, music, film, television and a whole range of commodities that are deeply imprinted with their (professionals') cultural tastes, will circulate in the economy.²⁹¹

Crucial here is that even progressive professionals, for the purposes of this study progressive *teachers*, may be unaware of the possibility that, even as they induct their pupils into modernity, they commit, unknowingly, something “inherent to modernity and high-status knowledge.”²⁹² Soudien reflects:

In committing themselves to the cause of progress, the progressives, unavoidably, looked back on the past and saw there only a world of hardship, shame and struggle. This they wish to cast aside. In looking forward they, unfortunately, universalise humanity in the image of the modern. It is at this moment that they give up the capacity to see the ‘other’ – call it the past if you like – within themselves. They don’t see how much their education has become an education of the privileged.²⁹³

In the process of inscribing Alie Fataar’s teaching life into the academy, this study relies on a third analytic tool of Bourdieu, namely ‘habitus’. Bourdieu defines habitus as “(A)

²⁸⁹ Soudien, 2006: 114

²⁹⁰ Hegemony is used here in its denotative, common-sense understanding, as opposed to the Gramscian notion.

²⁹¹ Bourdieu, 1986, as described in Soudien, 2006: 106

²⁹² Soudien, 2006: 115

²⁹³ Soudien, 2006: 115

structuring structure, which organises practices and the perception of practices.”²⁹⁴

Habitus “consists of our thoughts, tastes, beliefs, interests and our understanding of the world around us and is created through primary socialisation into the world through family, culture and the milieu of education.”²⁹⁵

I now consider the issues pertinent to the analysis of the images (photographs) which form part of the data-set in the study.

Photographic analysis

This section tracks the development of my analytic thinking relevant to the utilisation of photographs in this study, from an initial ‘secondary’ status, to viewing the photograph/image as a discrete and integral data-item, worthy of analysis in frameworks that privilege its integrity as a carrier of social, political, artistic, educational, cultural and other analytic markers. Douglas Harper²⁹⁶ writes:

The photograph is socially constructed in the sense that the social positions of the photographer and the subject come into play when a photograph is made... A father may photograph his children in ridiculous poses, but the children do not generally have the social power to photograph their parents arguing (or making love) and to present those images as the “official” family story.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁴ Bourdieu, 1984: 170

²⁹⁵ <http://kirstyahawthorn.wordpress.com/sociology-2/outline-the-concepts-of-habitus-and-social-field-in-bourdieu-sociology-how-valuable-are-these-concepts-for-the-sociological-analysis-of-social-life/>
Accessed 26 April 2014

²⁹⁶ Harper, D. (2000) Reimagining Visual Methods: Galileo to *Neuromancer*. In N.K. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Second edition. Thousand Oaks: SAGE, pp. 727-8.

²⁹⁷ Harper (2000) cites Chalfen, 1987, at the close of this quotation.

Chris Pinney²⁹⁸ problematises the analysis of photographs by suggesting that “pictures have a different story to tell from words”.²⁹⁹ “What if,” says Pinney, “we allowed them (photographs) to (tell their different story) “at least partly, on their own terms?”³⁰⁰ Pinney asks whether we are able to “envisage history as in part determined by struggles occurring at the level of the visual.”³⁰¹

Mitchell establishes an analytical regime for approaching visual analysis,³⁰² establishing what University of the Western Cape based historian Patricia Hayes indicates “we might refer to... as the social construction of vision.”³⁰³ A Mitchell-ean analysis invokes several modalities, together which allows for a deeply textured analysis of visual material.³⁰⁴ The first element of this analytic frame is that “vision is socially constructed”.³⁰⁵ Vision, in this framework, is “learned and cultivated, not simply given by nature”.³⁰⁶ The second element in Mitchell’s analytic approach is that the visual is related to “the history of arts, technologies, media, and social practices of display and spectatorship.”³⁰⁷ Third, vision and visual analysis is “deeply involved with human societies, with the ethics and politics, aesthetics, and epistemology of seeing and being seen.”³⁰⁸ Instead of the (still non-

²⁹⁸ Pinney, 2004: 9

²⁹⁹ In Hayes, 2005: 520

³⁰⁰ Pinney, 2004: 9, in Hayes, 2005: 520

³⁰¹ Hayes, 2005: 520

³⁰² Mitchell, 2002: 231-250

³⁰³ Hayes, 2005: 521

³⁰⁴ Mitchell, 2002: 231-250

³⁰⁵ Mitchell, 2002: 232, in Hayes, 2005: 521

³⁰⁶ Mitchell, 2002: 232, in Hayes, 2005: 521

³⁰⁷ Mitchell, 2002: 232, in Hayes, 2005: 521

³⁰⁸ Mitchell, 2002: 232, in Hayes, 2005: 521

positivist) approach that the visual is socially constructed, Mitchell “proposes(s) that we think directly about the visual construction of the social.”³⁰⁹

Patricia Hayes, writing about “the visual construction of gender”³¹⁰ suggests that, “if the visual can take us more deeply into the cultural and historical configurations of society, as it seems able to do, then we are beginning to ask new questions.”³¹¹ Writing analytically around these new questions poses an “ironic” element into such analytic work, in that “engaging with the visual demands a much greater precision with language itself...”³¹²

It must be stated here that the contingencies of space imposed on the study, and the voluminous nature of the primary data in the form of the interview transcripts, mitigates against a maximal implementation of the research desire to do full justice to the photographs as per the theoretical framework described in this section. In this context, an attempt is made to situate the photographs into a theoretical space in which their discrete integrity is assured, while indicating here that post-doctoral academic papers are planned in order to give greater effect to the photographs and the theoretical orientation described in this section. For the purposes of this study, in-text contextual descriptions are supplemented by deep captioning beneath the images in order to provide a form of discrete integrity to the photographs.

³⁰⁹ Mitchell, 2002: 237, in Hayes, 2005: 521

³¹⁰ Hayes, 2005: 521

³¹¹ Hayes, 2005: 521

³¹² Hayes, 2005: 521

The next chapter of the study addresses the key questions of validity and reliability in a life-history study, as well as ethical issues which arise in a life-history study.

Chapter Three: Validity, reliability, and the ethical challenges of a life-history study

Validity and reliability in life-history studies

A key weakness, or challenge, of life-history lies in the arena of validity and replicability. Based as this study is on the narratives of a single respondent, the issue of replicability lies in the domain of the methodology employed, and the usefulness or otherwise of the interpretive framework. Rogers *et al* indicate that

a fundamental criterion of validity in qualitative research is that interpretations and conclusions follow a trail of textual evidence that originate in the data source(s). This, of course, places a burden on the reader to rely upon, *inter alia*, the skills and integrity of the researcher. A corollary of this is that the researcher bears the responsibility of justification, self-awareness and self-discipline during the process of ongoing examination of text against interpretation.³¹³

Hammersley and Atkinson declare two general criteria for testing validity in narrative studies: First, “(H)ow truthful, plausible and credible is the account?” Second, “(H)ow important is the study? [Its contribution to the field, previous findings, methods, theory or social policy?]”³¹⁴ Whereas there is a great emphasis on ‘truth’ in ‘positivist’ research approaches, Mishler asserts that

(F)ocusing on trustworthiness rather than truth displaces validation from its traditional location in a presumably objective, non-reactive, and neutral reality and it moves it to the social world – a world constructed in and through our discourses, and actions, through praxis.³¹⁵

³¹³ Rogers *et al*, 1999

³¹⁴ Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. London and New York: Routledge.

³¹⁵ Mishler, 1990: 240

In Chapter Two of this study, under the heading ‘Constructivist Grounded Theory,’ Charmaz³¹⁶ foregrounded a number of methodological issues which I indicated, in Chapter Two, would be invoked in this chapter on reliability and validity in a qualitative study, here a life-history study. In Chapter Two, Charmaz³¹⁷ suggested that:

1. working with empirical data (in this study, over fifty hours of recorded and transcribed interviews, photographs, life-documents, and archival documents) allows for the taking of “a middle ground between postmodernism and positivism;”³¹⁸
2. reflexivity in the writing process allows grounded theorists to view their work as “constructions rather than as objectified products;”³¹⁹
3. the writer’s own epistemological preferences must be foregrounded, thereby enabling an explicit acknowledgement of “the limits of our studies and how we shape them;”³²⁰
4. such writing requires the seeking of, simultaneously, reflexively and explicitly, the meanings brought to the research by both the respondent and the researcher;”³²¹
5. a constant alertness on the part of the researcher to the risk of “cloaking analytic power in jargon” must be constantly invoked in the writing of such a study;”³²²
6. the act of writing itself must not be downplayed in the research process:
 - 6.1. the writer should try “to balance theoretical interpretation with an evocative aesthetic;”³²³

³¹⁶ Charmaz, 2000

³¹⁷ Charmaz, 2000

³¹⁸ Charmaz, 2000: 510

³¹⁹ Charmaz, 2000: 528

³²⁰ Charmaz, 2000: 528

³²¹ Charmaz, 2000: 525

³²² Charmaz, 2000: 525

- 6.2. the writing should use “words that reproduce the tempo and mood of the experience;”³²⁴
- 6.3. the writing should invoke the use of analogies and metaphors to “explicate tacit meanings and feelings subsumed within” analytic categories,³²⁵
- 6.4. such writing must make use of simple language to render meaning accessible,³²⁶
and
- 6.5. such writing should “aim for curiosity without condescension, openness without voyeurism, and participation without domination.”³²⁷

Part Two of this study, therefore, measures itself against the meeting of the aforementioned criteria. In attempting to achieve these benchmarks in this study, prime consideration is always given to maintaining the intellectual integrity of Alie Fataar’s narrative construction of his educational life. This has already been covered in the previous chapter under the sub-heading ‘Life-history and authorial voice’. In addition to the writing imperatives outlined by Charmaz,³²⁸ the issue of not subjugating Alie Fataar’s voice is paramount.

The issue of privileging Alie Fataar’s authorial voice leads coherently to the next section, which appraises the complex ethical issues that arise in the production of a life-history study.

³²³ Charmaz, 2000: 526

³²⁴ Charmaz, 2000: 527

³²⁵ Charmaz, 2000: 527

³²⁶ Charmaz, 2000: 527

³²⁷ Charmaz, 2000: 528

³²⁸ Charmaz, 2000

The ethics and challenges of working with narratives and life-history

The complexities around biography and life-history are not new. Pimlott³²⁹ foregrounds some of these complexities as follows:

1. biographer as handmaiden to greatness, and
2. biographer as moralist.

Virginia Woolf perhaps sums up the ‘handmaiden to greatness’ dilemma most succinctly: “Suppose, for example, that the man of genius was immoral, ill-tempered, and threw the boots at the maid’s head. The widow would say, ‘Still I loved him – he was the father of my children; and the public, who love his books, must on no account be disillusioned. Cover up. Omit.’”³³⁰ Lee,³³¹ one of the theorists at the nub of critical discourse analysis, has written that there is “a paucity of commentary concerning the political relations, that is, the relations of power-knowledge that pertain between the analyst and the object of analysis”. Smythe and Murray argue that “regulative principles of research ethics” do not sufficiently offer clear guidelines for “research in the narrative study of lives.” They propose that “narrative ethics is inextricably entwined with epistemological issues – namely, issues of narrative ownership and the multiplicity of narrative meaning.”³³²

LeGallais points to the “impossibility of absolutes” as this pertains to “insider/outsider research,” and posits the “creation of a researcher continuum, which encourages the

³²⁹ Pimlott, 1999: 37-8

³³⁰ In Pimlott, 1999: 37

³³¹ Lee, 2000: 188

³³² Smythe and Murray, 2000: Abstract

researcher to explore to what degree s/he can be called native or stranger and – through this awareness – to utilise the best aspects of both roles to inform and enhance the research experience.”³³³ Howarth asserts that the “researcher-researched relationship is not simply a problem of methodology but needs to be analysed as a feature of human relations.”³³⁴ Writing on the complex issue of confidentiality as it pertains to qualitative research, Baez asserts that “(T)ransformative political action requires that researchers and respondents consider themselves involved in a process of exposing and resisting hegemonic power arrangements, but such action is thwarted by secrecy and the methods used to protect it.” She argues for a re-appraisal of the “convention of confidentiality.”³³⁵

I posed a series of questions to my treatment of Alie Fataar’s narratives:

1. What are the parameters of power between researcher and researched in this process?
2. Who is the final arbiter in the debate?
3. What are the particular indicators that can assist in these decisions?
4. Whose narratives are these?
5. To what degree is an instrumental use of these narratives justified in the quest for academic and intellectual clarity?

My aim in this study is to foreground these very complex webs of relationships in researching the lives of teachers, with a view to placing these research conundrums

³³³ LeGallais, 2003: 3

³³⁴ Howarth, 2002: Abstract

³³⁵ Baez, 2002

squarely within the scope of this type of research. “Very few biographers,” writes Pimlott “... plump for subjects they do not like; and, if they start off liking a little, several years of immersion in papers and interviews, combined with a battle against self-doubt, tend to raise the liking several notches.”³³⁶ But are my ‘ethical’ concerns not over-emphasised? Are these concerns emerging from somewhere other than my professed concern for the respondent? Massey³³⁷ quotes the use of emotive terms such as a ‘rape model of research,’³³⁸ ‘social striptease,’³³⁹ and ‘exploitation.’³⁴⁰ Citing a case in which a researcher³⁴¹ agonised over whether or not to intervene when a respondent burst into tears during an interview, Massey wonders aloud:

But I suspect that the researcher's discomfort may be more a focus on self (the researcher) than the other (participant). In other words, the researcher's anxiety may centre around some issue within herself: perhaps her own societal or familial conditioning that tears should not be shown, or guilt because of a belief that she has caused the person to be unhappy.³⁴²

So what are those elements that were ‘troublesome’ or disturbing during the writing of this study? In taking up Massey’s challenge, I attempt to flesh out these concerns under the heading ‘scholarship or social striptease’ below.

Scholarship or ‘social striptease’?

Punch investigated the issue of police deviance, and wrote quite candidly about his perceptions around his own role as researcher: “I could not escape the realisation that

³³⁶ Pimlott, 1999: 37

³³⁷ Massey, 1996

³³⁸ Reinharz, 1979: 95

³³⁹ Ball, 1983: 95

³⁴⁰ Measor and Sikes, 1992: 214

³⁴¹ Edwards, 1993: 193

³⁴² Massey, 1996

deceit and dissemblance were part of the research role and I did not feel ethically comfortable with that insight.”³⁴³ There a number of important methodological-cum-ethical issues at play here, *inter alia*, ‘deceit’, ‘the research role’ and ‘ethically comfortable’. I use these three lenses to ground the discussion in this section of the paper, albeit not in strict chronological order.

A central concern during the twenty-five months that I worked with Alie Fataar was the construct ‘my research relationship with Alie Fataar.’ My construction ‘research relationship,’ of course, is a protective one. It is absolutely true that this period was particularly rich in ‘strictly research terms.’ But what do I mean by ‘strictly research terms’? Does such a construct hold much potential for a rich study into Alie Fataar’s teaching life? Indeed, in getting to know Alie Fataar over this period, his ‘teaching life’ had been one of many strands/themes to have been foregrounded. In no particular order, I had been afforded the privilege of getting to know, in greater or lesser detail, aspects of his life as a young boy; as the youngest son of twelve children; as the teenager schooling himself in the art of English enunciation; as the young man on his bicycle delivering washing to members of his neighbourhood, and as the son of a father who swelled the ranks of the unemployed during the Great Depression.

I have been with Alie Fataar as he movingly recounted the deaths of his parents. Via his narrative constructions, I have been afforded glimpses into his life as a young student in Claremont, and into the beginnings of his association with Livingstone High School in the late 1920s. I sat with him the day before his leg was amputated, and recited prayers

³⁴³ Punch, 1989: 189, quoted in Massey, 1996: 2

for him at his hospital bedside after the amputation. I was part of the mourners who carried him to his grave. All of these are far greater than the term “research relationship” can denote.

My notes after an interview reveal my sense of ‘privilege’ for having been afforded a very personal set of insights into the life of Alie Fataar.³⁴⁴ What was particularly intriguing was that I had expected his response to the question “Who has been the biggest influence on your life?” to have been some intellectual luminary of the age, or, I thought, Dr Goolam Gool, whose name and influence stitches together much of Fataar’s life from the late 1930s to the tempestuous late 1950s. But it was the infusion of the personal, in the form of his father, that shook off any sense that ‘I knew this man quite well.’ And here is a methodological conundrum: what was I listening to, and what was I listening for? More importantly, perhaps, what was I not aware of that I was listening to?

The filters through which I was listening were *my* personal knowledges (gleaned via experience, reading, *et al*). It is therefore crucial that my personal knowledges, my epistemological, political, social and other biases be acknowledged throughout the writing of Part Two of this study. This reflexivity, as pointed out by Charmaz,³⁴⁵ is crucial for the reliability and validity of a constructivist grounded study.

I find it of use to relate the following synopsis of Alessandro Portelli.³⁴⁶ Tasked with getting a speaker of a native dialect in central Italy to speak into a recorder for thirty

³⁴⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

³⁴⁵ Charmaz, 2000

³⁴⁶ Portelli, 1991: 29-31

minutes, Portelli relates that he was stumped as he began the session, and was asked by the native speaker: “Well, what shall we talk about?” Having solved this problem, and fixing a topic, Portelli³⁴⁷ writes that the interviewee “gave details freely, but was unresponsive whenever I tried to elicit a judgment, an opinion, or a criticism.”

Of course, no relationship outside of the very superficial existed in this interview by Portelli. As Portelli’s narrative unfolds, however, it is clear that a modicum of trust is established between Portelli, his initial contact, and the poets to whom Portelli is then introduced. In a significant shift, recognised by Portelli, he relates that the reluctant interviewee introduces him to a local poet.³⁴⁸ After this new interview, the first (reluctant) interviewee turns to the poet and says: “Aren’t you glad I brought this gentleman over? You see, he never asked me about priests.”³⁴⁹

Portelli insightfully posits that “while I was ‘studying’ him and his answers, he had been studying me and my questions, and had found out which side I was on.”³⁵⁰ The context (Italian fascism and anti-fascism) in which Portelli’s work is located is, of course, very different to the contexts in which I interviewed Alie Fataar. What is of importance for me as I engage with the data is the realisation that Fataar’s narrative data was as much a response to my questions as they were responses to *me* as a person. While I was ‘researching’ him, Alie Fataar, as per Portelli, “was studying me.”³⁵¹

³⁴⁷ Portelli, 1991: 29-31

³⁴⁸ Portelli, 1991: 30

³⁴⁹ Portelli, 1991: 30

³⁵⁰ Portelli, 1991: 30

³⁵¹ Portelli, 1991: 30

In concluding this section, the issue of what is at stake is fundamental to the course this study will eventually take.

As stated to Alie Fataar on several occasions before his death, I want to produce a scholarly work of integrity and academic merit. Simultaneously, I want to be able to look him in the eye, confident in the knowledge that his narratives have been fairly and honestly presented, and the critique of his narrative is executed with theoretical vigour, lucidity and integrity. I have no intention of flogging the man in public, nor, however, do I wish to produce an insipid hagiographical account of Alie Fataar. Academic rigour is fundamental to the study, and I believe this approach is a tribute to the withering intellectual critique to which Alie Fataar and his comrades subjected all ideas. I do not believe that Alie Fataar would find anything amiss with a critique that is based on *his* narratives, and which academically interrogates *his* narratives faithfully, rigorously and with a view to illuminating his rich and varied educational narratives within the many contexts of his life.

As regards my own identity in all of this: student, teacher, father, researcher... I would like to believe that all of these personas are guided by something akin to an ethics that concerns itself with fundamental human worth.

Part Two of this study is an attempt at inscribing Alie Fataar's educational life into South African education-resistance history and biography, with a view to shifting him from the margins of South Africa's educational resistance history, to the still sparsely-populated centre as regards those who actively imagined a new, just social order, and concomitantly

worked to undermine the racial-colonial subjugation to which the majority of South Africans were subjected to for over three centuries. This study also inscribes Alie Fataar, the teacher, into the arena of policy-formulation around the lives of teachers, and suggests that policy-making must take account of the nuanced, rich, *lived* realities of teachers, like Alie Fataar, who dared to take their pupils beyond the constraints of education systems that “misled (them) by showing (them) the greener pastures of European Society where (they are) not allowed to graze.”³⁵²

As this study moves on to Part Two, it is necessary to foreground the following. In pursuit of placing Alie Fataar’s narratives at the heart of this section of the study, the method employed here will be to (re)-present Fataar’s narrative constructions and intersperse these with ongoing critical reflections throughout, while identifying elements which will be material for the final reflection of the study in Chapter Eight. It must also be pointed out that linked themes or tropes are discussed across Chapters Four through Seven, as tropes and themes supplement or otherwise contradict each other. Every attempt is made to allow for a coherent reading of Alie Fataar’s life, while allowing for intersections between concepts and tropes across these semi-discrete chapters in order to foreground Alie Fataar’s lived reality, as relayed in narrative form, in all its complexity.

As the study now moves on to the narrative production of Alie Fataar’s teaching life, I note here that Alie Fataar allowed his life to intersect with mine in a research relationship in order to produce this doctoral study.

³⁵² Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd, then Minister of Native Affairs in the National Party apartheid government, explaining the new education policy to the apartheid government, in Kallaway, P. (ed.), 1984: 92.

Both researcher and researched will be judged. Whatever the outcome of this judgment, I trust that my pen is always in search of something approaching the truth and value of human decency and social justice.

PART TWO: THE NARRATIVE PRODUCTION OF ALIE FATAAR, TEACHER

Chapter Four: Educational foundations

“We’ll start there from... from the community, from Claremont.”³⁵³ Alie Fataar inscribed himself into this life-history study incisively and deliberately, not waiting for a question to prompt his response or initiate the discussion.

I had no idea what age Alie Fataar was as our first interview commenced in the modestly furnished flat he shared with his wife, Ursula. It is an understatement to indicate that I was nervous, even wary, of this first meeting. Here, tall and with a warm smile, was Alie Fataar. He was not what I had imagined him to be.

My initial wariness had been established during several years of listening to Alie Fataar on community-radio during phone-ins and as a studio-guest. He was fiery, had strong opinions, and did not suffer fools gladly during these interactions. Outside of this knowledge, the man who sat opposite me across the small table was known to me only in terms of a hazy series of mental-images and as-yet incoherent snippets gleaned from an interview conducted with him in Zimbabwe in 1989.³⁵⁴

From the outset of Part Two, as this study probes the construction of his teacher identity, I am mindful of the commitment, or attempt, to privilege Alie Fataar’s voice in the

³⁵³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

³⁵⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, Harare, Zimbabwe, 18-19 January, 1989, conducted by M.S. Jeppie. I handed a full copy of this interview transcript to Alie Fataar before we began the first recorded interview on the morning of 31 March 2003.

study.³⁵⁵ Methodologically, keeping true to the research aim to privilege rather than subjugate Alie Fataar's narratives is possible from the outset of this chapter. Fataar's unprompted narrative, with which I began this chapter, was part of a larger narrative:

We'll start there from... from the community, from Claremont. In this case, of course, the Muslim community, and of course the Coloured, segregated community. Now, what I think is important is that I'm one of thousands of that generation, of that period. It is now the First World War, post, the war had just ended in 1917, and, er, when did the war end?... 1918... the last year of the war, and they busy getting ready now for the peace. Now, er, the whole period before that... for the... you see, here, one is forced to use terminology... er... which, er... was relevant at the time. You actually speak of the Coloured... alright, you can say the oppressed, but they didn't regard themselves as oppressed... hulle was net bruinmene [*they were simply referred to/referred to themselves as 'coloured' people*]... and then a section of that was Slamse... that's what they were... they were I-Slams-se... and then of course the Christians'... er, views, were... Maleier... Maleier... all this terminology was around to show how people were in sections... not only that, but they also tended to live in sections... in Claremont they were known to live in three or four... segments.³⁵⁶

Fataar contextualised his coming-to-life within the context of the community of Claremont, a suburb in Cape Town nestling in the shadow of Devil's Peak and the back of the famous Table Mountain. Claremont is situated a few minutes' drive from the University of Cape Town, whose façade dominates the back slopes of the mountains which adorn postcard and tourist representations of Cape Town. Claremont is less than ten kilometres from the Cape Town city centre, and now boasts some of the most sought-after real-estate in its combination of narrow streets, quaint houses, and facilities such as

³⁵⁵ Historian Ciraj Rassool (2010) has cautioned against inadvertently subjugating the voice of narrative-study respondents. As expounded in Chapter Two of this study, under the heading 'Life-history and authorial voice', his views on Charles Van Onselen's celebrated *The Seed is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper, 1894-1985* were presented. In attempting to commit to an explicit foregrounding of Alie Fataar's narratives as "(his) own story of remembrance, forgetting and narrativity" rather than the use of Fataar's narratives only as "a means of generating evidence about the facts of (Fataar's) life" (Rassool, 2010: 83), the opening chapter of Fataar's narrative production of his teacher identity construction assumes primary status. My ability to sustain, or not be able to maintain this, will form part of the last chapter of this study, in which I critique my methodology as part of a desired research-reflexivity.

³⁵⁶ Alie Fataar's opening narrative contribution: Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

schools, shopping complexes, public gardens, and a host of commercial activities which continue to draw thousands of commuters along its bustling main roads.

Claremont's not-white population was forcibly removed from the area under the apartheid Group Areas Act, but their houses remained intact, to be occupied by people classified 'white.' This was different to the experiences of places such as Sophiatown and District Six, where complete destruction of physical spaces, and its peoples' associated historical affiliation to those spaces, was sought by the ironically-named 'architects' of apartheid.

It is fascinating that Alie Fataar initiated the narrative. Unprompted by any question, he began by contextualising his birth on 26 March 1917 as emerging within spatial, religious, global conflict, and colonial-apartheid social relations.

Alie Fataar was the last of twelve children born to Salamudien Fataar and Janap Moosa. Figure 1 on page 108 depicts Alie Fataar's parents standing outside their Surrey Street, Claremont home. Alie Fataar was born into what he narrated as the 'Muslim' and 'Coloured' communities of Claremont. "You see, here, one is forced to use terminology, er, which, er... was relevant at the time," related Fataar in the opening minutes of the first interview I conducted with him.³⁵⁷ He immediately dissociated himself from the racist identity-markers imposed on him and the dispossessed, subjugated indigenes of South Africa.

³⁵⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar



Figure 1: Pictured above are (left) Janap Moosa and (right) Salamudien Fataar, the parents of Alie Fataar.
Photo courtesy Alie Fataar

It is significant that he distinguishes between ‘Coloured’ and ‘the oppressed’: “You actually speak of the Coloured... alright, you can say the oppressed, but they didn’t regard themselves as oppressed....”³⁵⁸

My memo after the interview shows that I flagged the code-switching as unexpected and a category for analysis. I noted that I needed to be alert to any future code-switching, as it appeared to contradict the image of Alie Fataar I had constructed, namely of an English-speaking public intellectual who would avoid the use of Afrikaans as commonly spoken among large swathes of the ‘Coloured’ community of the Cape. I noted that this linguistic binary was my own construction of Alie Fataar, and needed to be probed in future interviews.

Fataar himself penned a mimeo in August 2001, “The Fataar Family”, which he handed to me during our interview on 9 June 2003.³⁵⁹ Under the heading “Abdul Fataagh”, Alie Fataar declared: “...the father could not have been a Portsmouth, Liverpool or London no-gooder who could only land a job as a sailor... Note: Winnie Mandela once remarked that the “Coloured” people were the offspring of “prostitutes!””³⁶⁰ The Fataar genealogy surfaced during our first interview.³⁶¹ The narrative denotes that the lineage of Alie Fataar’s great-grandfather, Abdul Fataagh, begins with “...a Khoi woman... now the records aren’t very straight... who married an Englishman by the name of Bowles, and

³⁵⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

³⁵⁹ Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: “Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001”]

³⁶⁰ Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: “Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001”]

³⁶¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

this... marriage was actually done in the Cathedral... the church... the Anglican church... it's in the records there, the marriage.”³⁶²

Fataar did not name the Khoi woman at this point, which is curious by its omission, but the Englishman, Bowles, is named, and becomes a figure who, as described earlier in this chapter by Alie Fataar, ‘could not have been a Portsmouth, Liverpool or London no-gooder.’ In fact, in ‘The Fataar Family’ document, Alie Fataar adds a very important item in parentheses when describing his paternal great-grandfather, the seaman Bowles. He writes: “Early in the 1840s, as I have estimated, an English sailor (captain?) on a cargo ship in Cape Town married a Khoi woman in the Anglican Church (Cathedral).”³⁶³

There is no direct evidence that the seaman was a captain, but it is inserted within parentheses by Alie Fataar. As indicated, the seaman has been denoted as ‘could not have been a Portsmouth, Liverpool or London no-gooder who could only land a job as a sailor’. The evidence Fataar provides is the following: “From a document I had in my possession (got from my father Salamudien, who died in Claremont in 1943) and now perhaps with someone in the family; (sic) the baby was baptised/christened in the Anglican Church (Cathedral?)... So both the marriage and christening were done in religious fashion.”³⁶⁴

³⁶² Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

³⁶³ Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: “Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001”], page 1

³⁶⁴ Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: “Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001”], page 1

It is of importance to this study, as will be shown in the course of this chapter, and those that follow, that Alie Fataar invokes high social-status for his great-grandfather in a religious context. The contested nature of religious identity (not only Muslim religious identity, as will be seen in the discussions around former Livingstone High School principal, E. C. Roberts) and social status was a consistent feature of Alie Fataar's narratives.

The nature of the colonial archive is highlighted in this attempt at establishing the Fataar genealogy. The mother, a woman of Khoi origin, is not decisively named in the archive, being identified only as Martha,³⁶⁵ whereas the father, an Englishman, is identified, rendered traceable, and inscribed into the archive and hence into a South African genealogy. The record of which Alie Fataar speaks is "in the records there now... at the Roeland Street..."³⁶⁶ I interrupted Alie Fataar's narrative with an amazed "at the archives... We've come full circle!"³⁶⁷ I was referencing the fact that I had schooled at Harold Cressy High School, directly opposite the Roeland Street jail, which now houses the Western Cape Provincial Archives and Records Service.

The interruption was also an acknowledgement of intertextuality, referencing a rather detailed account of Fataar's introduction "to this whole question... of what they

³⁶⁵ Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: "Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001"], page 1

³⁶⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

³⁶⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

afterwards called mixed-race.”³⁶⁸ Fataar had immediately related the story, introducing its telling with “(N)ow to give you an example...”

...right opposite us, in Surrey Street, near the railway line, there was a Boer... and he was a warder at Roeland Street jail... apparently, a rather tough one, with the Coloured prisoners, pretty harmless chaps, who were in for petty theft and so on, and, er, then from that you had the, the Klopse singing a song, er, about Roeland Street... ‘Olla, my basie (Fataar laughs) dan kry ek sewe, dan kry ek nege maande bo in die Roeland Straat (laughter)... [*I’m asking for a small amount, master, and I get seven, I get nine months jail-time in Roeland Street*] always in nine months... he lived opposite us, and his, er, kitchen door was right on the road... there was a window there... now as the people come down... from Main Road, across the railway line, across the old cemetery there, our house is on the corner... ‘A.S. Fataar – Tailor’, on the wall, right, and opposite is Poole; his name was Poole... and, er, they used to fling bricks through his window... and he used to sit there... “Kaffir-Poole, jou moer”³⁶⁹ that sort of thing they would shout... so he put shutters on, and, er... so that was the... now his first wife was... a Coloured woman... and they knew that... that’s why they called him “Kaffir-Poole”...³⁷⁰

Nowhere in the typed histories of his family, produced by Alie Fataar, is there anything akin to the description of the social and political milieu as in the extract above from the opening minutes of the very first interview I conducted with Alie Fataar. It is a significant, early testament to the field of life-history studies, and to narrative studies in general, in that here the written tradition is more conservative in orientation. In Alie Fataar’s typed family history, and in relation to his oral telling of that history, much of the subtleties, nuances and ‘story-telling’ representations are lost. Foregrounding the richness of Alie Fataar’s narratives is critical during this first phase of inscribing Alie Fataar into the academic record. It serves as a framing device for the rest of this chapter, and for the three chapters to follow.

³⁶⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

³⁶⁹ The use of the term ‘Kaffir-Poole’ is used to denote that a ‘white’ man, Poole, was married to a person not ‘white’. Fataar’s faithful linguistic representation of the period indicates the racist and vitriolic milieu in which he was raised, well before the advent of legislated apartheid in 1948. The perjorative label *Kaffirboetie* (someone who loves and throws in his lot with Black people) was later hurled at Alie Fataar. I discuss this further in Chapter Five.

³⁷⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

The document referenced earlier in this chapter, namely ‘The Fataar Family,’³⁷¹ which was penned by Alie Fataar, is the most comprehensive account of his lineage that I have been able to access from Alie Fataar. It is appropriated here in order to convey as accurately as possible the familial origins of Alie Fataar. Simultaneous to referencing this document will be a process of extracting those narratives from the interview transcripts which correspond to, embellish, or otherwise contest or contradict ‘The Fataar Family’ as committed to paper by the respondent of this study.

“The origin of the Fataar (plus Gallow) family,” wrote Alie Fataar in 2001, “of whom there are perhaps round about a thousand persons today, is... genetically tri-continental: African, English, Indonesian. Later additions were Indian, Mozambiquean, and some other African.”³⁷² The insert in the extract referring to the ‘Gallow’ part of the family is interesting. Alie Fataar’s eldest uncle, Abdul-Hadi Gallow, “lived in Harvey Road, Claremont, and all his children and grandchildren were Gallows.”³⁷³ Alie Fataar speculated during the same section of this interview that Abdul Hadi, the eldest son of the Englishman, Bowles, as well as the youngest son Abdurahman, “must have known that their father was an Englishman... so they took the surname... he took the surname... they

³⁷¹ Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: “Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001”]

³⁷² Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: “Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001”], page 2

³⁷³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

just invented the name... Galloway... toe kry hy sommer 'n naam, Gallow [*the name 'Gallow' was just invented*].”³⁷⁴

‘The Fataar Family’ document, unlike the interview narrative which suggests that “they just invented the name,” indicates in far less robust language that the eldest and youngest sons “for some strange reason took the surname Gallow...”³⁷⁵ Once again, the more incisive and critical narrative is the oral one, indicating perhaps that oral researchers are better able to gather data about persons, events and processes in more subtle, nuanced forms than can be gleaned from the written record.

After the marriage of Arthur Bowles, the English seaman, to Martha, his wife of Khoi origin, Bowles returned to England. During that period, Martha gave birth to a young son. On Bowles’ “return visit he died in his boat when a bag of coal fell on him”.³⁷⁶ “So they buried him at sea.”³⁷⁷

Now this woman, Khoi woman, a youngish woman, she was about nineteen or twenty, or so, what must she do with this baby... she lived there in the Bo-Kaap, they were all living there; there was no District Six yet... they lived in Bo-Kaap, and so she had befriended... and then the Muslims at that time, were keen to take babies... adopt them. So this child was adopted by an imam, and this imam named him Abdul Ra... Abdul Fataagh.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

³⁷⁵ Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: “Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001”], page 1

³⁷⁶ Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: “Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001”], page 1

³⁷⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

³⁷⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Interestingly, while earlier it was noted that the oral narratives were more ‘harsh’ or ‘critical’ when speaking to an issue also written about by Alie Fataar, in this case it is inverted. In the family history penned by Alie Fataar, he writes that after the baby’s now-widowed mother had given up her child for adoption, “(S)he then went off.”³⁷⁹

In the early appraisal, then, of adopting an intertextual approach vis-à-vis the written words of Alie Fataar and his oral narratives, there is no simple binary. This is a crucial theoretical insight. Also, Fataar does not mention dates in his oral representations, nor does he include dates on the Fataar genealogy document. He is seemingly more intent on conveying the historical processes than locating this broad genealogy within the rubric of specific dates.

After the narrated, unexplained departure of his young widowed mother, Martha, her son is adopted by an imam named as Abdul Raouf.³⁸⁰ “These imams lived on the slawats [*donations for conducting routine religious/cultural services*] they got, and very often it’s two shillings, a coin, or half-kroon [*half-a-crown*]... that was a typical one... so he had to be a tailor, or a carpenter, or something. So this one happened to be... he managed to get himself a cab, and horses. And he used to drive a cab.”³⁸¹

³⁷⁹ Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: “Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001”], page 1

³⁸⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar; Fataar, 2001: 1

³⁸¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

The Fataar family history and its links to Claremont were facilitated by the meeting of Imam Abdul Raouf and the wealthy Slamdien family of Claremont. Alie Fataar narrated that:

...the Slamdiens gave him a plot of land, where the masjid³⁸² is now. But he eventually started a masjid, in Claremont, er, Main Road. Then, he was now this, waggoner, they called him. Now the strange thing is this Abdul Fataagh was also a waggoner, so they are linked... took his adopted father, Abdul Raouf, and he became a waggoner, because he used to drive huge wagons to Kimberley for them, the gold... the diamond mines... then he used (to go) from Kimberley to Johannesburg. So eventually they lived in Johannesburg... but when he was a younger man, he must have been... with (the) morals he had, and he could manage these wagons, so they gave him the key, and he had to take it all the way to Kimberley again... the railway went past Kimberley... from there they had to take to Jo'burg for the gold mine... that's all the latter part of the nineteenth-century.³⁸³

It is again interesting to note how the moral standing of Abdul Fataagh, Alie Fataar's paternal grandfather, is invoked in terms of his work responsibilities on the diamond mines of Kimberley and the gold mines in Johannesburg. This narration consolidates a family history, as narrated by Alie Fataar, rooted in the indigenous (the Khoi mother, Martha); an English religious, moral and vocational standing (Arthur Bowles, the English seaman, posited as quite likely a ship's captain); and the Cape Muslim religious leadership (Imam Abdul Raouf, the adoptive father). Abdul Fataagh "married a Cape Malay woman (name unknown)."³⁸⁴

(T)hey had four sons: Abdul Hadi (we called him Bappa Hadji and he lived opposite the Harvey road (sic) masjid in Claremont), Abdol (married to a Galant woman from Claremont, Sies Gawa 'Konchak', and they lived near Talfalah School off Draper Street).

³⁸² The masjid referred to here is the Claremont Main Road Mosque, situated, as the name suggests, on the Main Road.

³⁸³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

³⁸⁴ Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: "Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001"], page 1

Next was my father Salamudien and the youngest was Abdurahman who lived for years next to the Chiappinni Street masjid. Both he and Abdul Hadi for some strange reason took the surname Gallow and their children and grandchildren are Gallow, not Fataar! There were two daughters, I think. The elder lived in District Six (opposite the fish market, just off Hanover Street) and her daughter Hajjera was married to my eldest brother, Gamja. Then there was a daughter who was married to a skilled cabinet maker. She was a singer who performed in the old Tivoli Hall in Cape Town where the big post office now stands (now known as Grand Central Mall) (sic) had no children and they lived opposite the Race Course in Kenilworth.

The waggoner Abdul Fataagh, and his wife, whose name was not known to Alie Fataar, lived in Vrededorp, Johannesburg in the last two decades of the nineteenth-century. With them were their two youngest sons, Alie Fataar's father Salamudien, and Abdurahman, the youngest. During this period an underground explosion on the Rand

shook the city and caused damage and injuries to people in the city, among whom was Abdul Fataagh's family – story told was; my father's mother was placing a baked loaf in the sun when the window exploded and injured her face. A census had been conducted and Abdul Fataagh was given the name Abdul and the family Fataar. They received 400 pounds in gold coins as compensation and used this money to take the family on hajj to Mecca.³⁸⁵

It was thus in Johannesburg that the Fataar family name was legislated. The practice of changing the names and surnames of those classified not white is common, and is reflected in many family histories among the disenfranchised and oppressed in the Cape and elsewhere in South Africa. "So they went by camel... just imagine, now, he must have been a strong man (pitch rises), and his wife and his two sons were with him."³⁸⁶ After their return from Hajj, the family re-settled in Cape Town, where the rest of the family was resident.

³⁸⁵ Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: "Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001"], pp. 1-2

³⁸⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

During our final interview³⁸⁷ Alie Fataar again narrated his family history, virtually unchanged from previous iterations of the genealogy. However, it was substantively different in that he now dissociated his family history from ‘race’ and ‘blood relations’. “There are hundreds of slaves in our family’s past,” narrated Fataar as he indicated that he was dealing with “the whole question not of race, but of genetic origins and DNA.”³⁸⁸

He continued:

There’s first of all, the indigenous ancestry. And from there, peculiarly or strangely or uniquely, it’s from a woman, a Khoi woman, the first gene to appear. So, er, that takes us back forty thousand years at least. Well, that’s if you lived in Cape Town or whatever. And, er, my own genetic ancestry is Khoi San, or is it Khoi? And I was thinking... I say: Please when I deal with the slave ancestry: first the African, and then I say, we are Malaysian, Indonesian, Indian, Ceylon and India, which makes it tri-continental because this first chap who came – I deal with him – is this Bowles chap, from where our genes are tri-continental. I don’t use race, you see. And then I say, well, all of African, European and Asian or Malay genetic origin... not a ‘rubbish of race’ in inverted commas, ‘mixed race’ in inverted commas, or blood relations; terms which should finally be flushed into the ocean.³⁸⁹

We turn now to Alie Fataar’s parents. Fataar’s father (to-be) had returned from Mecca with his father and brother. They returned to Cape Town, and a few years later, Salamudien Fataar met his wife-to-be.

He met Janap Moosa, whose father was an indentured Indian... and he was married to a Cape Malay woman... she grew up in Draper Street. So somewhere in 1884, 4th of December... I’ve got a record, er, they got married in that Main Road mosque by Imam Abdullah Abduraouf... the son of the one who had brought my grandfather up since he was a baby.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 4 August 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

³⁸⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 4 August 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

³⁸⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 4 August 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

³⁹⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

In the four-page “The Fataar Family”³⁹¹ penned by Alie Fataar, he provides insight into the origins of his maternal family. Alie Fataar’s mother, Janap Moosa,

was the daughter of a Malay woman and an Indian man, Moosa. She was, incidentally, the granddaughter of a ‘liberated’ Cape Malay woman, who was part of the slave community of Claremont around the early parts of the 19th century... **Janap was a washerwoman/laundress**, doing what most ex-slave women did for the white, mainly English, settlers at the Cape at the time. Claremont must have had the largest such community around Draper Street and 2nd Avenue...³⁹²

Fataar’s father, Salamudien, “was a tailor at Garlicks”³⁹³ and “was quite illiterate, both in Arabic or English or Afrikaans; he couldn’t read a thing.”³⁹⁴ In spite of his father’s illiteracy, Fataar prefaced the introduction of his father with a key concept which was to surface over subsequent interviews, namely that Salamudien Fataar “was very much a man, of, you know, ideas”.³⁹⁵ The significance of this characterisation of his father as a “man of ideas” will be supplemented in subsequent chapters in the context of Alie Fataar’s development vis-à-vis Fataar’s relationship with Dr. Goolam Gool, who, in a formal, organised political sense, was the “first person I met to put me on this road... not because he was a doctor, but because of the ideas he had of liberation.”³⁹⁶

³⁹¹ Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: “Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001”], page 3

³⁹² Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: “Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001”], page 3, original emphasis.

³⁹³ Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: “Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001”], page 3

³⁹⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

³⁹⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

³⁹⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 5 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Fataar's mother, by way of contrast, was literate. Fataar related his mother's literacy in the context of increasing educational opportunities for successive generations of the oppressed.

Now, in my mother's day, it was up to Standard Four, that was six years and she was, as far as I could make out or as far as I knew, fairly literate – she could write a good letter about the washing that she was doing for some madam. And she wrote, "Dear Madam, and so-and-so and so-and-so and so. There's trouble with so-and-so." And good sentences she wrote. Say now something tore in the wash and she would say that 'a certain garment' – use its name – 'tore on the line'. Because... she won't now say, 'this is an old garment'... But she'd say, "I'm very sorry it happened. You must let me know if there's any damage." Knowing that the woman couldn't very well ask her out of the pound she was getting. Probably paid five pounds for the dress. And then she'd sign off the letter; she was taught to write little letters like that, you see, in English.³⁹⁷

As indicated, Alie Fataar was the youngest of twelve children. Six children survived childhood, while six of Janap Moosa's daughters passed away very early in their lives, most, if not all, as a result of diabetes complications.³⁹⁸ The surviving children were his brothers (in order of first-born to later) Gamja, Toyer, Tapey, Omar and his sister Salega. Fataar's eldest brother, Gamja, "was brought up by Janap's aunt Naseba". Interestingly, Gamja followed his father into employment as a tailor at Garlicks. He died of asthma in 1934 or 1935.³⁹⁹ The second eldest brother of Alie Fataar, Toyer, was also a tailor at Garlicks.⁴⁰⁰ In a very interesting turn, brother Tapey "took the surname of Bowers(!), married and had two daughters."⁴⁰¹ Omar, "a builder... had a larger family of 17," and

³⁹⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 30 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

³⁹⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

³⁹⁹ Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: "Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001"], page 3

⁴⁰⁰ Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: "Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001"], page 3

⁴⁰¹ Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: "Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001"], page 3

“all carry the surname of Fataar”.⁴⁰² The only surviving daughter of Salamudien and Janap Fataar, Salega, was “a housewife”.⁴⁰³

Salamudien Fataar married a second wife, Amma Kamies, although Fataar does not provide the period in which this marriage occurred.

He had another wife in town, which he married for Islamic purposes; she was a widow and he had a son there who died and a daughter who lived, my sister Mymona... Now **her** children are still close to me, you see. And, um... but the two wives were like sisters. One day I did hear my mother say to somebody: “Ja, hier’s ’n paar hane, nou maak jy jou kussing so nat. Daar moet jy jou maar aanneem.”⁴⁰⁴ As if it’s Allah’s will. And, er... we used to spend the weekend there, and I used to go to District Six to study. And, er... she used to come with him to the house and they’d have tea together, like sisters and so on. You know, it was a sort of excellent relationship; there was no question of you’re doing more for the one than the other and so on, because we were all poor.⁴⁰⁵

In the same document we are provided with a partial autobiographical sketch of Alie Fataar. He writes:

Alie, the 12th and last born, on 26 March 1917; graduate teacher, lecturer and educationist; married Moreda (Rita) Davidson-Saban – three sons being Abdul Basier (Abe), Shadley and Rustum; also married Ursula Wolhuter as Ushra by Emam Abdulla Haroun, sons being Ashley (in Zimbabwe)... and Sedic who changed to Wolhuter...⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰² Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: “Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001”], page 3

⁴⁰³ Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: “Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001”], page 3

⁴⁰⁴ The Afrikaans idiom captures the idea that now that there are two hens in the coop, the first one has to shed tears on her pillow in the absence of the husband.

⁴⁰⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁴⁰⁶ Fataar, Alie (2001) *The Fataar Family*. Mimeo, 4 typed pages. [Imprint details on the bottom of page 4 denote: “Alie Fataar: No 8 Oakwood, Sherard Square, Wynberg 7800/ Ph. 762 3866/ August 2001. Printed by Minuteman Press Cambridge, Ontario Canada, Sept. 2001”], page 3

The influence of Alie Fataar's parents on his life was profound. I asked him (at the age of 86): "What continues to drive you? Why do you continue to struggle? Shouldn't you have earned your retirement by now, Mr. Fataar?"⁴⁰⁷ His reply was initially in response to the 'retirement' concept: a drawn-out "No-oo."⁴⁰⁸ I present Fataar's uninterrupted narration due to its significance, and to indicate precisely how Fataar framed his important response.

I think life itself (continues to drive me). I'll give you an example of my father, physically (long pause)... that I've never forgotten. And my mother. Many people say they got this from their mother or their father, but this is one thing, the only thing that I can even bother to repeat or state. First, my father: he worked as a skilled artisan, tailor, until the world economy, the First World War, and the Depression put an end to that kind of activity, so that **that** kind of life of his, where he was earning a living, ended. But he still had to live. And so he had to become a repairman, to put patches on other people's clothes, and he'd collect a shilling here and a shilling there and I had to go and measure and all that. That could have demoralised him completely. In other instances, people would take to drugs and liquor; he would have become a **drunkard**, but he remained faithful to his family and so on, and his home, by earning whatever he could get. Secondly, he never had – as far as I could recall – any medical attention or where he needed medical attention, but then, of course, he had the prostate enlargement. In the end, his whole urinary system was affected and, er, in those days it would have been dangerous to have an operation because of the haemorrhage, not like today, you don't have to cut. So the doctor merely used catheters up, and I was already a young teacher by then – 1943 – I had already been teaching for five or six years. I lived now, in part of the house next door. And that means that at least once a day, I had to push a catheter up, and he was largely then bedridden and he was aware that there was no medication for it; that had to be. And it must have struck him: "Must this now happen to me every day? The only way I can live is to have a catheter up me?" So he just decided one day, it must stop. In other words, he was doing a – what do you call it when they remove the...? He did an euthanasia on himself – in effect, in actual fact. Knowing that if a catheter was no longer up him, that would be the end of him. So he just told me: "Balla," he still called me that even though I was a young man, "laat staan maar."⁴⁰⁹ He said: "Laat staan maar. Stop pushing this thing up me." So I went to Dr. Goolam Gool, who was our doctor and colleague and so on, and he said: No, that's to be accepted. The old man is no longer, you know, able to withstand that..." And then I actually saw him dying, the last few

⁴⁰⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁰⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁰⁹ "Let it go."

muniutes. (pause) Now there was a case of where you take a decision without the advice from anybody except your own beliefs... (long pause). That was the one.⁴¹⁰

Fataar immediately followed up the narration of his father's life-example with a narration about his mother.

The following year, a good few months later, my mother's life comes to an end. And she had been a washerwoman, an ironer, all her life, since she was a teenager, till the age of sixty-something. It was less but it was little money to cover every month, whether it was two or three pounds, it was from that little bit of washing that she did for an old man. And, er... she had never been ill, not even with flu. Now, of course, old age got hold of her, at sixty-odd in those days – she must have been sixty-four. When Goolam Gool saw her, he said: “Auntie, jy sien [*you see*], you mustn't fast, Ramadaan is coming.” She actually had diabetes – I only knew later it was diabetes – and that is why also, she lost all her girl babies except the one. Because that actually happened to the one, to my sister – she lost **all** her girl babies and she also had diabetes and she went blind and she had her leg amputated eventually.⁴¹¹ So now when my mother goes down with, as I say now, diabetes, it came out in a different form; on the top of her head, her neck, there was a huge carbuncle, whatever you call it... er, while she was in Ramadaan. So she just said: “Yes, Doctor,” but then she would fast a few days and then eat a day or two, quietly, but then my sister said: “Mother is not doing what the doctor said, you know.” Then a few days before the end of Ramadaan – she had always said: “I never want to go into a sickbed. The day I go into a sickbed, you must remember I'm ready to die.” So she went to bed on the... yes, the day before Ramadaan, er, before Eid. And she was sick that whole week in bed, for a week... (long pause) hardly had anything to eat and then this carbuncle got bigger and bigger here, the way it worked out. We could do nothing. She had bedsores; we had to put methylated spirits on it and so on – my sister and I used to do it. And then the end of the seventh day, the rattle started, so I held her hand through the night, until Imam Abduraouf's wife came, which is a cousin of my mother. She sat a while and she said: “Alie, laat staan maar jou mama se hand.” [*“Alie, you can let go your mother's hand now.”*] And as soon as I had done that, the rattle stopped – and she died. So those were the two occasions when I could actually see people dying; it happened to be my father the one year and my mother, the next. I've never experienced anything like that. (Pause) So, er... it is their **lives** – the one is saying, “The day I go to my bed will be my deathbed.” The other was saying : “If that is the will of Allah that I should go on, don't worry with that medication or that thing,” and a few days after that, he was gone. To accept the reality of life that your ruh⁴¹² must go – you don't know when or where... Now this is a philosophy of life; that there are people who are so busy living life, you

⁴¹⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁴¹¹ This was an ironic and sad foreshadowing of Alie Fataar's own life trajectory. Diabetes complications in the last years of his life also led to the amputation of Alie Fataar's leg in the months before his death.

⁴¹² Soul

know, they can never think: “But one day (laughs softly) I’m not going to be so active. This thing shall happen.”⁴¹³

Several concepts have emerged in the two extracts about Alie Fataar’s narration and interpretation of aspects of his parents’ lives. Among these are the types of courage and fortitude that characterised his parents’ approaches to lives of economic regression and anxiety, as well as their conduct in the face of suffering on the brinks of their respective deaths. The economic dimension of Alie Fataar’s family history is awash with anecdotes of stoicism and adaptation in the face of hardship. While relating a story about delivering a political speech to Kalk Bay fishermen, Alie Fataar created a link between the fisherfolk of Kalk Bay (and the extended Cape) and his own family.

His grandfather, Abdul Fataagh, has already been identified in this study as a waggoner. Economic hardship had forced him to take up several other means of livelihood, including as a halaal-meat⁴¹⁴ slaughterer (slagter) at the abattoirs in Maitland.⁴¹⁵ Alie Fataar takes up the narrative:

And so that was linked with our whole past life, including the fact that my father’s father, who was Abdul Fataagh, went out to catch snoek in winter. And he used to say to his sons: “Moenie worry nie. Julle sal my nie begrawe nie. Laat staan maar die kaffang.” [*“Don’t fuss. You lot won’t bury me. Put aside the burial shroud.”*] So not deliberately, but he normally... you see he did three jobs; one was this carting goods... then he became a slagter [*slaughterer*]... At the same time, he was interested in fishing and what he didn’t know about fish was not worth knowing. What he knew about animals and their innards... he’d come home with the small intestines and his wife would clean it and make a meal of it; just the intestines. My mother could do that also; my father knew of it...

⁴¹³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis).

⁴¹⁴ The Arabic term for what is to be consumed by Muslims. The term is akin to the Hebrew concept of ‘Kosher’.

⁴¹⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 9 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

about it, too. So that they knew how to subsist on what they had, so that skaapkop [*sheep's head*] and whatever tong [*tongue*] and liver....⁴¹⁶

In these challenging economic contexts, Alie Fataar starts his schooling life in Claremont, a community marked, as we have outlined in part in the opening pages of this chapter, by racial, religious, class, gender, age and power inflections.

The first mention of schooling during the interviews occurred immediately after Fataar had begun his narrative by speaking of the 'community' into which he had been born: "You come now to school."⁴¹⁷ With these words Fataar began to contextualise schooling opportunities for Coloured persons.⁴¹⁸

...there were no schools for the, er, Coloureds and such... government schools... they were there for the Whites. You had them in those days in Claremont and Newlands, and Cape Town... lovely, what you call board schools... these were government schools run by the Cape Provincial Administration. There were no such schools... there were only subsidised mission schools... so your various missions... main missions that you had, were the Anglican, the Methodist, the Catholics... and, of course, the DRC. These were the four main... mission schools. The English came later on.⁴¹⁹

The discourse on schooling is thus started within a deficit context, i.e. the lack of government schools for persons not-White. Of significance, too, is the provision of schooling for not-White persons by religious institutions, i.e. the Church.⁴²⁰ Within this arena, Fataar elaborates on where not-White children in the communities of Claremont, District Six and the Bo-Kaap schooled.

⁴¹⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴¹⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴¹⁸ Fataar is quoted earlier in this chapter (Interview 31 March 2013) indicating that the employment of racial terminology is unavoidable in some respects: "You see, here, one is forced to use terminology... which, er, was relevant at the time. You actually speak of the Coloured... alright, you can say the oppressed, but they didn't regard themselves as oppressed... hulle was net bruinmense... and then a section of that was Slamse... that's what they were... I-Slam-se..."

⁴¹⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴²⁰ See Majeke, N. (1952) *Role of Missionaries in Conquest*. Johannesburg: Society of Young Africa.

Schools were following... one syllabus... whether it was a government board school under the Provincial Administration, or you were a mission school, er... for Coloureds... and that, of course, was for any religion, including the Malays. Now, umm, therefore, they went to these schools... I'm talking now of Cape Town. Of course it went out to other places... Genadendal and Mamre... spread out.. I'm speaking here only of Cape Town, Bo-Kaap... and they catered very largely also for Muslim kids of Bo-Kaap, and, er, the first... board school, for Coloureds, came as Trafalgar Junior... for District Six. This was the only one for the whole of Cape Town...⁴²¹

Fataar had earlier inscribed himself into the community of Claremont, indicating that the Muslims (I-Slam-se) were regarded as a section of the Coloured community of greater Cape Town. In these first minutes of the more than fifty hours of interviews, the dynamics of religious identity are enunciated by Fataar.

Moslem parents then sent their children to mission schools, but there was a fear, of course... the whole idea was to Christianise... but we can observe at this point already that... it was minimal, er, in my mind, from my youth, I can't remember... er, a Muslim... children... switching into Christianity...⁴²²

During this first interview, Fataar was keen to clarify the nature of 'being Muslim' in Claremont during the 1920s and 1930s: "I've said this before... er, the way in which we grew up... in Claremont... in a secular society... and people... must begin to understand it now... what the Muslims were..."⁴²³

To illustrate the type of social relations that shaped his childhood, Fataar related, in the context of the quotation above, how "you have this clear Cape Malay culture... and that has survived... they kept it going for the past 300 years."⁴²⁴ "Here," unlike in areas like Natal where you had "the Indian merchant class... here we had no merchant class... we

⁴²¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴²² Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴²³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴²⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

had a working class... artisans class... they became the tailors, and the dressmakers, etcetera, etcetera, and the oldest... the beautiful architecture, and so on.”⁴²⁵

Three months after the start of the interviews, I probed the link between the personal and the political in the context of taking political decisions that impacted on family life.

Fataar’s response was a social contextualisation:

I can tell you now. I don’t know if you want to record it. The biggest difficulty here was your living: when you grew up in and was brought up in a Muslim environment and there was a great deal of animosity against die Slamse. Now you couldn’t even go for higher education because it wasn’t the norm. You’d go and get a job, or... plus the fact that since you are now busy with secondary schooling and then you come into the political situation... your links with the Slamse – Muslims – there’s a bit of tension there.⁴²⁶

He concluded the discussion a few minutes later about the challenges he perceived while growing up as a young member of the Muslim community:

But, of course, in the community you still had this almost estrangement between I-Slamse and die Kriste [*the Christians*], you see; they were just called Kriste... Ja. So there was very little opportunity for people to socialise. Of course, this was the beginning of the, in the end, of the actual creation of living quarters, locations and all that sort of thing, and people were stuck into groups again when they were segregated, more segregated, and this is long before apartheid.⁴²⁷

“So out of this now comes the situation where you’ve gone... to school. My brothers and so on went to Talfallah... far down there.”⁴²⁸ Fataar did not know where his eldest brother, Gamja, had schooled, as Gamja had been raised by his mother’s aunt, as previously related in this chapter.

⁴²⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴²⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 9 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴²⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 9 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴²⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

And then Toyer, and Tapie and Omar went to Talfallah. Of course, Omar wasn't very fond of school, so he didn't go very far... but, er, Toyer was quite literate... he could read the English paper, and tell you all that happened on the football and the rugby field... sporting... he used to have great fun... my father used to swear at him: "Wat gaan jy betaal vir daai witmense... hier op Newlands." [*What do you think you're doing, paying white people at Newlands?*]... Now... ja, from that life, from that awareness, I eventually had... very anti-white... the sports... "Why do you want to go there? Watch the white man play... in a special hokkie [*cage*], you know... at Newlands, you had this South end... the Malays... and we had a Galant there... met sy rooi koeffiyah [*with his red fez*], you know... it's either for Villagers or for Hamiltons... now Claremont was Villagers... and Hamiltons... and, er, then he would sit there, you know, behind the posts... now they pay him to go in, and they also... just to demoralise your opponents... My Here, my pa het altyd my broer...: 'Daai ieblies! Daai ieblies wat daar sit, wat dink hy van die geloof? Hy kan at least sy koeffiyah afhaal... Slamse mens...' [*My God. My father always gave it to my brother: 'That devil! That devil who sits there; what does he think of the religion? He could at least take off his fez... Slams*].⁴²⁹

The initial narratives about the schooling experiences of his brothers, then, are inflected with a humorous though overtly political discourse of social tensions brought into the Fataar household as a direct result of the literacy of Fataar's older brother. Through reading and relating newspaper articles to his father, Salamudien, about local rugby, Toyer Fataar was instrumental in awakening in his younger brother, Alie, the seeds of an anti-racist approach to sport, and a rejection of segregation and discrimination in sport and other arenas.

Fataar himself did not attend Talfallah Primary School: "I went nearer to me... was just up the road from me, just up the Main Road, St. Saviours School, and, er, I must have been six, er... 1923... Sub A... you know they had the old Sub A (deep intake of breath from Mr. Fataar; eyes closed)."⁴³⁰

⁴²⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴³⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

He recalls “classes of about twenty” in his first year at St. Saviours English Church School.⁴³¹

The teachers were, er... er, those who came from England... and volunteers. But when I was now Sub A, they were actually training Coloured teachers, er, in the schools... the teachers would train other teachers. So you had, for example, a young girl, of... seventeen, as a teacher, teaching Sub A... trained since fifteen or sixteen, in the school... ambag geleer [*learning a trade*]...⁴³²

Fataar recalled these first days of schooling with an exclamatory “Ai!”⁴³³

The language... and some religious study, and so on. Now I’m talking about the first teacher we get... but then of course you had the older teachers from England... some of them might be retired... there was a Miss Hughes, for example, and there was a Miss Lacey... I can’t remember now, and, er... the one we had in, er, whatchacallit, in Sub A, was about fifty... very good teachers.⁴³⁴

The gendered nature of his early teaching experiences are not unique. Early primary teaching was virtually the domain of female teachers, with their male counterparts normally occupying senior posts and in secondary schools. Gender disparity was reflected in salary discrimination and post-promotions. Also of significance here is Alie Fataar’s first schooling experiences of mature English female teachers, whom he characterises, in his first narration of them, as ‘very good teachers’. He states: “...they taught, of course, by the phonetic method... there was no ‘ABC’... it was all phonetic... and in no time we could read on our own.”⁴³⁵

⁴³¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴³² Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴³³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴³⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴³⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Fataar progressed rapidly in his first year at school. During these early interviews, I asked Fataar about his approach to schooling: whether he had enjoyed attending school, and whether or not he had been a “good student”.⁴³⁶

(Laughs) Well, I was first in class from... Sub A right down to Ten... and into teacher-training... Ja [*Yes*]. I was top of the class all the way... So now, I... Sub A: I suppose I'm one of the brilliant ones... flew through it. They took a few of us, myself included... we don't have to go to that school down there for Sub B. “Look, you're clever enough to go to Standard One... you're going to the stone building.”⁴³⁷

Fataar remembered the school as a “sort of wood-and-iron place... where St. Saviours still is now.”⁴³⁸ Parts of the structure have by now been demolished, although the main stone building still stands. It is to this stone building that Fataar and others who were promoted from Sub A directly on to Standard One were sent to begin the 1924 academic year.

Schooling at St. Saviours meant a lengthy piece of travel each day. Again, it was an incidental set of remarks that provide insight into Fataar's daily trip to and from St. Saviour's. Fataar was relating how his brothers, and many Muslims in Claremont, were unable to attend daily prayers on time, due to the constraints of work-time and travel. Part of this narration concerned the ubiquitous use of rail travel for work purposes. His father, a tailor at Garlicks in the Cape Town CBD, also travelled by train: “...my mother, my father and my brother, Toyer, would have to take a train... would have to walk all the way to Claremont before Harfield Road station was built, and then they'd catch a train to

⁴³⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴³⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴³⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

be in town.”⁴³⁹ As part of this lengthy narration, Fataar seamlessly related how his father sometimes walked with him as part of the young Fataar’s daily walk to St. Saviour’s. He narrates: “...sometimes he would take me across the railway line, up to Claremont station, along the railway line, because I was now in Sub A. And then up. And then he’d give me a penny – which is a lot of money – he said I must go and buy, not sweets, I must buy raisins.”⁴⁴⁰

The daily routine, and flavour, of the schooling experience is enriched by the memory of the walk to and from school, inflected as it is with memories of people like his father and others who dotted the roads along the way to and from primary school each day.

...there used to be a shop on the corner of Station Road – it’s still there – and Main Road. It belonged to Hajira Hassan... Hassan was the shopkeeper. Hassan’s Café. No... no... before that it used to be some Portuguese and, er... afterwards Hajira Hassan. She’s still alive, by the way, a friend of mine. Her father... they had this shop; lovely sweet shop and then I would go and take this one... sometimes a half-a-penny, a ha’penny – you could buy a ha’penny... a handful of raisins. And they’d put it in a little peanut bag – raisins – now you put it in your bag and you take it to school. And, er... then he would go down to Claremont Station... take the train to go... and then in the afternoons, of course, I had to come home. Then I had to go down a dreary Wilderness Road, from the Main Road, to cross the railway line. So then, by that time, we were a few of us, you see, who had to come from that end to St. Saviours. But that’s how we went to school, walking that mile all the way.⁴⁴¹

The learning experience at the “stone building” was very different to what Alie Fataar had encountered at the old wood-and-iron room where he had started and completed his first year of schooling in 1923.

⁴³⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁴⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁴¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

So now there's a stage where Miss Hughes is principal. And then there's the hall here, with a curtain, cutting it into half... so this part is Grade, er... Standard One... Standard Two is on stage with Miss Hughes, the principal... Standard Three... finish and klaar [*that's it*].⁴⁴²

A local teacher from the Beltjiesbos area in Claremont, a Miss Taylor, was Fataar's Standard One teacher. He recalls her as "...this young, trained on the job" teacher, who was somewhat renowned for pinching ("God, maar sy't sommer geknyp!" [*God, she would just pinch!*]).⁴⁴³ Alie Fataar laughed protractedly at this memory: "But she could teach well. And she was still being trained, you see, and she was talking to the principal all the time... they were training her as to what to do next, and so on. It was only Miss Hughes and the one next door... with a curtain between, but you could hear."⁴⁴⁴

At this point Fataar mentioned that "they occasionally switched... I don't know what for, you know... subject teaching..."⁴⁴⁵ I interjected and asked him about this, as it piqued my interest in terms of specialised teaching during this period. But there was no response to this from Alie Fataar, who immediately curtailed the discussion with the insertion of "Anyhow...," and moved on to the dilemma of finding a new school at which to register for Standard Four, given that St. Saviours only provided for schooling up to Standard Three.

⁴⁴² Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁴³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁴⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁴⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

This was also the case with a school closer to Fataar's home in Surrey Street, namely St. Matthews, "also an Anglican school... and they were also doing Sub A, B, One, Two, Three, full-stop. No Standard Four."⁴⁴⁶

"Talfallah went as far as Standard Four," says Alie Fataar, "but we weren't going there."⁴⁴⁷ He offered no explanation as to why not, and simply carried on through my question about this to "...so they started what was called a higher mission school (laughs)... Standard Four, just around the corner, in Lancaster Street, or something, between First and Second Avenue, nearer to my house, you see, just down the road."⁴⁴⁸

Very interestingly Fataar does not include this one year (Standard Four) in his mimeo "Alie Fataar: A short biography".⁴⁴⁹ Instead, in this document, Fataar writes: "Attended St Saviour's English Church School, first five years of primary schooling..."⁴⁵⁰ This document provides no details of his experiences at any of the schools he attended.

The interviews, though, provide some insights into his one year at this unnamed "higher mission school". Once again, the primary evidence lies not in the written word, but in Alie Fataar's oral narrative:

It was also just a hall... and they had a Coloured... one of the early Coloured principals there, who became a member of the Teachers' League afterwards... and they... hy was so lig van kleur, maar 'n Coloured [*he was light of complexion, but Coloured*]... and then they had... a dark chap... his name was Clarke...⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁴⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁴⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁴⁹ Fataar, Alie (n.d.) *Alie Fataar: A short biography*. Two typed pages. Mimeo, page 1.

⁴⁵⁰ Fataar, Alie (n.d.) *Alie Fataar: A short biography*. Two typed pages. Mimeo, page 1.

⁴⁵¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

At this point in Alie Fataar's narrative, he interrupts the hitherto positive experience of his schooling. For the first time, a teacher is spoken of in less than glowing terms.

Clarke used to be a tough guy. He used to be fond of working the bloody cane... (laughter) and I was always afraid of Clarke, but since I was a bright fellow, I... I got... I had to help him. He used to say: "Alie, come here. You tell them." Now I must teach them.⁴⁵²

The threat of corporal punishment and other means of violence also surfaces in Alie Fataar's narration of his short-lived formal madrassah⁴⁵³ education. He related his madrassah experience in the context of how local imams would need to supplement their incomes with donations (*slawats*) from grateful congregants. Part of the discussion centred around the books (*kitaabs*) that were used for instructing Muslim children at madrassah at the Harvey Road Mosque. He was speaking to the daughter of an imam, and related to me what he had told her:

No. I was... ek was te bang vir die falaka [*I was too scared of the corporal punishment*]... We'd go up there; there's a sort of staircase and there's a dark, low roof and now in this semi-darkness... (laughs) we've got to read from these kitaabs... Alif, Baa, Taa, Thaa, Jiem, Ghaa, Ghaw [*the phonetic sounds of the letters of the Arabic alphabet*]... it got me confused because I'm now also at St. Saviour's School, you see, and in English, and now I've got to go suddenly to this. En dan die manne wat nou onbeskof is or they didn't read properly [*And then the chaps who are rude, or they didn't read properly*]... then there's a wooden contraption – twee pale [*two poles*] – sommer [*just*] not nice... draai [*turn*]... two of them, and then there's a rope on either end and now we open it up and you put your legs through there. Nou lê jy nou so [*Now you lie like that*]. Now I must turn this side, in other words... ja. Nou hou hulle sy bene en sy voete so op [*Now they hold his legs and feet up this way*]... Now the imam has the lat [*cane*], you see, and he gives you six of the best, on to your foot. And this contraption they called the falakah... you've heard of this? And this, of course, this chappie was crying up top there and... "Hou jou bek! Ek kap jou net maar in jou bek ook!" [*Shut your mouth, or I'll hit your mouth, too!*] It's there on the chair! I was watching! (high-pitched voice) Ja. God! [Afr.] (laughs) No. I'm not always the one... he'll get... he knows my father. "Alie, Gamiem, Gamja... hou daar." [*Alie, Gamiem, Gamja... hold there.*"]

⁴⁵² Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁵³ In this context, afternoon Moslem school

Now he gets somebody else to hold this. Nou kyk ek gou hoe gaan die aan [*So I check this state of affairs as it happens in front of me*] (chuckles uneasily).⁴⁵⁴

At this point I entered his narrative with: “So you’re seeing the pain right in front of you...” to which he replied and continued:

O, God, man! (Afr.) [*Oh, God, man!*] So I thought I wouldn’t want to be the one in the bloody falakah (laughs). So I bugged off. Ja [*Yes*]. I just said: “Ek het ’ie tyd vir daai Slameskool nie [*I don’t have time for Moslem school*],” I told my father. And he said: “Nee, dan kan jy by die huis leer. [*Alright. You can learn at home.*]⁴⁵⁵

Whereas at St. Saviours, an Anglican Christian mission school, “in no time we could read on our own,”⁴⁵⁶ in the community in which his primary identity, that of a Muslim, was his main marker of being, Fataar “learnt everything else except actually the actual reading” of the Arabic Qur’anic text.⁴⁵⁷

After the single year in Standard Four at the ‘higher mission school’, Fataar was once again faced with the dilemma and challenge of finding a school at which to continue on to Standard Five: “...and as I pointed out... I didn’t know where to go for Standard Five, you see. You’re out at Six – there’s no other place for you... but then, of course, the mission schools then did have Five and Six, because they used to train teachers after Standard Six...”⁴⁵⁸

In over fifty hours of interviews and narration, Alie Fataar did not ever suggest that he was *not* intent on securing a full primary and secondary education. So when political

⁴⁵⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁵⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁵⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁵⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁵⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 9 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

agitation by APO chairman Abdullah Abdurahman and Steve Reagon paid dividends in 1926 when the state “established (the) first school for non-whites in Claremont, the Livingstone Secondary School,”⁴⁵⁹ it was a godsend for the young Fataar, who had just entered Standard Four.

...Dr. Abdurahman and his second-in-command, Stevie Reagon (who) lived in Claremont... were lucky to get the provincial council – I think Abdurahman was also a member of the provincial council at the time whereas Reagon was the School Board. So there between the two there, they must have had political decisions taken and the administrative one, the School Board... Ah, well, we don't know what kind of tit-for-tat, but that's how it started. Because they only had Trafalgar Junior and Trafalgar Senior, that you still have there in the same building.⁴⁶⁰

For the young, academically ambitious and high-achieving Alie Fataar, the establishment of Livingstone Secondary School in 1926 was fortuitous, and signalled a relationship between Fataar and the school that would formally straddle five decades.

What a great thing it was to have a government school where they had old mission schools, for both primary and secondary. They could only go to Trafalgar Junior, Trafalgar Secondary, in Cape Town. For the rest, they had to go to all the Dutch Reformed and Anglican Church, primary and secondary, Wesley and Battswood and so on.⁴⁶¹

Fataar's sister, Salega, who was two years older than him, registered at Livingstone Secondary School in 1927, one year after the school's inception. Because his sister had been “in and out” of his aunt's house,⁴⁶² she registered at Livingstone under the name Salega Salie, Salie being the married surname of Fataar's aunt. His aunt lived on the

⁴⁵⁹ Fataar, Alie (n.d.) *Alie Fataar: A short biography*. Two typed pages. Mimeo, page 1.

⁴⁶⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 9 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁶¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 9 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁶² Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

corner of Surrey Street and Second Avenue,⁴⁶³ so his sister was close to her parents' home just down the road on the same block.

The first narratives about his experiences at Livingstone Secondary School relate to his teachers: "Ja. So now I'm in Standard Five.... and there they had some qualified teachers... some very good teachers. There was Joyce Kay, for example... and there were others... Ward... all Coloured... Standard Five and Six..."⁴⁶⁴ The newly-established Livingstone Secondary School drew students from all over the Southern Suburbs of then Cape Town. As there were no government secondary schools anywhere else in the surrounding areas, the school quickly registered three classes each for standards five and six.⁴⁶⁵

And so you had... three Standard Fives, three Standard Sixes, and those were in what were called the stables... the whole there at the back, and the upstairs... the double-storey... but the other classes were for the secondary... round the square, the quad. So we are in that school now...⁴⁶⁶

Alie Fataar produced photographs during our interviews after numerous requests on my part. He was quite evidently reluctant at first, indicating that he had given photographs to other researchers, and that these had not been returned. Nevertheless, the introduction of photographs into the interview sessions explicitly stimulated Alie Fataar's narratives. One such example is provided below: "But in my own albums there I've got pictures but they're those Livingstone ones. You see, I'll give you one there, when I was in Standard Seven: Hassan Abrahams was the teacher... He's sitting with a whole class at

⁴⁶³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁶⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁶⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁶⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Livingstone.”⁴⁶⁷ When this photograph was produced, Fataar spoke to the photograph in great detail. He indicated animatedly: “Now this is a **famous** picture!”⁴⁶⁸ The picture had been enlarged by Mr. Fataar and given to the current staff at Livingstone High School. “I’ve given them the enlargement, now I must give them the names.”⁴⁶⁹

As can be seen from the photograph, Figure 2 on page 140, Fataar had pasted the print on to a thin piece of black mounting board. The photograph is dated (in Fataar’s handwriting) as ‘1931’ in the bottom right-hand corner. Pasted below the photograph are the typed names of the Std. 7 student group with their class-teacher, Hassan Abrahams.

During our interview on 23 June 2003, Fataar (unsolicited) began relating details of his classmates as they appeared on the photograph. While the interview proceeded, the photograph was on the opposite end of the small table at which we usually sat when we conducted the interviews. (Figure 3 on page 141 depicts Alie Fataar sorting through various papers at the table where we conducted our weekly Monday morning interview sessions.) I assumed at the time that Fataar was identifying the persons in some sort of order as they appeared on the photograph. Only during the interview-transcription phase did I realise that this was not the case.

Fataar appeared to fix his eyes on someone, and then spoke about this person. The next person he spoke about was seemingly randomly chosen to speak about. This may not have been the case at all.

⁴⁶⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁶⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁴⁶⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Had I realised at the time that his method of speaking to the photograph was not a simple ‘left-to-right’ reading, I would have queried how he was going about choosing people to speak about. For example, was his order in terms of friendship? Did the first people he spoke about alert him to some characteristic he was reminded of as he looked at the photograph? It was a missed opportunity.

The descriptions of his classmates in Standard Seven are interesting and revealing. He began with “(T)his is – she’s still alive – she’s now Asa Hendricks... She’s living in Lansdowne. She was Asa Arendse.”⁴⁷⁰ After a short pause, during which he looked intently at the small photographic print in his hands, he started to relate the names, which he had already typed up and pasted beneath the photograph, and some descriptions of his classmates and teacher: “She was a ‘homey’ ... you know what a homey is? Opposite the school – waifs and strays and such... orphans or something...”⁴⁷¹

The student to whom Fataar refers is not identified by him except for this description. He continued looking at the photograph without looking up at me, and quietly kept on relating the names and descriptions:

Indian lassie. She almost sounded at that time that she’s not from the Cape – from Natal or somewhere. But what was her name?... Nidhu [pronounced by Alie Fataar as the more conventional ‘Naidoo’]... Oh, I remember. W. Hermanus... H.R. Abrahams. That was our very first teacher. He became principal of Cape Town... no, no, no, government school there. It’s still there.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁷¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁷² Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar



Figure 2: The Standard 7 class at Livingstone High School, 1931.
 Photo courtesy Alie Fataar



Figure 3: Alie Fataar is pictured at the table where we conducted our weekly interviews from March 2003 to August 2003. This photograph was taken in July 2004, during one of the frequent visits to Alie Fataar to check transcript accuracy and clarify aspects of the study. Photo Yunus Omar

Hassan Abrahams, the teacher “H.R. Abrahams” on the photograph, later became principal at Chapel Street Primary School on the border of District Six, which would in 1961 be proclaimed a white area under the apartheid Group Areas Act.

Abrahams assumed a very important role in the new Livingstone Secondary School student’s life, and we will return to this relationship shortly.

Fataar continued naming and describing his classmates on the “famous” Standard Seven class photograph. The names were related with pauses of varying lengths between them.

And Asa Arendse and I. Robertson. She was a big girl. Then N. Williams; he was a small chappie. Norman Thomas; great friend of mine. He lived right there where Cavendish Square is now. He was a teacher afterwards. He died in Namibia, I think. He was a member of the Teachers’ League and all that... M. Pasquall... Ai! Lilian Moses. B. Reynard... Now **this** chap’s father wrote about Dr. Abdurahman⁴⁷³ ... was also a shortie. Now “left to right”: R.W. Schilder... he was a bit **older** than us... D.E. Gorrison, a tall chap... J.T. Oldale. He was almost white... A friend of mine... Ismail Salie. We were pals: Ismail, Norman Thomas... three... and T. Basson from Claremont – these are all from Claremont, up Main Road way...⁴⁷⁴

After a considerable pause of several seconds, I asked Alie Fataar to locate for me where the photograph had been taken. During a series of questions and clarification-questions based on his responses, it emerged that the photograph had been taken “...downstairs: this is the old building, on the stoep... it’s still standing there... that double-storey with that little park around. Now that is facing east.”⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷³ Raynard, A.H. (2002) *Dr. A. Abdurahman: A Biographical Memoir*. Cape Town: Friends of the National Library of South Africa in association with The District Six Museum.

⁴⁷⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphases)

⁴⁷⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

It also emerged that the photograph had been taken with “the same little camera that took all of these”.⁴⁷⁶ ‘These’ referred to a vast collection of black-and-white prints that were piled on the side of the table at which Alie Fataar sat.

It was a secondhand Kodak – I don’t know where I got it from – and, er... you could take, in those days, about eight pictures because the film was small – eight or twelve, I don’t know, nothing like twenty-four or thirty-six. And, er... I knew very little about photography except that I was intrigued by this... and all the printing and developing was done in Claremont somewhere.⁴⁷⁷

“You place great store in photographs and memories,” I indicated to Alie Fataar. His reply was a simple but immediate and resounding “Yes!”⁴⁷⁸ In a much later interview, I used virtually the same words while Fataar was sorting through a bundle of photographs on the table. “You set great store in photographs, Mr. Fataar,” I ventured, to which he replied: “Oh, I’ve got thousands of... I don’t know when I’m going to have the time...”⁴⁷⁹

The “famous photograph” of the 1931 Standard Seven class at Livingstone was, as indicated earlier in this chapter, a key element in facilitating a quite detailed and nuanced set of memories about a teacher who had a profound impact on Alie Fataar, namely Hassan Abrahams. Curiously, the details of Hassan Abrahams’ significance in Alie Fataar’s life emerged as part of Fataar’s response to my question: “What do you feel when you look at photographs like this, if I may ask? I mean, it’s many, many years

⁴⁷⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁷⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁷⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁷⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

back...’’⁴⁸⁰ Fataar paused for a while, quietly, and then responded in a rather measured tone: “No... when I look at that I wonder now, who are still alive, because... ons is maar oud al [*we’re old now*]...’’⁴⁸¹ He then prefaced a lengthy narration about Hassan Abrahams with “...and I know Hassan, the teacher...’’⁴⁸²

...we were very close when he was principal there. He was in the... all the Bulletins; rolled off in his school... Because he and his wife were staunch members – they had no children – but he was of another well-known Muslim family: Abrahams. His name was Hassan Raouf Abrahams. So he was the kind of teacher who would invite Norman Thomas and myself, in Standard Seven, to come to his house in District Six where he lived upstairs in Tennant Street.⁴⁸³

At moments like these, I regarded Alie Fataar’s life as curiously intertwined with mine. I had attended Sydney Street Primary School in District Six, on the corner of Sydney and Selkirk Streets, just a few metres away from where Hassan Abrahams lived, and where a now mid-eighty-year-old Alie Fataar had visited as a youngster.

The relationship between Hassan Abrahams and Alie Fataar, teacher and student, went beyond the classroom to encompass a rich liaison that was prized by the young Fataar.

Then he would take us from there and we’d have lunch. I remember the lunch we had also when you had salmon, tins of salmon, for lunch – a lekker [*nice*] salmon stuffing with rice and potatoes, you know. Lekker [*Nice*]. Then he’d take us (Fataar and Norman Thomas) into town right down to Sea Point – and he spent the afternoon with us. And, er... it might have been school holidays, but we’d take the train and walk up to his house... Ja [*Yes*]. He was a very fine fellow.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁸¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁸² Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁸³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁸⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Fataar's overwhelming memories of his Livingstone teachers are positive, but, as with his negative primary school experience with Mr. Clarke, who taught Fataar during Fataar's only year (Standard Four) at the "higher mission school", so Fataar encountered one teacher at Livingstone High School whose method he despised. "You know, of all my teachers, I can't see that there's one I didn't get on with or that didn't get on with me."⁴⁸⁵

These words were immediately followed up by a correction.

There was sometimes this one Afrikaans teacher, Le Roux, and he was now typical **boer**.⁴⁸⁶ He lives in a different world, but he's in a classroom and he says: "Bladysy vier-en-sewentig [*page seventy-four*]." Now he remembers that's where he last stopped. He teaches everything from: "Bladysy [*page*]... Fataar, wat's die meervoud van [*Fataar, what's the plural of*]...?" He had such a harsh voice... "what's the ending of the meervoud [*plural*]?" (laughs) When he gets to the bladdy tenses of... English is alright, maar moenie met my in Afrikaans... kan nie [*but don't ask me about the Afrikaans... I can't*]...⁴⁸⁷

This was curious. Fataar had emerged from an Afrikaans-speaking home into an English-medium primary school and on to an English-medium secondary school. Now, he professed, he was better able to cope with the subtleties and exceptions-to-the-rule of English grammar rather than his home-language, Afrikaans. A significant story emerges here.

...er, our problem, of course, was literature. I had another problem, and that was, er... intonation and pronunciation... so I taught myself... I realised, you know... Afrikaans at home... friends were all speaking Afrikaans... only at school that we're having... a number of English-speaking... English is only at school...⁴⁸⁸ so I realised, er... if you are

⁴⁸⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁸⁶ The denotative meaning is 'farmer'. However, the connotation is that the person was a typical Afrikaner. The term is also perjoratively associated with connotations of authority, rural backwardness, simplicity, and Afrikaner white privilege.

⁴⁸⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁴⁸⁸ Figure 4 on page 148 depicts Alie Fataar at about the age he would have been at the time he engaged, on his own, in perfecting his elocutionary skills in English. He is pictured here in the grounds of Livingstone High School in 1933, with some of his male classmates, when they were in standard nine.

going to... improve your spoken English, you must speak it! If you can't speak it to anybody, you've got to speak it to yourself!⁴⁸⁹

“When did you this, Mr. Fataar?” I shot out the question in surprise and delight. This was an extraordinary moment. Alie Fataar had opened a portal into a far more personal world than anything I had previously identified with. As I sat opposite him, I pictured a young Alie Fataar somewhere, the place still vague in my mind's eye, manoeuvring himself into an Anglophone academic world by sheer force of will. He continued the story:

And naturally, I started taking an interest in poetry... and Shakespeare. I used to read it aloud... and try to... improve... especially the drama, of course... the intonation... I'll go outside... I'll take a walk... I'd take my book... in the park... anywhere. I'd just go down there... there's nobody around, and start, er... aloud... Loud, loud, loud! I'll read. I was fond of Keats and Shelley and all that, and Shakespeare, of course. And then of course I'd take some prose, you know, and read that. And, er, pronounce the names now in...⁴⁹⁰

I had a number of questions I wanted to ask. I blurted out one: “... and your teachers? What was their reaction to your improving language?” Fataar replied with a smile: “Oh, they must have been pleased... they didn't know about it. It was just my own private arrangement. I just had to teach myself... like that... I had to teach...”⁴⁹¹

Fataar had punctuated the telling of his lone, spoken-aloud elocution self-improvement tale with the following anecdote from his years in exile. It is useful to include it here, as it demonstrates the non-linear narration of his life during the extensive interviews we conducted. The telling of the story here also introduces the long-term personal, political and educational impact of experiences garnered in his youth. He related:

⁴⁸⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁹⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁹¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

...and, er, the strange thing is... it must have done me a great deal of good, because many, many years later... somewhere in 19... sixty... eight... I was in Zambia... as a teacher there... and a lot of expatriates... first time I go so far north... I'd never been to Europe... so the only English people I met were the local speakers... among ourselves... find me a little party there... with some... chaps from England... doing... working... engineers in the mines and so on... the copper mines, there... we were chatting, so one chappie says: "Oh, and Mr. Fataar, er, er, which university did you attend in the U.K.?" (Alie Fataar laughs) "My friend. This is the furthest north I've ever been from Cape Town!" "You mean... you mean... that language you're speaking... you've never been studying at a university?" "No. I've never been studying at the university!" (laughs)... I said: "You know, you've been talking now for fifteen minutes. Do you know, half the time I never understood what you were saying? I didn't... but all of you understood what I was saying! You know why? I speak a standard English, whereas you come from various parts of England..." and all that. They said: "You're right." "Of course I'm right!" (laughs) "Of course I'm bloody right!" Hulle skrik hulle lam! [*They fell on their backs!*] And it struck me. God! [Afr.]... I've been reading Shakespeare the way Shakespeare would've read it! (laughs)⁴⁹²

As this chapter moves towards its conclusion, I turn to a second discursive element in the telling of Fataar's 'spoken-aloud elocution self-improvement tale'. Twice, Fataar indicated in the extract quoted earlier that, in the absence of formal learning opportunities, and after identifying an educational deficit on his part, "I taught myself"⁴⁹³ and a few sentences later, "I just had to teach myself".⁴⁹⁴

...like that, I had to teach... as you'll find afterwards in secondary, when there... there were no teachers there... no Maths teacher... so... E.C. Roberts (laughs)... he was very innovative... he thought... alright, you'll have to take book-keeping without arithmetic... because he knew something about it... so, one of our six subjects is... instead of Maths... book-keeping... so... I also looked forward to that... to being a book-keeper and everything... but, er, most of the time old Roberts was busy in the office... on the 'phone... and then he's not there on the time-table... so there were about six or eight of us... Standard Ten class... Nine class...⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹² Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁹³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁹⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁹⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar



Figure 4: Alie Fataar (front, centre) is pictured here in the grounds of Livingstone High School in 1933, with male classmates from his standard nine class. The photograph has been annotated as '1933' on the bottom right-hand side by Alie Fataar. The hat worn by Fataar is one of the markers of his identity at this stage of his life, as he juggled several competing social forces which sought to have him appropriate an essentialist identity. In the Muslim community of the period, the hat signified, at the very least, a rejection of the explicit marker of being a Muslim male, namely, the fez or koeffiyah worn by Muslim males in most depictions of Muslims of the period and later. Photo courtesy Alie Fataar

Fataar went on to complete his secondary schooling years at Livingstone, obtaining a “First Grade Standard 6 pass” in 1930.⁴⁹⁶ In 1932 he sat for the Junior Certificate examination, obtaining a First Grade pass, and “by 1934 was (the) first to pass Matric (Senior Certificate) in First Grade and obtained (a) Gold Medal from the school.”⁴⁹⁷ Figure 5 on page 151 is a photographic reproduction of the combined Standards Nine and Ten classes of 1933 and 1934 at Livingstone High School. Fataar typed the names of the persons on the photograph, and underlined the names of the Standard Ten students for ease of reference.

By the time Fataar was completing Standard Ten, his father had lost his job at Garlicks as the economy reeled in the wake of the Great Depression of 1929. By 1934, when Fataar completed his Senior Certificate examination with a First Grade pass, “...it was those with Matric who were enabled to go to Cape Town University. There were some with some money; some could even afford to do Medicine. Er... Solly Edross, for example, did Science; Ben Kies got a scholarship; went to do language.”⁴⁹⁸ I interjected with: “Okay. So Kies got a scholarship to go to university?” Fataar replied immediately: “Which I should have got.”⁴⁹⁹ I asked: “Which you should have got?”

We both passed Matric in 1934... In 1934 and, er... there was one scholarship for five years. And, er, I didn't have Maths....⁵⁰⁰

I asked: “Was that because of a lack of teacher at Livingstone?”

⁴⁹⁶ Fataar, Alie (n.d.) *Alie Fataar: A short biography*. Two typed pages. Mimeo, page 1.

⁴⁹⁷ Fataar, Alie (n.d.) *Alie Fataar: A short biography*. Two typed pages. Mimeo, page 1.

⁴⁹⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁴⁹⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁵⁰⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Yes, because of teachers. There was no Latin either. They were still taking Latin. At Trafalgar they were taking Maths and Latin and all the sciences, but at Livingstone, which came later, we had to make do. We had a very good English teacher, but therefore the, er... I got a first-class pass, which Kies didn't get, so therefore they put me in a category where I was entitled to get that scholarship, even though I lacked Maths, which I could have taken in order to qualify... to be eligible. The Latin didn't matter because they weren't concerned with Latin, but Maths you did have to have in those days. So he started. So, er... my birthday happened to be in March. That was too early to qualify for that scholarship because in March I turned seventeen, in 19... no, I turned eighteen in 1935 – I had to be **under** eighteen. Ben Kies was lucky: he turned eighteen **later** than me. So by that time he was eighteen – a month or two difference. (laughs)⁵⁰¹

It may be useful to reproduce here exactly the way the interview proceeded. The transcription reveals the order of the questions and responses, as well as the curt replies to my clarification questions. I was extremely conscious of this pivotal moment being played out in Alie Fataar's narrative unfolding across the little table. I did not want to misrepresent this narrative as the dissertation was written up. What follows is a verbatim reproduction of the section of the interview as transcribed.⁵⁰²

YO: Therefore you were not eligible for this five-year scholarship?

AF: He got it.

YO: A five-year university scholarship because of a few months...

AF: He got his B.A. and his S.T.D. and Master of Education.

YO: Let me take a step back here. You had a first-class pass. Ben Kies didn't?

AF: No.

YO: You were competing for one scholarship...

AF: I was the only one in the Coloured schools with a first-class pass.

YO: The only one in the Coloured schools, of that year, to get a first-class pass?

AF: Port Elizabeth or Kimberley or Cape Town, one of... oh, half-a-dozen schools.

YO: What was (sic.) your feelings on that at the time, if I may ask? And thinking back now?

AF: I was disappointed, and, er... I took it in my stride, as well.⁵⁰³

⁵⁰¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁰² Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar. [The interviewer is represented by "YO", for Yunus Omar; the respondent, Alie Fataar, is represented by "AF".]

⁵⁰³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar. [In this crucial moment of his narration, Fataar employs the refrain "In my stride," from which the title of this study is derived.]

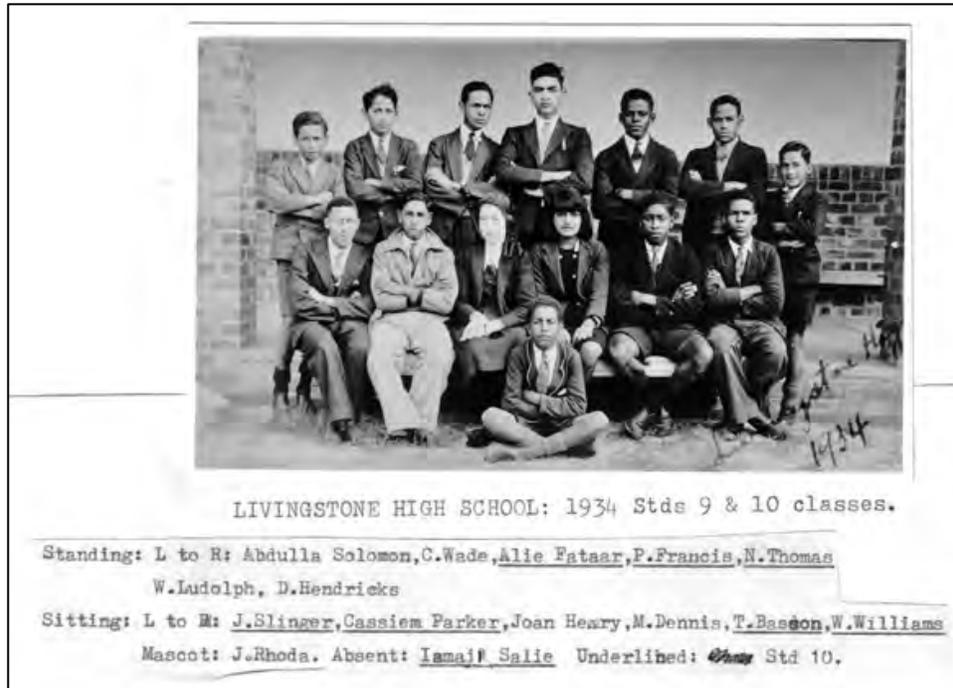


Figure 5: The combined Standards 9 and 10 classes at Livingstone High School, 1934. Alie Fataar had mounted the photograph on white board, and had typed up and pasted the names of the persons below the photograph.
Photo courtesy Alie Fataar

The clipped, taut responses were marked. There was no discernible attempt on Alie Fataar's part at tempering his responses. He maintained eye-contact throughout this exchange, details of which I insisted on clarifying even though it felt as though Fataar was unwilling to elaborate of his own volition. I felt extremely sad during this exchange, but simultaneously elated at the disclosure of what appeared to originate from a deeply personal space.

It is crucially important, and very interesting to note how, in a subsequent interview, Fataar narrated and reflected on the non-award of the bursary. For contextual clarity, the interview exchange is registered here:

YO: How do you think things might have turned out had you got that bursary, Mr. Fataar? Have you thought about that at all?

AF: No, I'd probably have been another Ben Kies or something (laughs)...

YO: And that would have meant? How would that have changed you?

AF: I would've become a teacher...

YO: Would that not have changed you at all? [Mr. Fataar offers no response.]⁵⁰⁴

Fataar's self-penned short biography states blandly and without any hint of the life-altering turmoil behind the facts: "1935 – 1936: Attended Zonnebloem Teacher Training College in Cape Town and obtained First Grade teachers' Higher Certificate."⁵⁰⁵

Two months after he had first ventured that Ben Kies had been awarded a bursary "(W)hich I should have got,"⁵⁰⁶ Alie Fataar spoke about the steps he had had to take in order to be eligible to register for a B.A. degree. Fataar's narration two months on was devoid of any of the emotive content with reference to Ben Kies. Instead, Fataar

⁵⁰⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁰⁵ Fataar, Alie (n.d.) *Alie Fataar: A short biography*. Two typed pages. Mimeo, page 1.

⁵⁰⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

employed a formal, technical narrative in which his own curriculum at Livingstone High School was portrayed as deficient.

Now for example, for me to do my degree - I didn't have Latin, I didn't have Maths, because there were no teachers – so I got my Senior Certificate even in the First Class, but there was something lacking; I couldn't get Matriculation, whereas Benny Kies got it because at Trafalgar he had Latin and he had Maths and he got the scholarship as well. But I couldn't... even if I'd got a scholarship I couldn't go to university unless I did Maths. So in order to enter even for a degree, I had to pass Senior Certificate Maths with forty per cent, at least... fortunately at Livingstone we had a chap that was teaching Maths, he helped me. So I wrote at the end of the – 40 somewhere there – I wrote the one subject and I passed, so then I could now enter... That was now 1938. So I could only start my degree in 1939 because er... then I had this Maths. Then I entered for UNISA, you see, and it took me up to 1943 to get my degree.⁵⁰⁷

Fataar subverts his own previous telling of the bursary won by Ben Kies. In a matter-of-fact narration, he not only indicates that the limited subject offerings at the relatively new Livingstone High School cost him the bursary, he also indicates that he would not have been able to utilise the award because his Standard Ten curriculum did not qualify him to register for university study. The change in tone from the earlier discourse of perceived academic injustice to a technical discourse of curriculum deficiency is a major shift. Fataar did not explain the shift, but it is significant that Ben Kies is 'exonerated' in Fataar's second telling of the circumstances around the award of the bursary. The second telling invokes an instrumentalist account of the bursary award; the award is used merely to indicate how Fataar was forced to find an alternate route to a university education.

Insights from Chapter Four

Alie Fataar's narrative regarding his diverse family origins foregrounds key issues around the genesis of his life-long disavowal of race as a legitimate marker of human identity.

⁵⁰⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

When read with the class issues he foregrounds, in terms of the poverty his family experiences as a result of the Depression-era, Fataar's multi-layered persona is seen to be shaped profoundly by the social, political and economic circumstances he experiences within his self-defined geographic, religious, racial and gendered communities in which he is born and lives. Within these parameters, and allied to his parents' minimal functional literacies, what emerges from the chapter is a surprising commitment to schooling which belies the quite obvious lack of pathways which an education can provide in a relatively normally functioning society. In spite of these unknowns, Fataar gathers a set of intellectual tools which he uses to immerse himself in the education project which the majority of his community ignores, in the belief, *et al*, that education offers no prospect of social mobility.

Fataar experiences his first schooling years as a particularly gendered space, with females almost always providing nurturing and excellent teaching models, while his earliest encounters with male teachers, in both his mission schooling arena as well as in the madrasah, are profoundly violent, and invokes a near-manic sense of fear in the young student. This male modelling is so acute that it forces Fataar out of madrasah, thus creating a visible break from his religious community at a very young age. In many senses, this is crucial to his future, and he will navigate this type of 'stepping off', and accusations thereof, throughout his life. Added to this sense of male schooling violence are the constant issues around whether or not he will be able to continue his schooling, given the lack of institutions which can accommodate him. This serves to reinforce the idea that Alie Fataar remains undeterred in the face of several considerable obstacles to his schooling, and he acts with a maturity that belies his years. These navigations are

formative, and will come to characterise Fataar as he moves through various educational, political and social structures during his long life.

Crucially, Fataar's negative gendered schooling experience with regard to male teachers is definitively disrupted at Livingstone High School. Here, his affective-intellectual association with Hassan Abrahams, and a primarily intellectual engagement with E.C. Roberts, shapes his world-views in profound ways. The world is shown to him to be a much more complex and nuanced stage, and his role in that complex world is articulated in terms of the socialist register into which E.C. Roberts inducts him, and which is consolidated and extended by his intense personal-intellectual relationship with medical doctor Goolam Gool. From them, Fataar receives the socialist and radical nationalist analytical tools which he uses to move his life into the nexus of the socialist world-view which swirls around progressive political circles in which his teachers and other radicals are moving in Cape Town. His immersion in these socialist intellectual circles and learning rituals sets him apart from the religious community from which he comes, but the tensions which arise from this are more than offset by the sense of personal liberation afforded by the socialist ideals which he begins to embody.

This study now moves on to Chapter Five, and Alie Fataar's post-school life. Chapter Five takes as its point of departure Fataar's teacher-training at the Zonnebloem Teacher Training College in Cape Town. Chapter Five then moves on to Fataar's teaching life in Cape Town, after his teacher-training, and finds a teaching life intertwined with a rapidly-radicalised Western Cape (and national) political arena into which Alie Fataar immerses himself. Chapter Five is a portal into the life of one teacher, an organic

intellectual, thrust into the maelstrom of educational and broader political resistance alongside his comrades. The complex issues of class, embedded as they are in Fataar's formative years, as this chapter has shown, as well as the gendered relations of race, age and culture, all feature prominently in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five: Teaching and Politics in and beyond the South African classroom

Teaching was not a ‘natural’ nor assumed career-trajectory for the young Alie Fataar. When he first raised the issue of his entry into a teaching life during our interviews, it was in the context of the relatively large proportion of time he spent with his father compared to that of his older brothers and surviving sister Salega.

“He was very fond of me, being the baby and being with him all the time. He used to call me Balla, as a little nickname. And then I had to be a tailor.”⁵⁰⁸ This was not unusual, as many families induct children into the work-areas of their parents. Two of Alie Fataar’s brothers had been trained by their father, and had worked at Garlick’s, in central Cape Town, alongside their father at various times.

It is very interesting that the shift in Alie Fataar’s father’s thinking around the possibility of inducting the young Alie into tailoring revolves around the idea of sending Fataar to Egypt. “Ek dink nie jy moet (’n) tailor word nie [*I don’t think you should be a tailor*],” Fataar related his father as saying to him.⁵⁰⁹ Fataar pointed out that his father conveyed this in Afrikaans. “He never spoke English – he couldn’t,”⁵¹⁰ related Fataar. “Ek weet nie of jy moet... jy moet ’n imam word. Ons moet vir jou geld gooi in... whatsaname... Cairo... Gaan daar... gaan leer van Islam. Gaan leer van Islam.” [*I’m not sure if you*

⁵⁰⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁰⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵¹⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

*should become an imam. I think we should save some money for Cairo. Go there to learn about Islam. Go and learn about Islam.”*⁵¹¹

The interesting aspect of this is that Fataar consistently relates his father’s critical stance in relation to some of the customs and practices associated with the Muslim community. His father, whilst critical of local practices, was keen to let his youngest son learn about Islam. In relation to Alie Fataar’s own life-story, this is absolutely pivotal. In Chapter Seven, the study addresses the deep reflection of Alie Fataar as he confronts earlier iterations of his identity.

Global shifts put paid to the idea of getting money together to send Fataar overseas. “Well, the Depression came and that was finished. I landed up at Zonnebloem College.”⁵¹² The transcript of the interview records that Alie Fataar laughed ‘ruefully?’

It’s a certain dream that he had, you see... So um... that was actually what he used to propose to me. I used to agree... oh, being young... I must have been about nine or ten years old. But now, when I got to Matric class and I had friends and there were all sorts of other things... and the Depression had set in, and his work was what it was... so that idea just disappeared. Probably if they had and we weren’t in a Depression, I probably would have landed up in Cairo.⁵¹³

Alie Fataar registered for the Higher Teacher’s Certificate at the Zonnebloem College of Education in 1935. The “other things” of which Fataar speaks include his ineligibility for the five-year bursary which went to Ben Kies (which was detailed in Chapter Four), as well as the considerable influence of his teachers at Livingstone High School.

⁵¹¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵¹² Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵¹³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

E.C. Roberts, Fataar's principal at Livingstone High School, was described by Fataar in a specific religious-beliefs context in the following terms:

...when I was a teenager, and E.C. Roberts... he was now our progressive chap in that sense, as far as we were concerned, at Livingstone. Er, he turned against the organised Christian religion, although he was not in that sense... was another definition of what an atheist is, because very often an atheist has turned against a particular religion, but he's got something that replaces it.⁵¹⁴

The modernising influence of teachers like E.C. Roberts was to be consolidated and extended considerably by Fataar's association with Dr. Goolam Gool, details of which will be elaborated later in this chapter.

The crucial point here is that Fataar narrates several complex influences on his coming to a decision to enrol as a teacher-in-training at the Zonnebloem College of Education on the edge of District Six in Cape Town. Fataar continued his high academic achievements at Zonnebloem: "I was always top of the class,"⁵¹⁵ he related as he described the various streams on offer to teachers of colour at the various teacher-training colleges in Cape Town and surrounds.

In Chapter Four, Alie Fataar had narrated how he admired the majority of his teachers at both primary and high school, who he credits as innovative, competent and motivating.⁵¹⁶

He had, of course, also alluded in Chapter Four to his fear of teachers who loved wielding

⁵¹⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵¹⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵¹⁶ It is ironic that a key public intellectual, Edward Said, whose work permeates Part One of the study, and whose *oeuvre* informs multiple aspects of this study, declares unambiguously: "...I must say that in all my schooling I never had any teachers whom I was particularly close to or admired or anything of that kind. I always felt antagonism between the teachers and myself... I was a true delinquent and I felt that they were trying to break my spirit." (Ali, 2006, p. 29)

the cane. This had happened at the intermediary mission school he had attended between St. Saviours and Livingstone, and also at the madrassah he had attended for a short while.

His admiration for his teachers was consolidated by the teachers he encountered at Zonnebloem. In fact, Fataar pays a teacher at Zonnebloem College, Mary Waters, the ultimate accolade, in the following terms: "...she was now my **model** teacher, and, er... I'd take note of almost everything she said (original emphasis)."⁵¹⁷ Figure 6 on page 161 is reproduced from the Zonnebloem Papers (BC636) housed at the Manuscripts and Archives Department of the University of Cape Town. The image is a handwritten Zonnebloem College of Education staff list by principal E.A. Ball. Mary Waters' name appears on the list with 'Methods' appended next to her name in parentheses. The names of other teachers, who would have taught Alie Fataar, appear on the same page. As with his experiences of teachers during the very first years of his primary schooling, Waters, "a very fine woman... was English-trained."⁵¹⁸

She was a teacher of geography and of course, psychology, and her method of teaching was very good. English-trained, but she'd worked in the Transkei so she could also speak Xhosa. Lived in Sea Point in a flat there but, er... a woman without any colour about her... consciousness. And she had apparently inherited some money so whatever she earned at Zonnebloem she spent on us!⁵¹⁹

Fataar recounted, in great detail, several aspects of his two-year teacher-training stint at Zonnebloem, in each case inscribing into his life-history the formative nature of much of what was to constitute his own repertoire as a teacher.

⁵¹⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵¹⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵¹⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Source: The Zonnebloem Papers. UCT M+A. BC 636. D1.4. Log Book 1931-1938.

①

1936.

Final position

Staff	T School	Principal
		Miss Watkin (Methods)
		Miss Hoal. (D.E.)
		Miss M. McLean (Sciences)
		Mr. van Rensburg (Afrikaans/English)
		Mr. Baker (Eng. in T.S. &)
		Mr. Thompson (Eng. in T.S. &)
		Mr. de Kromm (Afrikaans in T.S. &)
		Mr. Bongard (Woodwork)
	<u>School</u>	Miss de Kromm (Hist)
		Miss F. de Kromm (Art)
		Miss R. G. van der Merwe (English) (copy for Miss Southern)
		Miss M. G. van der Merwe (English in T.S.)
		Miss E. Stemann (English)
		Mr. G. de Kromm (Sciences)
		Miss de Kromm (Afrikaans)
	<u>Additional</u>	Miss M. de Kromm (Clubs)
		Miss Southern (Speech Eng)
		Ms. M. Connell (Music)

Changes for 1937:

Succ^r to Principal - Miss M. Watkin (Acting)

Succ^r to Miss Watkin - to be fixed

Miss Stemann - replaced by Mr. R. de Kromm

Mr. van Rensburg - redundant.

E.A. Ball

Figure 6: An excerpt from the Zonnebloem College of Education Log Book 1931-1938. The name of Alie Fataar's 'model teacher', Mary Waters, appears on the page. The list is signed by, and in the handwriting of E.A. Ball, Zonnebloem College of Education principal. (The handwriting at the top of the page is my own.)

Image courtesy The Zonnebloem Papers, BC636, University of Cape Town Manuscripts and Archives Department.

In relating Mary Waters' teaching-method, Fataar conveyed a sense of delighted humour, reflecting his very positive memories of 'his model teacher':

...she wrote all sorts of things in a lesson... she can't make it out on the board. She said: 'Alie,' or 'Fataar,' and I'd read what she wrote there. She couldn't... she wants to know: 'What is that?'(YO laughs) And then I read (Mr. Fataar laughs) you know, 'the line of latitude runs through so-and-so and so-and-so-and-so degree.' 'Ah,' and then she knows. Now the students go: 'What the hell is that line, the line... of **land**litude?' 'Latitude, not longitude; latitude runs through...' She says: 'Oh, it's latitude?' I said: 'Yes, it's latitude.' (YO and AF burst out laughing) So she couldn't read it!... She couldn't read her own writing! (laughs) She wrote **rapidly**, you see. (YO still laughing) Then she'd say: 'Alie,' and I'd follow her.⁵²⁰

The privileged position Fataar held in relation to his teachers has already been indicated in Chapter Four. The extract above reveals that Fataar enjoyed an elevated status even during teacher-training.

The influence of Mary Waters extended beyond her own teaching. Fataar revealed that his subsequent reading of his B.A. degree, too, had been influenced by his educational offerings at Zonnebloem.

...she stayed in Sea Point – it was expensive in those days, and she'd come there (to Zonnebloem) by tram and buses and things. And then she had two elderly women, also sort of, er... half-socialist as well, and they were retired lecturers, teachers. And she used to bring them sometimes in the afternoon especially and they could lecture on psychology. It's from them I learned psychology, that's why I did my Bachelor... my Psychology major... because of that input I was very interested in taking Psychology 1 through Unisa... **She** was a good teacher... of basic psychology. But then she used to bring in these lecturers to talk more about aspects of psychology... they came there as volunteers... and one was in a wheelchair! (original emphasis)⁵²¹

⁵²⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁵²¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Drawing from Chapter Four, it is evident that Fataar's admiration of his teachers encompassed both genders. From his earliest recollections of teachers at St. Saviours Primary, through Livingstone High School and on to teacher-training at Zonnebloem, both female and male teachers alike made deep, positive impressions on the eager young Alie Fataar. At the age of 86, he recalled their influence vividly, indicative of the value he attached to their pedagogy and wider influence on him educationally.

The retired voluntary lecturer-teachers brought in to Zonnebloem by his "model teacher" ignited a desire in Fataar to emulate these role-models he had encountered during his teacher-training.

The point is, you know, eventually, after I'd retired, you know, I was quite prepared to come back here, and do that sort of voluntary... But our idea was then, that these were... well they did it out of pure Christian principles too, and the fact that they were humanists, you know, in that they were brought up in an Anglican Church, the mission, and they must now, of course, in a way, assist, the blacks and the browns and all that... they realised that the whites were getting it all and they had... they had that feeling that we were discriminated against and we needed... we didn't **have** teachers, you know, very few would go to varsity and do psychology. Whereas here and of course, you had the psychology of education in a **watered-down** form. We had: 'What do you mean by tension?' Er... you know, psychology of the child or the minds, you know. And, er... but then they came in more on the scientific level.⁵²²

Part of the special skills (intellectual and practical) Alie Fataar brought to his teaching repertoire were developed as a youngster and honed while he was at Zonnebloem. The intersection of a caring teacher, Mary Waters; the arts; a young Fataar keen on grabbing as much education as he could; and a fellow-student Louis Maurice, contributes an illuminating and fascinating insight into the making of the teacher Alie Fataar.

⁵²² Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

Speaking of the money Mary Waters spent on her students at Zonnebloem, Fataar recounted in incredible detail, and with reverence, a seminal moment in his making.

Louis Maurice, Edgar Maurice's brother... was also at Zonnebloem, but he came via Battswood. And, er... he was more interested in sculpting. So Mary Waters found a sculptor, an African from the Transkei, living in Cape Town... and she said to Louis: 'Now you choose three or four of the ones who are good at handwork.' And I was a very good handwork, woodwork man, you see. So I was chosen, Louis and one or two others, to go into this man's sculpting classes.⁵²³

As Part Two of this study develops, the combination of intellectual and practical skills in Fataar's teaching repertoire will assume great importance. For the study at this point, it is worth noting that Fataar is foregrounding his teacher's generosity and extra assistance when he inserts information about his own prowess into the narrative.

Waters provided sufficient money to the sculpting teacher (employed by Mary Waters at her own expense) to "go and buy the proper sculpting tools... and he had to have enough for each of us to use. And Mary gave him money to go and buy real lovely new teak. And I had to go with this chap to select the teak because I was also the woodwork man."⁵²⁴

The narrative takes a decidedly personal turn in that the person chosen to sit for Fataar's sculpture is the younger brother of a comrade, Amelia Lewis. "So he had to come and sit for me."⁵²⁵

He used to come and sit for me in the bottom part of the school there, under sort of a dungeon, in the afternoon. And there this chappie taught us how to get the square into a head and then eventually to get the neck and the **proportion** right and the shoulders. And now to come to the face, ears, every eye, and forehead and hair. And nothing had to be

⁵²³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵²⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵²⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

filed because it all had to be... you had different kinds of round, er... sharp-end, chip, then you can chip out. (original emphasis)⁵²⁶

I followed up by asking: “What did it feel like to be involved in art and sculpture...?”

The response was part-musing: “You just go and then wonder: you’ll never see that... I never saw that head again, because somehow or the other it went there,⁵²⁷ probably somebody bought it – I think they were allowed to buy some of the exhibits.”⁵²⁸

I posed the following question to Fataar after he had spoken at length about his sculpting experience, and about other aspects of artistic work he had engaged in at Zonnebloem: “So you were far more than a man of letters, which is a massive thing in itself...?”⁵²⁹ His response is pivotal insofar as it provides an incisive window into his view of himself as a teacher. He answered in the following way: “Well, I was sort of an all-rounder. I was good at painting, and then there was that chisel-work, sculpting; there was woodwork, of course, and then there was this other cardboard work, which was... I can’t get a name. The only thing I missed... I couldn’t do music.”⁵³⁰

Fataar emerges during the Zonnebloem period as a confident young teacher-in-training, who admires his teachers for their conscientiousness and passion for going beyond the expected because of their belief-systems and commitment to fairness in an exploitative system.

⁵²⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁵²⁷ Fataar indicated during the 14 April 2003 interview that Mary Waters had arranged for the sculptures by the four Zonnebloem students to be sent to “the exhibition at the Eastern Transvaal Rand Show” of that year, either 1935 or 1936.

⁵²⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵²⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵³⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

During my research in the UCT Manuscripts and Archives Department working through the Tabata Collection, I chanced across ‘The Zonnebloem Papers,’ catalogued as BC636. Without holding out much hope of finding anything relating to Alie Fataar, I began perusing the small collection. The resulting ‘find’ was instructive and exciting. A college magazine⁵³¹ formed part of the collection, and its cover imprint details caused a minor flutter: the magazine cover was imprinted as Vol. 6, October 1936. The magazine cover is reproduced as Figure 7 on page 168. I could hardly wait to open its pages, as 1936 was Alie Fataar’s final year at Zonnebloem College. Page 7 of this document provided a valuable insight into the educational and cultural ethos of Alie Fataar’s two-year stay at Zonnebloem. In the magazine, under the heading ‘College Prefect System’, and the sub-heading ‘Prefects for 1936: Secretaries’, the name ‘Alie Fataa’ (sic) appears.⁵³²

“I always became secretary,”⁵³³ Alie Fataar had related during our recorded interviews. It was one of several moments in which aspects of our lives, the researched and the researcher, coincided. As I read the 1936 *Zonnebloem College Magazine* a few minutes before the Manuscripts and Archives Department closed for the day, the theoretical imperative of the study to insert elements of my biography and therefore my potential research biases into the study, became more acute.

My own biography would have to include the words “I always became secretary”: at club-sport level; as Secretary of the Harold Cressy High School PTSA until its

⁵³¹ *Zonnebloem College Magazine*, Vol. 6, October 1936, in BC636, ‘The Zonnebloem Papers’, UCT Manuscripts and Archives Department.

⁵³² *Zonnebloem College Magazine*, Vol. 6, October 1936, in BC636, ‘The Zonnebloem Papers’, UCT Manuscripts and Archives Department, p.7

⁵³³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

replacement by a statutory SGB; secretary of regional PTSA structures as a teacher during the infamous teacher-rationalisation post-apartheid period; as Harold Cressy Sports Council founding-secretary as we sought to salvage the ethos of mass-based school-sport in the wake of the decimation of Sacos; as founding-secretary of the Harold Cressy Arts and Cultural Council, and during my association as a parent with Livingstone High School, where I was assistant-secretary of the SGB. As indicated throughout this study, these moments provided for an ongoing awareness as to the implications of such recognised ‘biographical confluence’ for the study, and my potential biases in terms of becoming less critical theoretically.

In concluding the section on the Zonnebloem years, Figure 8 on page 170 is inserted into the study. The photograph depicts the 1936 graduating class at Zonnebloem Teaching College. Alie Fataar is seen standing directly behind principal E.A. Ball, who has been identified with a koki’ed black arrow and his name labelled on the image by Fataar, who has also annotated the pic with the date ‘1936’ slanted across the bottom right-hand corner of the photograph.

As Fataar was ending his period at Zonnebloem, and with applications for teaching posts as motivation, he solicited testimonials from the principal of the Zonnebloem College, Welshman Edward Augustus Ball, and Livingstone High School principal E.C. Roberts. Sadly, Alie Fataar could not find the Zonnebloem testimonial, but he did provide a beautiful, full-colour testimonial penned by E.C. Roberts and dated 30 October 1936 (the same month and year as the publication of the *Zonnebloem College Magazine*).

Roberts' testimonial reads in part:

At school he was an ideal student, being hardworking, conscientious and thoroughly reliable in all his work. Whatever he did received his wholehearted attention, so that it was a real pleasure not only to teach him but to have him as a student. He maintained the position of leader in the class both in standard of work and in general student qualities. His subsequent progress at Zonnebloem Training College enhanced these excellent qualities, and I have no hesitation in recommending him to any position where a real outstanding leader is required.⁵³⁴

The testimonial from E.C. Roberts is reproduced as Figure 9 on page 172. Fataar was appointed to a new primary school in Salt River, the Cecil Road Primary School, where he began his teaching career in 1937. In his two-page (undated) biographical document, Fataar indicates: "1937: Appointed first teacher at new government primary school for non-whites in Salt River, Cape Town, and taught beginners for a year. ('suburb of' deleted but partially legible on the yellowing pages)"⁵³⁵ Of this year he spoke nothing more than to mention it, relegating it perhaps to the status of a professional interlude before landing a more important post in 1938 at his *alma mater*, Livingstone High School. He writes undramatically: "1938: Appointed to Livingstone High School, Claremont as specialist Std. 6 teacher."⁵³⁶

While the writing of Part Two of this study necessarily 'organises' Alie Fataar's life in quasi-chronological form in order to facilitate a sense of coherency, this form belies the interview experience.

⁵³⁴ Testimonial in favour of Alie Fataar by E.C. Roberts, Principal of Livingstone High School, dated 30 October 1936. Scanned copy of colour original provided by Alie Fataar.

⁵³⁵ Fataar, Alie (undated) *Alie Fataar: a brief biography*. Mimeo, 2 typed pages.

⁵³⁶ Fataar, Alie (undated) *Alie Fataar: a brief biography*. Mimeo, 2 typed pages.



Figure 8: The graduating class of 1936 at the Zonnebloem College of Education, District Six, Cape Town. Alie Fataar is pictured standing directly behind College principal, Welshman Edward Augustus Ball. The photograph has been mounted on black board, and annotated by Alie Fataar. Photo courtesy Alie Fataar

There was no point during more than six months of extended weekly interviews that Alie Fataar began speaking about one aspect of his life and then consistently tracked a narrative for any period that could be categorised as ‘complete’. Instead, the interview transcripts reveal a complex set of narrations, intertwined and linked only through various ‘triggers’ such as my leading questions or clarity-seeking questions, or a visual stimulus when he began (literally) to bring photographs to the interview table.

It is important to state here that while he explicitly indicated that he wanted to speak about certain aspects of his life, as evidenced by the notes he had compiled for our first interview,⁵³⁷ the interviews did not follow a discernable chronological or thematic pattern. The notes Alie Fataar had prepared for our first interview on 31 March 2003 are reproduced as Figure 10 on page 174. It depicts several topics Fataar appeared to want to cover during our interviews.

There was, therefore, no distinctive ‘Livingstone interview,’ or ‘exile interview’. Instead, several themes merged seamlessly, as Fataar recalled, narrated, and was questioned, asked for clarity, challenged and asked to reflect on what he had claimed or stated. Thus, the disjointed, fragmented nature of the narratives as evinced during the interviews are foregrounded as the study moves to inscribing Alie Fataar’s years as a teacher at Livingstone High School.

⁵³⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

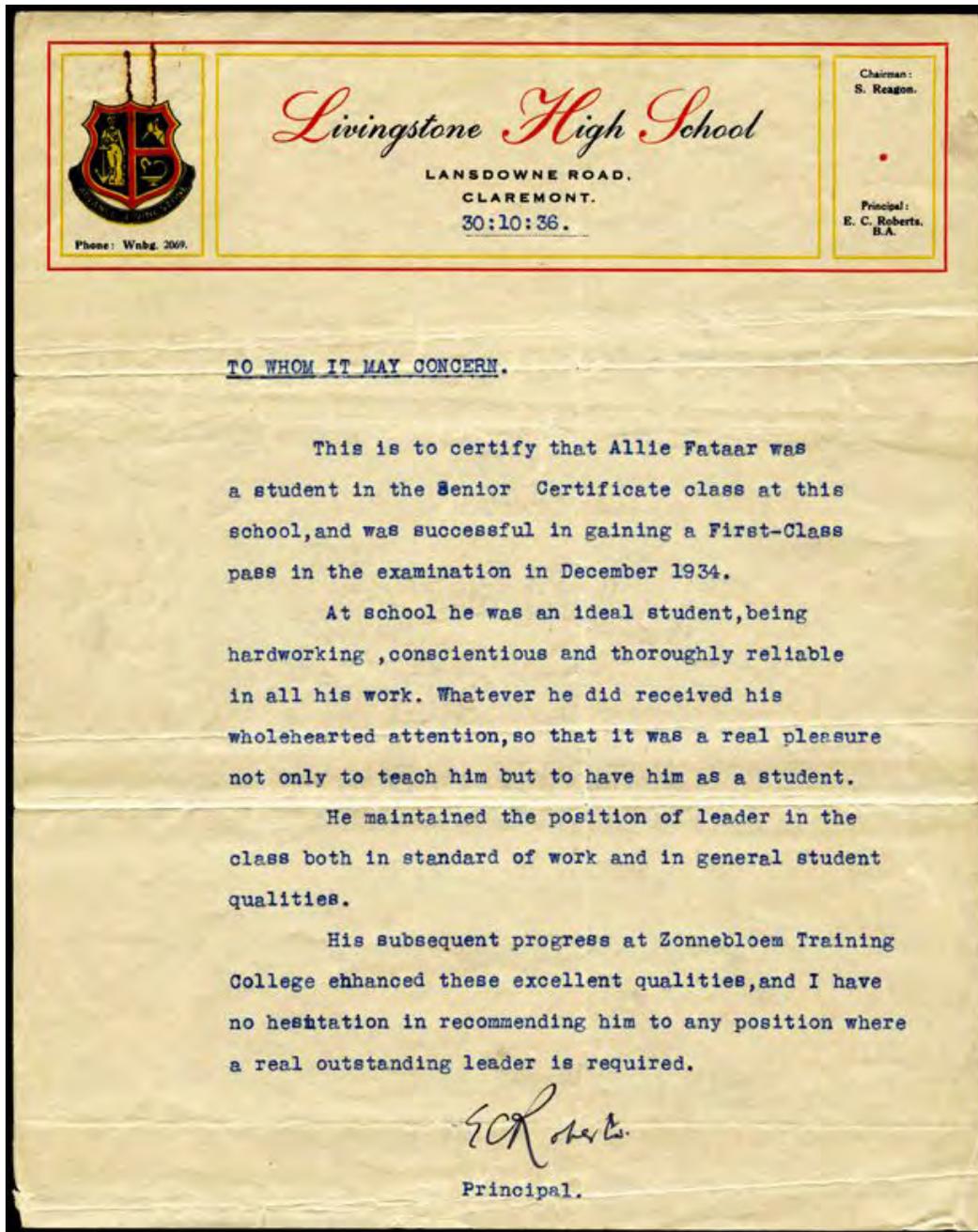


Figure 9: A testimonial penned by Livingstone High School principal E.C. Roberts in October 1936, as Alie Fataar was completing his teacher-training at the Zonnebloem College of Education, and was applying for teaching posts, for which he required testimonials in his favour. Alie Fataar placed great store in finding this testimonial, amongst a batch of others which had been packed away for decades.

Image courtesy Alie Fataar

In his very first insertion into the interviews of his teaching years at Livingstone High School, Fataar explicitly linked politics and teaching:

We were a group of about five or six teachers (long pause) with a clear political understanding already, and these were myself, Ben Kies, Frank Grammer, Winston Layne, Solly Edross, George Meissenheimer – I might have forgotten one or two names – but these are the six main ones. There might have been Ruth Pienaar, one of the ladies there. These were all teachers in their first two years of teaching; I'm talking now of the 1940 period and this is the period of war, so there are lots of things lying around which we could get on to.⁵³⁸

It is significant here that Fataar immediately places into context his (and others') formal and life-defining entry into the Teachers' League of South Africa. As Part One of this study has revealed, the TLSA was viewed by young teachers such as Fataar as conservative at best, collaborationist at worst. Seeking membership of the TLSA, therefore, was not a natural act: "Now, where we had now decided, and our seniors like Tabata and others like Goolam Gool had said... that's where you must go: into Teachers' League."⁵³⁹

The persons of whom Fataar speaks as his first political mentors are Isaac Bangani Tabata and Dr. Goolam Gool, a medical doctor.

In order to underline the importance of Fataar's characterisation of Dr. Goolam Gool, it is useful to note here that Alie Fataar displayed an array of communicative features during the interviews. He was not uni-dimensional in the least, moving between moments of fairly 'neutral' recall to moments of voluble anger.

⁵³⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar. (Not all the teachers listed by Fataar were teachers at Livingstone High School.)

⁵³⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

In many instances, the interview transcripts reveal that Fataar bashed on the table to emphasise a point, or that his pitch heightened as he emotively related something which had rankled in the past, and/or still triggered feelings and thoughts that stirred up (perhaps) negative or otherwise key memories. He moved, too, between moments of delighted glee and low chuckles as he spoke more intimately of times and relationships in his youth.

Here, I wish to emphasise that Fataar's response to my asking how important Dr. Goolam Gool was to the group of young teachers Fataar had mentioned earlier in the same interview, was immediate and declaratory: "In my own language, he was my ustaad."⁵⁴⁰ From him I learnt what politics was all about. (Immediate response).⁵⁴¹

I learnt from him... in the very instance because he was the kind of person who would find the individual, the young person that he wants to work with, and I happened to be one of them. There were others around but he didn't get through... they didn't get through to him or he didn't get through to them. But that group of six were all Goolam Gool: Ben Kies; Solly Edross, who was a teacher at Trafalgar... he had a marvellous brain: he was a teacher of math - he came from Cape Town University; then Winston Layne, primary school teacher at Chapel Street... he and Frank Grammer at Livingstone, Solly Edross and Ben Kies at Trafalgar, and then afterwards Fowler who came from Kimberley to Livingstone, he was one of them. And then we had George Meissenheimer, who was also at Trafalgar.⁵⁴²

When Fataar first related this fairly detailed insight into his own political awakening, he wedded the personal, organisational, political and social elements seamlessly. As an

⁵⁴⁰ The term 'ustaad' is of Indo-Pak origin, and approximates in meaning the English terms 'teacher', 'mentor' or 'guide'.

⁵⁴¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar. (The transcriber's note in parentheses indicates "Immediate response". This level of transcription was explicitly requested as it allows for a more nuanced, contextualised representation of the subtleties of audio-narrative that often loses many shades of the verbal, and of course the total lack of non-verbal communication which accompanies the spoken narrative.)

⁵⁴² Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

example, as he narrated his intellectual debt to Dr. Goolam Gool, he looked out of the window of the first-floor flat in Wynberg in which we conducted the interviews. He pointed to a parking lot near the Main Road, and indicated that Dr. Goolam Gool's surgery and home in the 1940s was situated at No. 1 Stilton Road just off the Wynberg Main Road.

And, er, we were in and out of that house. He was the only man with a car, and then, er... we used to gather there at least once a week, especially on Saturday afternoons, for all sorts of discussions. Occasionally, we used to go in his car to Kalk Bay; we always used to swim at Kalk Bay. We used to call it Kalkie. And, er... from there we'd come here and have a bite and so on. Or, if we are in town (laughs) as happened one Saturday, Ben Kies, myself, Winston Layne and maybe Edross, the four of us, we always used to gather in town on Saturday morning, probably with Meissenheimer and so on, but five or six of us. And, er... then we decided that we'd go home lunchtime but I was so tired I said... I always used to take the bus to get to Claremont. So when I got to Claremont I just went on sitting in the bus. And when it came to the terminus, I got off here. I went to Goolam but he wasn't there. Then the maid knew me, so she let me in, gave me a bite, Goolam came and we went off. No – Goolam came. The next person to walk in there was Ben Kies. [Mr. Fataar and YO both laugh] He's living in Woodstock, you see. So he also had some idea (laughs)... So here's Ben (laughs). I think the third one was [YO bursts out laughing] Solly Edross. And now Goolam's only too happy here, (laughs) you know, because what would he do, he's got no college or others that he... these are his people that he wants to teach politics and work on them.⁵⁴³

The young teacher, Alie Fataar, whose immediate community defined itself primarily in religious terms, was open to the modernising influence of radical intellectuals such as Tabata and Gool. An important personality, who may, for analytic purposes be invoked here, is Imam Abdullah Haron.⁵⁴⁴ Fataar indicates that Goolam Gool's surgery moved to

⁵⁴³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁴⁴ The lives of Imam Abdullah Haron and Alie Fataar would, chillingly, be joined many years later in that (on separate occasions) they shared an interrogator in the form of Special Branch police sergeant Spyker Van Wyk. Fataar's interrogation at the hands of the notorious Van Wyk brothers in 1964 will be covered during the latter pages of this chapter. Various accounts exist of the iconic status Imam Haron posthumously holds in the discourse of resistance to apartheid by Muslims. Of these accounts, Ursula Günther's *The Memory of Imam Haron in Consolidating Muslim Resistance in the Apartheid Struggle*, published in 2004, is a useful appraisal of the arguably constructed discourse of the use of Imam Haron's personal narrative to stitch together a seamless account of Muslim resistance to colonial and apartheid

Main Road, Claremont, then to premises in Stegmann Road, Claremont, “and he had that surgery for many, many... until he died.”⁵⁴⁵

Imam Haron was a young, newly appointed imam of the Al-Jaamia mosque also located in Stegmann Road. “You cross the railway line, you come to the masjid. And that’s where Imam Haron was. And that’s how he and Imam Haron used to meet... Haron would come to the surgery there, and then he would just leave his patients...”⁵⁴⁶

Retrospectively, Fataar would characterise this relationship between Dr. Goolam Gool and Imam Abdullah Haron in the following way: “I’ve mentioned in the commemorations⁵⁴⁷ we’ve had. I said there was... in one thing I wrote there, I said, the only difference, the only separation between the imam and the doctor, was the railway line.”⁵⁴⁸

In terms of the importance of this initial insertion by Fataar of Imam Haron during our interviews, perhaps its significance for this study is most pointed in terms of my question to Fataar: “Why do you think people are reluctant to make that link because, er...?”⁵⁴⁹ It created the space for Fataar, again, to contextualise his views on political life, religious

oppression. This study, although not its primary research focus, adds to those that contest this seamless narrative.

⁵⁴⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁴⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁴⁷ Annual commemorations of Imam Haron’s life and death have been held in Cape Town on the date of his death in detention each year since the early 1980s. These are convened by organisations such as the Islamic Unity Convention (IUC), who are not part of the unelected theological leadership organ in the Cape, the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC), of whom Imam Haron was a member at the time of his death in an apartheid jail.

⁵⁴⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁴⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

affiliation and adherence, and social attitudes and lack of historical awareness in the present:

Well, Goolam wasn't, I would say, **religious**, but then, you know, not many of us were, no matter who you were and, er... didn't recognise the Eid and this Eid. Jumu'ah, when you have the freedom to break off, but these people are working artisans and builders; they go and do their eight hours a day; they can't take off for Jumu'ah. Jumu'ah used to be when they have a holiday or... our people are not aware of how Islam was practised in Cape Town, in the Cape Peninsula.⁵⁵⁰

Alie Fataar is explicit about his beliefs as a young man and newly-qualified teacher at Livingstone High School. This provides a candid backdrop to his relationship with Imam Haron. Fataar lived close to where the young imam resided with his aunt after Haron's return from studies in Arabia. Fataar described these meetings in the following way:

...he stayed with his aunt in First Avenue, Claremont – they had a little shop there on the stoep. I passed there on the way from Surrey Street to Livingstone. Now often he's sitting on the stoep and I'd go and sit on the stoep with him and we chatted. He'd come from Mecca and he wanted to improve his English.⁵⁵¹

I probed the relationship, and queried whether the young Imam had ever been “part of the Teachers' League discussions and things like that?”⁵⁵² It provided Fataar with the opportunity to broaden the scope of the discussion.

Not he, but where the link comes is many of our students at Livingstone. I had to go and encourage the parents whom I knew – the Galants and the Salies and the Abduraoufs... And so when I was a teacher there, I... and then also we were beginning political struggle and we used to have meetings in various open spaces and so on.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁵⁵¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁵² Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁵³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

The lived experience of the new teacher brought with it a new status and concomitant responsibility. In a community in which many families had had little or no access to formal schooling, and in which many persons were involved in economic activities like artisanal work and other forms of labour, salaried professionals were an exception rather than the rule.

So we... there was a small group of Muslims... where they weren't thinking about going beyond standard eight. Or matric...very rare! And I had then, when I became a teacher, to encourage the Claremont... community, to do likewise... not only for their boys, but for the girls as well. So a number of girls came forward! Well, some fortunately, like Abdullah Adams' children, they already had it. But the Galants, and the Salies, er, the Abdurahmans... all those who were... Slamdiens, of Claremont, all eventually came to Livingstone. Even after I had left there, there were still... up to today there are still grandchildren who get in at Livingstone! So, there was that a, er, almost crusade (laughs) to let them escape what I'd escaped.⁵⁵⁴

The powerful 'crusade' metaphor runs the risk of being over-analysed in the context of Fataar's ambivalence with regard to the religious aspects of his early years, but the metaphor provides a definitive insight into the seriousness with which Fataar saw his role in his community where educational access and attainment were not the norm.

It is not, I believe, tangential to the deconstruction of the 'crusade' metaphor to indicate that it forms a representational canvas on which linguistic and imagined elements like 'fighter against ignorance'; 'freeing from the darkness of ignorance', and 'bringing light in the face of religious (and other forms of) conservatism' that blocks access to 'othered' forms of knowledge is present.

⁵⁵⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

At the very least, the new teacher Alie Fataar represents his attitude to the responsibility he faces as one which invokes a life-long battle to ‘let them escape what I’d escaped’. The young Alie Fataar is seen in the front row, far left, in Figure 11 on page 181. The photograph is a similar one to that which appeared in the Livingstone school magazine, *The Advance*, in 1949. The immersion into teaching was immediate, but something burned in the new teacher: the desire to read for, and attain a university degree.

I had to fix up my maths first, so there was a teacher at Livingstone, a white chap, who helped me. So in one year, I had to do matric maths which I had last done in JC... And (I) wrote the exam – I had to get forty percent – and I managed to get forty percent (laughs). So then I could now enter in 1939, for, er, B.A... At that time, too, I got engaged.⁵⁵⁵

In describing his life from 1940 onwards, two years into his teaching career at Livingstone, and newly married to Rita Davidson-Saban, Fataar indicates that “we were working on two fronts: your home, and the political.”⁵⁵⁶ I enquired as to the actual daily life he had experienced at this point in his life. “Was it that busy?” I asked?⁵⁵⁷

...it was daily: afternoon, evening, weekends, holidays. There wasn’t a week when we could say that [laughs] there was nothing to do politically. Day and night, because you are also a teacher: you had to prepare lessons, you had to mark marks, and, er... you had to attend meetings. Then there was the political: meetings, conferences, correspondence, reports, all sorts of things.⁵⁵⁸ Then there was at one time still my studies... I did three courses a year. And so you start the day at four o’clock studying.⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁵⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁵⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁵⁸ Figures 12, 13 and 14, on pages 206, 207 and 208 respectively, offer a window into the kinds of meetings Alie Fataar addressed, along with other comrades, as the TLSA and formations of the NEUM and associated organisations attempted to foster the unity of all sectors of oppressed society across the colour-bar during the 1940s and 1950s.

⁵⁵⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar



Figure 11: Alie Fataar began teaching at Livingstone High School in 1938. This photograph depicts the staff of Livingstone High School as it appeared in the school magazine, *The Advance*, in 1949. Alie Fataar is seated on the far left in the front row. On the photograph are colleagues who feature in the interviews conducted with Alie Fataar for this study. Some of these colleagues are: E.C. Roberts, Fataar's principal as both student and teacher-colleague (seated fourth from left, front row, wearing a hat); Ray Carlier (seated fourth from right, front row); Kenny Jordaan (standing, middle row, second from left); Ron Samuels (standing, middle row, third from left); Willie Ward (standing, middle row, second from right); Frank Grammer (standing, middle row, far right), and Richard Dudley (standing, back row, second from right). Photo courtesy Alie Fataar

He described his commitment to his work and part-time studies:

Ja, ja [*Yes, yes*], I had a regimen clearly. I had to cover foolscap books, those old foolscap books... not foolscap... er... they have the rough-work books. This is the cheapest thing – cheap paper... I used to [coughs]... cover those with my notes on the books (pause), **dozens** of them, and then, er... I never sent in any answers, I didn't have the time to send them to UNISA: I just studied, everything I studied was there; I had made notes on the books. And then I prepared for the exams. No external... no answering of questions, giving reports back, because **I didn't have the time!**⁵⁶⁰

Figures 12, 13 and 14 on pages 183, 184 and 185 respectively, convey a sense of the meetings and conferences addressed by Alie Fataar as part of the group of intellectuals of the Anti-CAD, NEUM and TLSA. Whereas the attainment of a degree under these circumstances could well be described in purely functional terms, Fataar's narrative is instructive of his approach to knowledge and learning. In relating his approach, he also reveals aspects of his UNISA B.A. curriculum:

...whether it was Geography, practical work also... all I had to do... I had to get the instruments and all the traversing and all of that, all had to be done. Square tape and blah-blah-blah... and for literature, of course, I had to have all the Shakespeare and others, books. Then, umm... same with History. Economics... it was new... two courses I had for Psychology, which I loved – two courses... purely on the basis of the text-books and the literature. Gardiner was the great book and all that sort of thing. And, er... I never failed one of them.⁵⁶¹

During this narration, I mused that the UNISA study-experience was as seamless as his primary, secondary and college experience had been, and I pre-empted a narrative of 'I was top of the class,' as had been the case throughout his academic life. I was surprised by what followed:

⁵⁶⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁵⁶¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

CAPE ANTI-C.A.D. COMMITTEE
NOTHING LESS THAN FULL CITIZENSHIP
NOTHING LESS THAN 10 PT PROGRAMME

MASS MEETING

IN THE
EAST YORK HALL, 6th AVENUE,
KENSINGTON
Tuesday, 8th May, 1945
AT 7.30 P.M.

HEAR ANTI-C.A.D. POLICY & PROGRAMME!

Down with Coloured Locations!

**AGAINST RACE-HATRED
AND FOR RACE-UNITY**

Speakers—Rev. D. M. Wessels, Mr. E. C. Roberts,
Mr. Duckitt, Dr. G. H. Gool, Mr. A. Fataar,
and others.

Secretary: Miss H. Ahmed, Constantia Road, Wynberg.

101-4-45-252

Figure 12: Alie Fataar is listed as a speaker on this pamphlet advertising a Cape Anti-CAD meeting in Kensington, Cape Town. Fataar's political mentor, Dr. Goolam Gool, and his Livingstone High School principal E.C. Roberts are among other speakers at this May 1945 public meeting. Image courtesy Alie Fataar



Figure 13: The Cape Teachers' Federal Council was one of the attempts at securing the unity of all progressive teacher formations across the colour-bar. Alie Fataar is listed as a speaker at this CTFC mass meeting called to oppose university apartheid. Fataar is noted as a speaker alongside Ben Kies and Dr. A.C. Jordan. The legal requirement to note an address and an official of the issuing organisation is interesting, as it lists Alie Fataar's position as Secretary of the CTFC, and lists his home, 'Eothen' in Dale Street, Lansdowne, as the address for CTFC correspondence. Image courtesy Alie Fataar

UMANYANO LWEZIMA-MHLABA
"UMANYANO YINKULULEKO"

Ingxikela Yentlanganiso
E-BANQUETING HALL (CITY HALL)
E-KAPA
NGE-CAWA 10TH MAY, 1959
ngo - 2 p.m. entloko

- **Silwa:**
IZITHANGANA (BANTUSTANS)
OOMAZIPHATHE NGONDABA-ZEBALA
- **Silwa:**
OOSINGA-MFUNDO NOOSINGA-KHOLEJI
- **Silwa:**
AMAPASI NOOMAKATSHA NAMASAKA
- ★ **Sifuna:**
AMALUNGELO OBUNTU APHELELEYO
IPALAMENTE YABANTU BONKE
- ★ **Sifuna:**
IMFUNDO EFANAYO NELINGANAYO
KUBANTU BONKE
- ★ **Sifuna:**
INKULULEKO EF EZEKILEYO

Umgcini-sihlalo: Dr. A. C. JORDAN

Isithethi:

Mr. W. M. TSOTSI (Umongameli)
Miss J. GOOL
Mr. L. L. SIHLALI (Usiba-lukhulu Wengqungquthela, A.A.C.)
Mr. A. FATAAR (Usiba-lukhulu Wambutha Weetitshala Zebala,
T.L.S.A.)
Mr. N. HONONO (Umongameli Wambutha Weetitshala
Zama-Afrika, C.A.T.A.)
Mr. ENVER HASSIM (Unonxhova Wengqungquthela, A.A.C.)

Ovuke Emini Wofika Kungasekho Ndawo!

Iminywa yi-N.E.U.M., P.O. Box 3475, Cape Town. C.D. 1959

Figure 14: This pamphlet, issued by the Non European Unity Movement, is an isiXhosa version of a pamphlet also issued in English. Alie Fataar, listed as one of the speakers at the meeting which had been called to register protest against, amongst other issues, inferior education and the Group Areas Act, indicated during our interviews that he and other cadres of the NEUM and TLSA attended isiXhosa classes convened by Dr. A.C. Jordan, in an attempt to bridge the linguistic divide between members of the oppressed. Image courtesy Alie Fataar

Strange thing is, the first year I failed English... because I wrote an essay on the role of the Bible in literature, and what did I know about that? It was the best of the four, and so I chose that one. Ah, I made a mess of it! So I went down in English, so I had to repeat.⁵⁶²

The candour with which Fataar relates his marginal pass in mathematics in order to qualify for university registration, as well as an unsolicited admission of failure in English, the academic area in which he is most vividly remembered as a teacher, is a key feature in Fataar's narrative. Fataar does not hide or disguise personal failure or under-achievement in the primary arena in which his professional and political life is located.

At Livingstone High School, where he had begun as a Standard Six teacher providing instruction in English and Geography, Fataar soon established himself as a teacher of English Language and Literature to the Standard Ten classes. While at Livingstone as a student, it was recorded in Chapter Four, Fataar had spent countless hours practising and honing his elocutory skills on his own, reading aloud to himself. Now, with roles reversed, he related something of the essence he brought to his English classroom, for many decades located in Room 13 at the school:

I met one of my students the other day, and he said: "Remember how you used to give us, er... essay titles to write?" It was never an essay-title! I would just say: "Write on 'bricks'. Write on 'water'. Just one word. And let your mind go. You'll be amazed what you can write about! One object. Literally and figuratively!" And he said: "No, no, no, we got the point! We used to sit at night and think now: 'What did the old man want?' you know, Now that used to... tease their minds, you know... 'so that he can be impressed by what I'm saying.'" And then the best ones would be read out in class.⁵⁶³

Alie Fataar did not speak extensively to his pedagogic repertoire at Livingstone, even when pressed for such details. In virtually every instance, he quickly turned to his

⁵⁶² Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁶³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

classroom experiences during his exile period, and continued to do so even when an attempt was made to re-direct his narrative to his classroom experience in South Africa. This curious phenomenon may be viewed in the context of two theoretical possibilities: did Fataar see his Livingstone teaching years as subjugated to his organisational political work, or is this phenomenon a desire on his part to foreground the out-of-school political work he was engaged in during that period?

In their 'Introduction,' Wieder and Fataar⁵⁶⁴ (Aslam Fataar is Alie Fataar's grand-nephew) relate, regrettably without much detail, that students of Fataar remembered him in very different ways. One former student, Arthur Hendricks, is revealed as having "fond memories of Ali (sic.) Fataar". They contrast this positive memory of Fataar with that of Zain Ebrahim, recently deceased "director of a large community radio station in Cape Town," whose "memories of Fataar are very different than those of Arthur Hendricks and they include him remarking that he was one of those disaffected students who were treated disdainfully by Ali (sic.) Fataar and some of his radical colleagues."⁵⁶⁵

It bears speculation as to whether having the 'best ones read out in class' constituted one of the exclusionary markers of 'those disaffected students who were treated disdainfully...'

Even though the paper⁵⁶⁶ contains only one each of a positive and negative impression of the teacher Fataar, it crucially paints a picture of complexity in the relationship between

⁵⁶⁴ Wieder and Fataar, 2002: 31

⁵⁶⁵ Wieder and Fataar, 2002: 31

⁵⁶⁶ Wieder and Fataar, 2002: 31-43

teacher and student, with a full range of learning experiences on a continuum of 'like' to 'dislike', or 'engaged' to 'disaffected'. This is critically important, and points to the need for further studies in which this continuum can be explored.⁵⁶⁷

Fataar himself speaks to an aspect of the issue of 'disaffected' students at Livingstone in a very specific socio-political context.

Ja [*Yes*], you see, when you get out of this complex apartheid thing, you begin to see... you were aware of it when you were here; these are all the restrictions, but the restrictions are not in the interests of the people... and that you can now... you had cases where there was a certain amount of jealousy on the part of locals... but for the rest, the people you are giving it to, the students, they are there....⁵⁶⁸

The consolidation of the racial-capitalist stranglehold on South Africa's oppressed majority had been effected with the coming into power of the Nationalist Party under D.F. Malan in 1948, ushering in what is called the 'apartheid' era. A slew of discriminatory legislation was passed, directly impacting on the process of social mobility through education:

...you already, at that period, amongst the non-white students, you would find there was sort of a reticence... ja, you had difficulty to get homework out of them, for example, because to become a doctor now; very few could. And then you were going to have apartheid in the universities - it was already there. You already had good scholars... so there were those and then what else can you go and do now? Become a teacher, you know. Ja, this attitude of 'what's the point'. There's more available today, of course, but that was the beginning of it, you know.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁷ Figure 15 on page 189 depicts a relatively young Alie Fataar in a relaxed setting, complete with cigarette in hand, amongst some of his students at Livingstone High School.

⁵⁶⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁶⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar



Figure 15: Alie Fataar, second left, is pictured amongst a group of Livingstone High School students and colleagues in the grounds of the school. The photograph was taken in the late 1940s or early 1950s.

Photo courtesy Alie Fataar

The cornerstone of many of the schools associated with the TLSA (this, of course, is not exclusive to schools where the TLSA had a dominant presence) was the value of homework as a consolidation and mastery of classroom-based learning. It is thus very significant that Fataar draws attention to the reluctance of students to do homework in the post-1948 period as an indication of their academic ‘reticence’.

There can be little doubt that Fataar inspired and encouraged his students to aspire to accessing the various professions by virtue of scholastic attainment. With little hope for the majority of students ever achieving these career-goals, it is not unusual for students to begin to manifest resistance to the rigours of schooling, given that the end-result is a virtual non-guarantee of upward social mobility.⁵⁷⁰ This resistance can manifest in disruptive classroom behaviours, dress-code violations, non-completion of homework and a range of other behaviours.

Also significant here is the apparent second-tier status Fataar accords his own profession, teaching: “...what else can you go and do now? Become a teacher.” The context indicates that students aspired to, or were pointed to, a range of different professions, including medicine, from which the majority were excluded on the basis of finances, but also because many professions were reserved for ‘whites’.

⁵⁷⁰ In this regard, Paul Willis’ seminal 1977 work *Learning to Labour: Why Working Class Kids get Working Class Jobs*, is a powerful reminder that students’ manifested resistance to learning in classrooms may well be political awareness of narrow post-school social and economic opportunities, rather than a reductionist view of students as simply ‘inattentive’, ‘disruptive’ or other negative appellations commonly attributed to such student behaviours.

Three issues are relevant here. First, Fataar does not speak of his students as delinquent. In fact, he never uses such language about his students even once during more than six months of interviews. Instead, he frames students' lack of full academic application in terms of the narrow opportunities for them in their post-school lives, of which they are acutely aware, due, perhaps ironically, in no small measure to the political education they would have received from teachers such as Fataar himself.

Second, he speaks of the 'jealousy' directed by members of the community towards those who were upwardly mobile on the back of their accessing of further educational opportunities. In this regard, it is instructive to note that

(W)hile it would have been politically incorrect for Fataar and his colleagues to present Livingstone as a producer of individual mobility for their successful students, the school and others like it were producing many first generation professionals who formed the cornerstone of the Coloured middle class in Cape Town. These schools' radical politics could thus be seen as part of a range of factors that contributed to class formation and mobility in twentieth century Cape Town.⁵⁷¹

Third, Fataar's seeming deprecation of the teaching profession (given that he is primarily framing it here in deficit terms vis-à-vis the lack of professional opportunities for students) is a reminder of the academic imperative to elicit and foreground students' voices as part of an ongoing project that seeks a broader historiographical footprint from amongst the oppressed and arguably still silenced majority.

Much of the intrigue I encountered when I mentioned my study to various people, concerns Alie Fataar's personal life. I was wary about probing areas of his life that might

⁵⁷¹ Wieder and Fataar, 2002: 42

constitute an intrusion or even a violation, but I was acutely aware, and communicated this to him on several occasions, that the study sought to engage issues around the interplay of the personal and the political. I therefore dared to venture academically where, in my personal life, I would not dare go. Again, I was surprised at the candour with which Fataar approached my questions, and, significantly, how Fataar ventured information and insights without being questioned.

Unknown to me during the first months of our interviews, Fataar had been working with several other researchers immediately prior to my beginning the interviews with him, and was simultaneously working with Trevor Oosterwyk on a book commissioned by academic, newspaperman and later party-politician Dr. Wilmot James. It was during a moment of reflection by Fataar on a question posed to him by either James or Oosterwyk that Fataar, for example, spoke candidly about what he viewed as ‘relevant’ to an academic or other intellectual study of the lives of those involved in political struggle:

No, what they do, they go to other people that they know. Now this Alie Fataar, we want to write about him. Tell us something about him. Now of course they tell him. They said of course, in his personal life he had some problems, and now they come out: “And of course, no, we won’t tell you about it.” So he wants to put it in there. So I said: “You’re speaking of censorship. I’ve given you some material and others I’ve recorded. We are busy, not with me and my five sons, two of whom became doctors. One became an engineer in Simonstown; one became an accountant; and one is working here... You want me to put that in the book? How relevant is that? It’s not relevant. Or my first wife and my relations with her and then, my second wife – is that relevant? If the Movement suffered as a result, maybe, but then I can inform you of Dr. Goolam Gool’s divorce from his wife, she was the secretary, and it all came into the papers. And there was some personal thing but you don’t go and rake that up because he played a role there in the anti-CAD Movement and the Convention all over the country. He had *The Torch* newspaper paid for by him because we didn’t earn - now that must be recorded. The fact that his own life had this mishap did nothing to the struggle or its programme. You can say that there are people who say: “What about Tabata? He married Jane Gool or he lived with her for all these years. So what’s that got to do with it?” You know, that’s gossip – about everybody – there’s a lot of gossip. There’s a lot of gossip about your Saint Nelson Mandela, who was his first wife and first children just vanished and now and then they appear. And his second wife – look at what

she's up to. But the fact that he played a certain role over on the Island and all that, that is what is highlighted – now for the rest, if you want to bring out the sort of scandal sheet, produce one – then forget about the political side.” Well he accepted that... Then he had to say: “These aspects of Alie Fataar’s personal life is a subject for another text.”⁵⁷²

The lengthy extract speaks to a number of key issues for this study. First, he questions the relevance of foregrounding personal relationships in terms of political work on the basis of whether or not those relationships impacted negatively on organisational work.

Second, he regards it perjoratively as ‘gossip’, likening and relegating it immediately to the status of the worst equivalent of, for example, sensationalist tabloid publishing.

Interestingly, Fataar himself ventured that the teaching and political associations with persons such as Ben Kies and Goolam Gool extended beyond the professional. I initiated the discussion with: “As I’ve said before, this is not about hanging out dirty linen at all,” and continued: “I’m very keen to bridge that; the political-personal that almost merges at many times in terms of the road. Your relationship with Doctor Goolam Gool, for example – I mean it was clearly more than a political association.”⁵⁷³ Fataar answered without hesitation:

Personally we were very, very close; the person I was closest to, both personally and politically, was Goolam Gool. I don’t know if it was because we were Muslim or we were in Claremont – it might have been a factor – because in the end I came to know his whole family. His sister, Jane, for example, was political. And then his sister who was in the surgery there with him, she was political. His wife, of course, Halima, was political. And, er... actually we went out swimming together, the two families.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷² Interview with Alie Fataar, 9 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁷³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁷⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

There followed a lengthy series of dialogue between us, during which my statements and questions inviting more responses to the political-personal continuum were answered in the main with “Ja” [*Yes*] and “Hmm”.

After several more attempts at outlining why I wanted to explore the political-personal matrix in the study, I ventured the following: “I’m very keen to get this idea through – don’t divorce aspects of life...”⁵⁷⁵ What emerged from this question was a breadth of responses that addressed several key issues, *inter alia*, the financial realities of a newly-married teacher, parent and politically-engaged individual.

That was never the case when I got married, because the first child came in the first year, and so you had a baby to look after. I somehow managed for seven years to have just the one [laughs] and that was the period in which the political activity got underway. I don’t know how conscious it was not to have a second baby, and what actually triggered the second one. That was one of those things that happened; the same with the third one, even another six or seven years later. And, er... they are very much part of the marriage and the family, those three, so that they weren’t in any way neglected. Their education was looked after, right up to university level, and, er... difficult as it was, I had to make some extra cash by all sorts of legal means [laughs] to get him at varsity.⁵⁷⁶

The narration moved seamlessly into the move into exile (which is the focus of the next chapter), and the travails of that period. I probed this, and asked whether he had had any regrets about having to eke out, for a substantial period at the start of his exile period, a much-reduced quality of life.

Fataar moved the conversation back to the earlier periods of his life, including his degree studies at Unisa, financial challenges, and the modalities of addressing these challenges.

First, we observe Alie Fataar’s narrating of his success in terms of his degree studies, and

⁵⁷⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁷⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

he then moves subsequently to the financial narratives with regard to maintaining and progressing his family.

You see, the fact that you got some education or schooling, as they call it, that you managed to get a degree by study, private study – it was quite an achievement in the community at the time [laughs]. I remember it appeared in *The Sun*: I had got my B.A... and then it's: 'Congratulations! Come. Very rare.' Now that's the first part of it.⁵⁷⁷

The narrative then shifted immediately to the financial challenges of teaching and maintaining a family. Significantly, Fataar contextualised this narrative with reference to his parental home in the post-Depression years:

...you, um... come from a working-class background: I mean, I had to help my mother and my sister with the washing and the ironing. Not so much the washing and the ironing but the delivery and fetching... bicycle... the waentjie [*wagon*] with its bicycle tyres, bicycle wheels... So that was my upbringing... Then becoming a teacher... so that now you find that your earnings are not sufficient for what you want for your family. I mean I could have let them do matric and then go and get an apprenticeship, get a job. It was not the thing that could be done easily, to get to university, even just to do a B.A. or B.Sc.; as for medicine, it was even harder... but I had set my mind on it...⁵⁷⁸

In fact, 'setting (his) mind on it' (medicine as a course of study for his eldest son) was something of an understatement. After a lengthy set of discussions about several other issues during the same interview, I noted how amazed I was that he and his wife were able to send their son to study Medicine. Fataar responded:

It's a funny thing, that – it was an obsession with me. It may also be that I missed out on the University of Cape Town. I thought, well, at least he will go there, and there was no question about it; it had to be Medicine, for some reason or other. In other words, six years I had to be prepared, and, of course, his mother, with her sewing and so on, helping

⁵⁷⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁷⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

to such an extent that I could offload less to her, so she would then see to the house, and I could at least pay his fees and pay for his clothing and travelling and so on.⁵⁷⁹

This interesting second narration about ensuring a university education for his first-born is significant in that it now reveals much more of the desire the young Fataar had nurtured in terms of his attending the University of Cape Town after completing Standard Ten with a first-class pass. Teacher-college, his own part-time degree studies at Unisa, marriage and the birth of his children had not diminished the flame.

His self-proclaimed ‘obsession’ mirrors the ‘crusade’ he had ventured earlier with regard to his encouraging and cajoling families in Claremont to push their sons and daughters on to ever-higher educational attainments.

Alie Fataar’s narrations regarding the high social status of teachers have already been described in the context of a community in which educational attainment beyond Standard Six was rare. He related that teachers were called ‘Meneer’ [*Sir*] and ‘Juffrou’ [*Miss*] by the community, denoting respect. There was a counter-narrative to this.

It was a term of respect they had for the teacher, and funnily enough the critics afterwards of the teachers and the role they were playing, used to cast aspersions on this: ‘Hy’s mos ’n Meneer.’ [*He’s a teacher, you know.*] They reckoned now he thinks he’s above everybody else because he’s a ‘Meneer’... a term of abuse, yes... just among themselves. Hulle praat van die onderwysers. [*They talk about the teachers.*] They never used to call somebody a ‘onderwyser’ [*teacher*] in Afrikaans. ‘Hy’s ’n Meneer,’ [*He’s a teacher*] or ‘Hy’s ’n teacher.’ [*He’s a teacher*] You never heard the word amongst... near us in Cape Town here – onderwysers [*teachers*]– and even if you spoke Afrikaans – ‘Hy’s ’n teacher. Waar teach hy dan nou?’ [*He’s a teacher. Where’s he teaching?*] Or: ‘Waar hou

⁵⁷⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

hy dan skool?' [*At which school is he teaching?*] That was the language they had. So teacher was almost like you were a doctor, you know, set aside.⁵⁸⁰

Notwithstanding the tension between the contrasting attitudes towards teachers presented in the previous extract, Fataar expanded on the status of teachers:

So anyhow, therefore I say that the teachers there had a certain status both urban and rural – more so in the rural areas because they went to the teachers for just everything there. They had a form to be filled in, an application to be made for old-age pension – all that sort of thing... the teachers would do it, you see... he was the only person who was literate.⁵⁸¹

Fataar moves quickly from a 'status of teachers' discourse to an exclusivist narrative that depicts teachers as 'the only person(s)' able to fulfil certain life-sustaining and life-enhancing functions for strata of society unable to navigate the bureaucratic institutions that governed their lives. He further extends this notion:

It clearly was their role. And so you had these teachers who realised that the children in front of them were their responsibility; and their parents were their responsibility; and from this grew this whole idea of the teachers having to go out to see what changes can be made in the political field and in the social and in the economic field.⁵⁸²

As a contextual necessity, it is worthwhile re-inserting the following description of the work of the NEUM and TLSA, as reproduced in Part One of this study:

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, almost state-like project in public education, whose objective was the constitution of a new public domain as a rational form of social order, peopled by suitably conscious proto-citizens. Through an analysis of power in society and the conditions of resistance and

⁵⁸⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 12 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar, original emphasis

⁵⁸¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 12 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁸² Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

collaboration, a system of representation was created, complete with its own vocabulary, framing categories, concepts, 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’.⁵⁸³

This ‘emancipatory project’ was to be disrupted by internal dissension and splits in the latter half of the 1950s, and it would have damaging organisational, professional and personal implications for the persons involved. For the respondent of this study, it had the following consequence, amongst other experiences: “...in my case, for example, when the ‘Jaffeites’ attacked me and had one or two at the top that said, of course, that I’m a ‘kaffirboetie’: I stand for the African sector.”⁵⁸⁴

Fataar would not reveal these persons’ names. The ‘accusation’ levelled at Fataar (as he relates it) is a crucial insight into the realities of intellectuals whose collective legacy is recognised in this study as progressive. To underscore the depth of this devastation, it is valuable to restate the following, as it appears in Part One of the study:

From about the middle of the 1930s, a steady stream of intellectuals emerged in Cape Town, working in left-wing political and cultural structures. They brought to the assemblies in which they moved a fierce commitment to social analysis buttressed by a concentrated interest in political theory. This commitment was expressed in activist work, in polemics in debating circles, and also in writing sometimes reproduced in formal journals, newspapers, and books, but, much more often, in polemical tracts. These tracts and pamphlets constituted the grist of the intellectual work holding up the particular outlooks and perspectives emerging in those parts of the Western Cape that were not White. They contained what came to be the characteristic postures of the Unity Movement, the Fourth International of South Africa, the Teachers’ League of South Africa (TLSA), and a whole range of Trotskyist and Leninist movements...⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸³ Rassool, 2004: 321

⁵⁸⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 12 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁸⁵ Wieder, A. and Soudien, C. (2010) Teacher as Public Intellectual: Richard Dudley and the Fight Against South African Apartheid. In Sandlin, J.A., Schultz, B.D. and Burdick, J. (eds.) (2010) *Handbook of Public Pedagogy: Education and Learning Beyond Schooling*. New York: Routledge, p. 604.

Fataar himself had joined the TLSA on entering the teaching profession in 1938; was founder executive-member of the National Anti-CAD in 1943, serving later as Treasurer; in December 1943 he had become a Head Unity Committee member of the NEUM; in 1944 he became Assistant-Secretary of the TLSA, and in 1946 he was General Secretary of the TLSA; he became Secretary of the Cape Teachers' Federal Council⁵⁸⁶ (formed after unity between CATA and the TLSA); he “wrote for *The Educational Journal*,” the organ of the TLSA, as well as *The Cape Standard*, and he “was on the editorial staff of *The Torch* newspaper and later *The Ikhwezi*.”⁵⁸⁷

The document⁵⁸⁸ (provided by Alie Fataar) from which these details are taken, states without any context that in 1959 he “relinquished (his) position as General Secretary of the TLSA, after 15 years as an official”. He stated: “In 1958, I could see they wanted me out, so in '59 – then I got in still in '58 against Dudley – but in '59 Ursula said: “Let them go, man, they're out of the Unity Movement,” the Anti-CAD by that time.”⁵⁸⁹

Fataar indicated that he had never been afraid to speak his mind, even when it involved a critique of persons closely associated with him. He related two instances of this type of confrontation, the first of which related to Ben Kies:

⁵⁸⁶ Figure 16 on page 200 depicts the inaugural CTFC meeting held in Kimberley in December 1951. The formation of the CTFC was the result of many years of work aimed at uniting the progressive teacher bodies under an anti-racist rubric.

⁵⁸⁷ Fataar, Alie (undated) *Alie Fataar: a short biography*. Mimeo, 2 typed pages.

⁵⁸⁸ Fataar, Alie (undated) *Alie Fataar: a short biography*. Mimeo, 2 typed pages.

⁵⁸⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 12 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar



Figure 16: Alie Fataar, far right, is photographed at the inaugural meeting of the Cape Teachers' Federal Council in Kimberley in December 1951. The CTFC was the culmination of attempts over many years to unite the progressive teacher bodies under the rubric of a united, anti-racist, structure which would better co-ordinate and channel the opposition to the racist-capitalist order. As was the established executive pattern that is a feature of Fataar's organised educational and political lives, he was elected secretary of the CTFC, as can be seen on the typed names and designations provided by Alie Fataar.

Photo courtesy Alie Fataar

...in the smallest meeting that we could have, committee, Head Unity... I went for Kies, rather, in no uncertain terms, that he even got shocked at my language – but that was me, you know... and, er... I said in an even bigger meeting, I repeated – I forget what it was now – anyhow, they were all shocked and he was shocked to think that we were so close right from the beginning and now there was this... Right, so I had already decided the Kies-Jaffe... that section, is going its way. We had other means, because I knew that I had a lot of influence, if not so much in Cape Town, then all around the countryside and there'd be splits of various kinds which knocked the hell out of some people. They couldn't understand, you know... people are saying in Heidelberg or Riversdale or Mossel Bay, wherever, you know, it was Kies-Fataar, and Kies-Fataar...⁵⁹⁰

The second insight into Fataar's direct approach to issues he felt deeply about, concerned confronting I.B. Tabata with reference to Neville Alexander's proposal that the Unity Movement adopt armed struggle as a method of resistance.

Now the point is I did exactly the same in about the 1962 period when I was Secretary of the Unity Movement; Joint-Secretary... when Tabata felt that he should handle Neville Alexander, having come from overseas with his ideas, revolutionary organisations, and so on, that he had to deal with Neville. I felt Tabata was wrong and one big meeting which Tabata and Jane Gool, myself, Limbada, Sihlali and others from the Convention, were in a meeting with Tabata, we had to deal with this question of Neville. And I clearly told Tabata he was wrong, that this young man had every right to have this view, whether he got it from overseas or where... and he should be allowed to put his views to the Conference. Ah, there was such a fight! Sihlali was staying with me, and he said: 'You know, I never could have imagined, Alie, that you and Isaac would have it out the way you did.' I said: 'Leo, I'll have it out with you, too, if you... it's just in me.' I said: 'I had it out with Ben. I didn't have to go to the level of a Jaffe, Kies and Dudley, that's what happened.' He said: 'No, you're quite right.' But, you know, that sort of thing makes you feel, wait, there's something good... political argument, here.⁵⁹¹

Alie Fataar would not be drawn on the tensions playing themselves out at Livingstone during the period of the split, where he and R.O. Dudley were colleagues, preferring to keep his narrative pitched at the organisational level.

⁵⁹⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 12 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁹¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 12 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Fataar's two-page biographical notes indicate that in 1961, "(I)n September, B.J. Vorster placed me under a ban in terms of the Suppression of Communism Act, for five years."⁵⁹²

I was forced to resign from certain designated organisations and not attend any meetings."⁵⁹³

...they didn't ban the Unity Movement because they couldn't. Because there were so many constituent bodies that they would have to ban: ANC's one organisation; PAC's one organisation; Communist Party's one organisation – whereas with the Unity Movement and the Convention there were so many committees without the name 'Unity' but doing the work of the Unity Movement.⁵⁹⁴

Fataar continued to work under the radar of the State. During our interview of 7 April 2003, Fataar produced a set of photographs which he slowly worked through while talking to some aspects of the photographs. Pausing at one, he remarked: "There's a big one," to which I replied: "I think this is the pic I'd seen. There you are, third from the right."⁵⁹⁵ Figure 18 on page 204 is a remarkable image composite, the details of which are provided after the following extract from the interviews. The interview transcript reveals the following dialogue:

AF: See what happened here?

YO: Oh, I see.

AF: Another one... I cut him off.

AF: This one.

YO: What had happened there?

AF: He gave evidence against us.

YO: He gave evidence against you?

AF: Ja. The fact that I had meetings on the beach here when I was banned and all...⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹² In 1961, Fataar was banned for five years under the Suppression of Communism Act. Figure 17 on page 203 shows Alie Fataar with his 10A class during the year he was banned.

⁵⁹³ Fataar, Alie (undated) *Alie Fataar: a short biography*. Mimeo, 2 typed pages.

⁵⁹⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 9 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁹⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁵⁹⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar



Figure 17: The 10A class of 1961 at Livingstone High School is pictured here with their class-teacher, Alie Fataar, seen here standing in the centre of the front-row. The group is standing at the entrance to Livingstone High School's main building. During this same year, 1961, Fataar was banned for five years under the Suppression of Communism Act, resulting in his having to resign formally from organised structures. In reality, he continued working clandestinely in these organisations, and was a founder-member of Apdusa during this very period. Photo courtesy Alie Fataar



Figure 18: During our interview on 7 April 2003, Alie Fataar produced the full photograph (to the left on the composite image above) of a clandestine three-day beach meeting at Kommetjie, Cape Town, in 1961, at which, Fataar indicated, he was the only banned person on the group, as other members' banning orders had recently ended. Members of the NEUM and Apdusa from all over the country were present at this meeting. Seated at the front are, from left, Jane Gool, Leo Sihlali and Isaac Bangani Tabata. Alie Fataar is seen, back, third from right, on the main photograph. During the interview, a fragment of a photograph fell out of the envelope from which the full photograph had been taken. Alie Fataar indicated, as noted on page 223, that he had 'cut him off'. The fragment had been cut off another, larger version of the same photograph. The person on the photo-fragment, noted Fataar, who abruptly indicated that he did not remember the person's name, had turned state-witness during the terrorism trial of thirteen Unity Movement members. Photo and photo-fragment courtesy Alie Fataar

It was a revelatory moment. An enlarged fragment of the original full photograph had fallen from the table. The person on the far-right of the original photograph had literally been “cut off”: cut out of a different, enlarged version of the original photograph. Fataar had described in detail how he had helped organise this ‘beach conference’ in 1961, during his banning.

A significant number of persons on the photograph would leave into exile shortly and over the next two years. I wondered what thoughts and emotions had accompanied the ‘cutting off’ of the person who had turned state witness against them. I asked Fataar about this. He responded by relating the question to something that had occurred at Livingstone High School:

We had just... (cynical laugh) I tell you what; we were having the Alexander case. We had this character at Livingstone who had to go and give evidence – he’s still teaching at Livingstone. So the day after, they came to school, came to the staff-room and he was alone in the staff-room. I came in and I said: “You sonofabitch, you fokkin’ bastard, what are you still doing here...?” The same night the kids went and chucked a brick into his window... (laughs).⁵⁹⁷

The original expletives are not included here to detract from the person of Alie Fataar, nor are they included here for dramatic or sensational effect. These elements, as part of the broader narrative, speak to the incredible rage recalled by Alie Fataar some forty years later. The atmosphere at the school at the time can be interpolated as being very tense, given that tensions between staff members Fataar and Richard Dudley had come to a head in the TLSA, culminating in Fataar not opposing Dudley for the TLSA General Secretary’s position in 1959:

⁵⁹⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

So Dudley got there unopposed – then I knew they were pushing for Dudley - we were both in the Claremont branch, you see – and then he got in unopposed. So I just handed over to him, finish and klaar [*done and dusted*], and that very same year, the end of the year, I was elected Joint Secretary of the Unity Movement because others had pulled out, you see; Boonzaaier, Neethling – they went with the Jaffes and the Dudleys. So Mqotsi and I became the Joint Secretaries. Then I was banned in 1961; then again with the conference in 1961, December, I was again appointed although I was banned – I couldn't even be in the conference. So Apdusa was there and all that sort of thing – so that was the period of the split, you see.⁵⁹⁸

It is useful to pause here to reflect on the nature of this study. The importance of the period, its implications for the trajectory the country would take, and the consequences for organisations are critical components of the histories being written by several contributors to the broadening of South African resistance historiography.

In this sense, a life-history study such as this works alongside such studies in which a single respondent, here Alie Fataar, constructs narratives he privileges, coaxed along, questioned, sought clarity from, and otherwise challenged by the researcher. This study is placed alongside other historical studies in order to produce a more nuanced academic insight into the period and its politics.

It is useful to revisit a central tenet of life-history studies here, in order to ground the study once more in the frame in which this research project must be understood. The study does not make any claims to being a definitive historical account. Its explicit narratives are critical, but so are its silences, which need to be recognised by the researcher and placed via a reflexive gaze into the analysis and learnings from such a study.

⁵⁹⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 12 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

In this vein, we again remind ourselves (before illuminating Alie Fataar's role in the formation of Apdusa), what a life-history study sets out to achieve:

The ability of life history to focus upon central moments, critical incidents, or fateful moments that revolve around indecision, confusions, contradictions and ironies, gives a greater sense of process to a life and gives a more ambiguous, complex, and chaotic view of reality. It also presents more "rounded" and believable characters than the "flat," seemingly irrational, and linear characters from other forms of qualitative inquiry.⁵⁹⁹

From Fataar's perspective, my seemingly naïve question around the formation of Apdusa elicited a lengthy elaborative response. I asked him as he had completed his narrative around the period of the split in the NEUM, "Okay, now, the Apdusa move. Were you involved with that at all?"⁶⁰⁰

After the lengthy discussion about the split, the almost ignorant question about his role in Apdusa's formation appeared to amuse Fataar somewhat. "Yes, very much. (laughs) Ninety-nine percent."⁶⁰¹ He elaborated:

You see then I was already banned and then Tabata's banning had come to an end of course. Well, his banning had already come to an end round about that time, 1960 or so. So we had the anti-CAD pulling out of the Unity Movement and that left now a gap for people who wanted to remain in the Unity Movement. And for that purpose then, we started the first Unity organisation, where you could join the Movement as a member... they were all Unity Movement but here for the first time we formed – that's why I had to draft a constitution; me, Tabata and Jane Gool at No. 8 Milan Street. And the name as well changed and in the end we came to the name being Southern Africa, not just South Africa. Well we had to put it to a committee afterwards but we sort of sat down and day after day worked out a programme and then eventually the constitution, so that the reason why it was the African People's... because we were the peoples of Southern Africa. We also had in mind at that time the other places, although we didn't push it but we certainly

⁵⁹⁹ Sparkes, in Hatch and Wisniewski, 1995: 116

⁶⁰⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁰¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 5 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

had Namibia in mind. So it was South Africa, Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland and Botswana and these were all unfree in that they were British protectorates.⁶⁰²

The internal issues of the split, combined with a re-appraisal of the nature of the challenges faced by the reorganised NEUM, brought into being a movement that now organised very differently to the federal structure which had characterised the NEUM before the split. “Anybody could join and there was no class question, professional or worker, anything they were, rural or... and so we used to have meetings in locations, house-meetings,” Fataar indicated.⁶⁰³

This shift in the organisational restructuring in the face of massive state repression and the internal complications was remarkable in many senses, and the significance of its formation in Southern African resistance historiography is yet to be widely acknowledged in the face of a triumphalist post-apartheid ANC discourse.

Through all of this, Fataar continued to teach at Livingstone, alongside colleagues like Richard Dudley, with whom relations were at a low ebb as a result of the splits in 1959. Allied to this was the reality that people like Fataar, the senior of the two, and Dudley, were consistently overlooked for the leadership of the school. As will be shown in the paragraphs which follow, Fataar did not claim during our interviews that the internal tensions amongst colleagues on the same staffs contributed in any way to his decision to depart into exile.

⁶⁰² Interview with Alie Fataar, 5 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁰³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 26 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Fataar indicated that with Isaac Tabata, Jane Gool and others leaving into exile around 1962, and Fataar himself banned in 1961 and finally exiting South Africa in March 1965, “we left only (Apdusa) branches like Cape Town and Durban.”⁶⁰⁴

By 18 June 1964, Fataar had already begun thinking about leaving into exile. He solicited a testimonial from his former student and now Livingstone High School acting-principal, Ron Samuels. The testimonial penned by Ron Samuels in favour of Alie Fataar is reproduced as Figure 19 on page 210. The tone of the next extract from the transcripts seems incompatible with the tone of the preceding pages.

At the time, Fataar was more intent on talking about *finding* the testimonials and indicating how surprised he was at their contents, than talking through the context in which they had been solicited and received. Nevertheless, the presentation of the testimonial by Alie Fataar during the interview is instructive:

...the first one I have here is in June 1964... I'll find it somewhere here. And there was an acting-principal of Livingstone because they wouldn't make us principal. So that Samuels – an ex-student of mine – he's now the principal over me. So he gave me a full-page testimonial in case I should apply for another job. But I don't know why I did it in June 1964...? You see, I was already banned for three years and I thought that if I have to leave the country I must have something from the man... where I was at Livingstone. So he gives me this glowing testimonial.⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 5 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁰⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

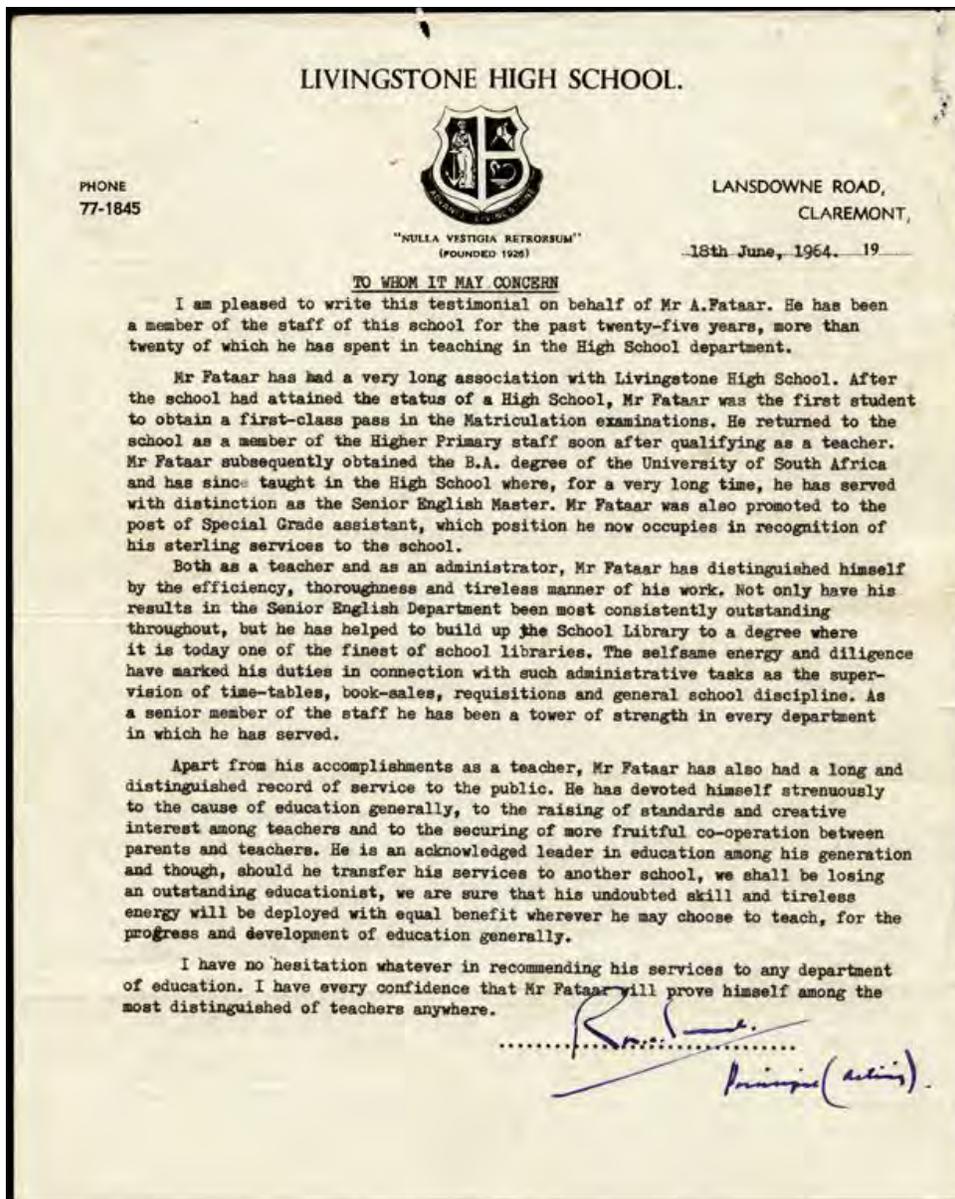


Figure 19: The testimonial above, in favour of Alie Fataar, was penned for him by his former pupil, and his current (June 1964) acting-principal at Livingstone High School, Ron Samuels. The testimonial is significant in that Alie Fataar indicates that in June 1964, he was already thinking about the need to solicit testimonials if he 'had to leave the country' (Interview 16 June, 2003, Wynberg, conducted by Yunus Omar). Outside of this, the testimonial is important as it hides several sub-texts, including the sense of outrage Fataar and other senior figures felt at being bypassed for formal leadership at the school due to their political affiliations and activities. Fataar indicates during the interview that Samuels was the principal 'over' him, indicating how he felt subjugated by this leadership structure.

Image courtesy Alie Fataar

There are several indications of malcontent in the extract. It rankles Fataar that long-serving teachers such as he and Richard Dudley are deliberately overlooked for the position of principal due to their political activism, and a student of his acts ‘over’ him as his principal. The trope of being dominated is explicit.

Fataar then questions why he would have solicited the testimonial in June 1964 already, and immediately answers by indicating that it was due to his thinking ‘if I have to leave the country’.

Most interestingly, Fataar indicated in a different interview that he had solicited the testimonial because “I thought with that I’d get posts, even if it meant going overseas”.⁶⁰⁶ Exile was therefore already a deliberate thought at least mid-way through 1964, as was the thought that he might secure a teaching post overseas. ‘Overseas’ here may indicate that Fataar was thinking about an alternative to exile in Africa, more specifically Zambia, where Isaac Tabata and Jane Gool were already in exile.

Fataar spoke quite extensively about the period during which he contemplated going into exile, employing several tropes during these narrations. I asked the following: “How was that decision made to go into exile? Can I ask you some of the details of how that went about... family decisions, er... political decisions in the Movement? How did you go about taking that decision?”⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁰⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Fataar paused for a discernible time, and then began an extensive response to the question and the sub-questions I had posed.

Well, the funny thing is, living in that period, you can't live outside of your social and political environment. And for that matter your personal relations with family and so on. So, er... there are facets of life that you have to contend with: the home, the children, the wife, the in-laws, the family generally. Then there's the external; the outside, social conditions; and then there's international conditions – all these impinge on you in various ways but you haven't got time to analyse them.⁶⁰⁸

Fataar then sketched parallels between the period of the Great Depression and the period at the start of the 21st-century, indicating how he had, with others, chosen to go with “the unknown”: a “socialist system or socialism and equality” rather than with the known but loathed capitalist system.⁶⁰⁹ He continued:

So you have to **assess** the people you associate with and that is why the attraction was to go to Goolam Gool because he had that in him, which takes you along that route and not remain with the other one. So now when it comes to having taken part in the whole struggle, you're exposing yourself to the powers-that-be and don't even think of the consequences, when eventually the consequences become so obvious that you can't exist under this system short of going to be incarcerated (short laugh – pause... puts cup down). So it means you've got **logically** to go forward with the struggle and that meant you had to go and join those who were going to help to conduct the struggle from outside. That's how I landed in exile.⁶¹⁰

The period was further contextualised by Fataar in terms of members of the ANC, PAC, and Unity Movement leadership figures like Isaac Tabata and Jane Gool who had already fled into exile to escape the state crackdown.

So in a sense then, 1964, the Executive or the Head Unity Committee and of Apdusa, which was held in Durban, September 1964, most of us were already banned people: Dr.

⁶⁰⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁰⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶¹⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

Limbada – well, Tabata and Jane Gool were already in exile – (inaudible) Elma Carolissen, myself, er... Natal people, er... some of them you'll find in that picture there. It was the first time we'd met since we'd had that secret meeting on the beach. So we there had to take various decisions about our activity through and by means of external training and gathering of people... Anyhow, they clamped down and, er... that was September, October, and then December they came to me and, er... got me to Caledon Square on instructions from the Special Branch in Durban.⁶¹¹

Fataar's eldest son was graduating as a medical doctor on the day Fataar was summoned to Caledon Square police-station to present himself for interrogation by the notorious Van Wyk brothers of the Special Branch.

...that's on the day Abe qualified... was being capped, so I couldn't even be there at twelve o'clock – I had to be with them at Caledon Square. [Very long pause] They knew enough about our meeting or so they pretended to know. [Pronounced sound of cup setting down on saucer] When I got home the evening I decided, no – in my mind was always what Mahatma Gandhi used to say: "If the ruling class put you in their prison, you are socially and politically dead." And that's how I regarded it. You can do much more being outside than being inside. So there my own decision was that night: I looked at the family there. They're having the party – the next morning I disappeared. I never saw them again. That was somewhere in December 1964. And after being around for a while in Jo'burg, I eventually managed to get into Botswana; that was now in March 1965.⁶¹²

At various points during the interviews, Fataar employed different ways of describing his reasons for going into exile. A few interviews after he had first described his going into exile, Fataar related that on the evening of his eldest son's graduation as a medical doctor (the same day that he had been interrogated at Caledon Square Police Station), he received a call: "We'd got home about midnight and the next morning – it was just then we got this phone call: "Scram!" Because that's a sort of code and then you know – they just say "Scram!" And the earliest I could make it was six o'clock."⁶¹³

⁶¹¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶¹² Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶¹³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 5 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

On other occasions during the interviews, Fataar narrated that he had been “called”⁶¹⁴ into exile by the already-exiled leadership; that he was “slipping out;”⁶¹⁵ was “pushing off;”⁶¹⁶ and that he had followed the teaching of Mahatma Gandhi who advocated that being in the prisons of your oppressor meant that you were “socially and politically dead.”⁶¹⁷

It is interesting here to note that in a subsequent interview, Fataar addresses the issue of fear and the repressive regime in South Africa. He indicates, as before, that they “were summonsed to come.”⁶¹⁸ Unsolicited, he continues:

...we didn't leave, like so many people left the country here because they were afraid of apartheid and so on. But we were instructed by the Unity Movement, that met here, that when Lusaka says we must come, we must go, and that was the only time, in September 1964, when things were getting so hot for us now, because they had banned so many of us...⁶¹⁹

The proffered reason for evading imprisonment is Gandhi's maxim that imprisonment by the oppressor class renders one “socially and politically dead”.⁶²⁰ Not once does Fataar indicate that there is an element of fear. Even when he relates the interrogation by the Special Branch on the occasion of his son's graduation as a medical doctor, there is no overt reference to a notion of fear. The only occasion on which Fataar refers to fear is when alluding to people who ‘left the country here because they were afraid of

⁶¹⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 12 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar; Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶¹⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶¹⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 12 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶¹⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 5 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar; Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶¹⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 9 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶¹⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 9 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶²⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

apartheid'. For Fataar and his comrades, the discourse is one which privileges a reading of their going into exile to the effect that they will be 'more useful outside than inside'.⁶²¹

He indicated that the decision to go into exile "didn't affect me" health-wise, and that "politically, it strengthened my resolve to get where I wanted to."⁶²²

In a more candid and surprising comment, Fataar indicated:

It's strange that, er, most of this... I suppose my age at that time... early thirties, no, late forties, er... I turned fifty when I was there in Botswana. Er, that age you feel... adventurous is one way, er... you're not reckless, but you work out what you have to do next... so you have to take all of this in your stride.⁶²³

After serving Livingstone High School since 1938, Alie Fataar left without notice in December 1964. He was 47-years old, and would not teach again formally in South Africa. He took into exile nearly three decades of teaching and political experience, but the initial experience of exile was to prove anything but welcoming.

Insights from Chapter Five

Having emerged from Livingstone High School as a significantly engaged young socialist, Fataar is, without prior knowledge of this eventuality, unable to secure the teaching subjects he requires at a newly-established government school, Livingstone High School, to enter university. In spite of his being the only student in the Cape coloured schools to achieve a first-class pass, Fataar's school, Livingstone, does not provide a mathematics teacher, and his curriculum therefore does not qualify him for the

⁶²¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 12 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶²² Interview with Alie Fataar, 12 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶²³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

matriculation pass that will secure university entry. The effect is to be life-long. His university educational aspirations thwarted, Fataar has to register at a second-prize educational institution in the form of a teacher-training college. He accepts this, but his desire for a university degree burns within him. He excels at teacher-training college, as he indicates, with pride, as he has done all his schooling life. At Zonnebloem Teacher Training College, Fataar is cognisant of the genderedness of his experiences, which manifest in teacher Mary Waters, to whom Alie Fataar appends the considerable honour of her being 'my ideal teacher'. This is crucial, as it displays, amongst other things, that Fataar's teacherly self is hugely gender-inflected, something he recognises in retrospect, and in which he takes considerable pride.

In this chapter, too, the confluences of the researched and researcher's lives were foregrounded as an analytical alert. It is during moments of biographical confluence, such as Fataar's 'I was always secretary,' that the researcher has to remain alert to the affective dimensions which roar into significance, and which can potentially disrupt the scholarly orientation of the research project. I work with this reality by foregrounding these moments of biographical intersection, and by alerting the project and its readers of my explicit recognition of these moments. By making these connections explicit, potential bias is at least partially mediated, and it allows the reader of this thesis to bring to her reading an analytical gaze which may otherwise be difficult to recognise. It therefore facilitates a dialogical reading, which again makes explicit that this thesis, and its author, are social constructions which become research objects in and of themselves.

In the next chapter, the focus is on Alie Fataar's narrative experience of exile. The chapter primarily examines the extent to which the period of exile was characterised by an emphasis on political work, or whether Alie Fataar, the teacher, was foregrounded, and the consequences of these findings.

Chapter Six: More useful outside than inside: education and politics in exile

Twenty-six years after starting to teach at his *alma mater*, Livingstone High School, Alie Fataar began a new life in Bechuanaland, a British Protectorate situated north of South Africa, and nestled between South-West Africa to the west and Rhodesia to the east. He had spent three months in hiding in South Africa, being assisted by persons such as Marchina Gool, daughter of Cissie Gool, and her husband in Kenilworth, Johannesburg.⁶²⁴ A young Marchina Gool is captured in Figure 20 on page 219 along with a group of female friends and Alie Fataar in Kirstenbosch Gardens in 1936.

Fataar's absence from Livingstone High School at the start of the 1965 school-year was noted in an article Fataar indicated had been placed in the *Cape Herald*. The newspaper cutting Alie Fataar produced from his archive was imprinted in Alie Fataar's handwriting as from *Die Banier* dated 13 February 1965 (see Figure 21 on page 220, which is a copy of the article held by Alie Fataar). Fataar indicated during an interview that it had appeared "(O)n the front page. 'Where is ...' in bold letters... George Golding... 'Where is Alie Fataar?'"⁶²⁵ The article noted, *inter alia*:

In recent years Mr. Fataar has been a sobering influence at the Livingstone High School. There was even talk of his elevation to that of vice-principal... Mr. Fataar was a determined fighter for the rights of the Coloured people. His methods were straight forward, and he asked for no favours from anybody. He stood his ground amongst his

⁶²⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 30 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶²⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar



Figure 20: Alie Fataar, seated at the back, on the right, sits behind Marchina Gool, daughter of Zainunisa (Cissie) Gool. The photograph was taken during a group outing to Kirstenbosch. The photograph has been annotated by Alie Fataar as '1936'. During a three-month period between December 1964 and March 1965, Alie Fataar indicated that he had gone underground to escape arrest by the Special Branch of the apartheid state. Marchina Gool and her husband, related Alie Fataar, had been one of many couples and individuals who had given him refuge during this period. Photo courtesy Alie Fataar



Figure 21: This newspaper article, indicated Alie Fataar, had been penned by George Golding. Fataar had left Livingstone High School without notice in December 1964, as he went incognito to avoid arrest as he made final preparations for his flight into nearly three decades of exile. Image courtesy Alie Fataar

colleagues and refused at all times to compromise on principles... What lies behind his withdrawal is a question to which only he can reply.⁶²⁶

After three months in hiding in various suburbs of Johannesburg, Fataar crossed over the South African border at Ramathlabama over the Easter weekend in March 1965.

Once he had crossed the fence late at night, he continued moving east to a railway siding “on the way to Lobatse,”⁶²⁷ where a local contact would be waiting to take him the twenty miles to his first destination in exile. The contact was waiting with his son “outside there at about six o’clock in the morning because it was March, it was Easter time, so I know that it was sunrise at about that time but it was quite cold already.”⁶²⁸

“All I was interested in,” related Fataar, was “how free am I?... that’s all I was interested in.”⁶²⁹ He was able to shower at the little shop near the railway siding, “and I telephoned the people in Lobatse to say I’ve arrived.”⁶³⁰ Fataar continued: “I just had a little soft case and a little rain overcoat. That’s all I had with me. And I had a sun-hat but of course it got soaked in the rain – a white hat. And so I had some twenty rand or so with me or thirty rand, which people had given me on the way.”⁶³¹

⁶²⁶ Extract from newspaper cutting *Die Banier*, handwritten imprint 13 February 1965. The article is not bylined. Source: Alie Fataar

⁶²⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 9 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶²⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 9 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶²⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 9 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶³⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 9 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶³¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 9 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Once in Lobatse, things went badly. The refugee group, now joined by Fataar, were unable to work due to regulations in the country. Personally, things were rough: "...we had difficulties with accommodation, sleeping on the floor."⁶³²

...and this chap from the New End Refugee Council coming from Lusaka, where they had an office; they had to come and help all the refugees with the... ANC... PAC... All they did was they gave us a bag of mealie-meal and a bag of salt. [Laughs softly] We had to live on that. Those were our rations. Um... then, of course, Lusaka didn't have any money, so we didn't expect money from them.⁶³³

These initial pieces of narrative open up three crucial elements. The first is that Fataar experienced an immediate and dramatic change in what may be termed the 'material quality of life' he had been accustomed to as a teacher in Cape Town.

While his Cape Town 'quality of life' was not lavish by any standards, and given that he had experienced the deep trauma of an impoverished household during the Depression years, here he was faced with no prospect of employment, no money to draw on, precious little food, and he was forced to sleep on the stoep-floor of a shop.

The second is that the Unity Movement exiles in Lusaka could not provide financial support to the group of refugees in Lobatse. This is a critical point, as the Lusaka office of what became the Unity Movement of South Africa (UMSA) was hampered by a lack of adequate funding throughout the period of exile. An extract from a letter written by Isaac Tabata to Wycliffe Tsotsi indicates the following:

⁶³² Interview with Alie Fataar, 9 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶³³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 9 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

The authorities here are most sympathetic to our refugees. But it must be understood that we ourselves do not want a flood of people landing here. We cannot afford to feed them and we do not want to be a burden on the Zambian Government, in any way whatsoever.⁶³⁴

The extract raises several troubling questions, but these are not the focus of the present study. For the purposes of this study, the extract reveals that there was a space for debate regarding full-time political work in the UMSA office in Lusaka versus remunerative employment and part-time political work, given the severe financial constraints on the Movement.

In this regard, correspondence in the Tabata Collection relates the tensions between Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and relations with UMSA. A letter laments: “I am disappointed Ali (sic.) and Karrim were not given permits to enter Zambia. I am informed that the office in Lusaka can only have six persons. Can you throw light on this? I did not expect Kaunda’s government to go to such limits.”⁶³⁵

The earlier extracts, thirdly, indicate that the refugees in Lobatse had a struggle on their hands regarding sparse support from agencies meant to provide adequately for political refugees such as Fataar.

The predicament of the Unity Movement cadres at this time, for the purposes of this study, specifically Alie Fataar, is captured in three separate pieces of correspondence in the UMSA-Tabata Collection. The first, dated 28 November 1966, reads in part:

⁶³⁴ Letter ‘to Wyckie Tsotsi from IBT,’ 28 November 1966, I.B. Tabata Collection (BC925)

⁶³⁵ Letter from ‘Amby’ to Dora Taylor, 2 August 1965, I.B. Tabata Collection (BC925)

The experiences our fellows went through in all the centres, Botswana, Lusaka, Lesotho, etc., after leaving home, seem to have produced a tendency to be cautious at a time when boldness and more boldness (I would even say reckless disregard of personal consideration) is an absolute necessity. Here I am not referring to such things as exposure to imprisonment. I am talking about material personal well-being. This is the danger I fear. Unless we decide to take the plunge and swim for survival, we are not only faced with the danger of losing the revolutionary élan which carried us at home but with disintegration. There are times when a man is faced with a choice of staking everything he has got, or lose all, including the future. We have now reached such a critical stage. We stand on the very brink. Either we dive in now and swim across, or the approaching torrent of history will brush us aside.⁶³⁶

The evocative language from Isaac Tabata is less than two years after Alie Fataar left South Africa into exile. It is included here as a stark indication of the insecurity which surrounded the refugees in Lobatse, of which Fataar was a member. Fataar had by this time been allowed to find employment, and was at the Swaneng Hill School in Serowe, to which we will devote fuller attention later in this chapter.

The second piece of communication referred to earlier concerns a four-page, typed letter to Alie Fataar from Isaac Tabata. It reads, in part:

You know, Alie, I feel that a little boldness and a revolutionary imagination would get us somewhere. I am in constant fear of that revolutionary spirit being replaced by petit-bourgeois timidity, and even apathy, as a result of the long delay in obtaining recognition by the Committee of 11... Our problem is lack of personnel, and that revolutionary boldness, enthusiasm and élan that always carried us through the most difficult times in our country. Thais (sic.) why I need you so much... Exile has a most insidious effect on the individual, all the more so because we have been transplanted from our own soil from which we constantly drew sustenance. It is a devilish process, because one is often not aware of what is gnawing at the very core and centre of his revolutionary strength.⁶³⁷

This letter to Fataar, exhorting ‘boldness’ in the face of the uncertainty of the refugees’ status and future in exile is indicative of the severe pressure faced by the Unity

⁶³⁶ Letter ‘to Wyckie Tsotsi from IBT’, 28 November 1966, I.B. Tabata Collection (BC925)

⁶³⁷ Letter to ‘My dear Alie’, unsigned, but from the context, written by I.B. Tabata, 19 November 1966, I.B. Tabata Collection (BC925)

Movement in exile as the OAU, under the influence of Moscow, fully recognised the ANC in exile, while withholding full recognition and therefore material support for the Unity Movement.

But there was an infinitely greater challenge at work during this period, as several pieces of communication in the I.B. Tabata Collection point to.⁶³⁸ The (arguably) more serious institutional, political discourse that runs through this initial period of exile is the documenting of internal divisions in the Unity Movement, which involved the person of Alie Fataar. One indication of this, from a quite substantial set of documents in the I.B. Tabata Collection, reveals the following:

Now I am firstly going to show that within the Unity Movement there is a clique which from time to time finds it necessary to gang up in order to devise ways of liquidating those who have been found to be an obstacle to the machinations of this clique... Alie Fataar, who had fallen out with another section of the conspiracy was also down for assassination at the same time but this did not suit the books of the other members of the gang. The recommendation from the émigrés that he should be removed from one of the Joint-Secretaryships was not placed before the open meeting of the HUC.⁶³⁹

The achronological presentation of the three archival documents does not impede an appreciation of the multifaceted problems and challenges Fataar faced amidst the

⁶³⁸ It is noted here, as has been detailed in Part One of this study, that the I.B. Tabata Collection, as with any archive, is not a neutral body of work. It is a curated, deliberate collection of documents that speaks to ideological and other motivations, all of which are acknowledged here. The use of these materials is thus not naïve. These records are deployed here as useful artefacts in piecing together a sense of the documented tensions that were playing out in the very first years of Fataar's exile. As such, they allow a more complete understanding of the swirling complexity of Alie Fataar's initial years in exile, and therefore these documents form a layer of contextuality that is a boon to the research process as it seeks to understand the multiple dimensions of Alie Fataar's life, and his agency in navigating these currents and making choices at every point.

⁶³⁹ 'Speech delivered by Mr. Mqotsi at the meeting of HUC members held from the 19th April – 26th April 1966, in Lusaka, Zambia. Dated 21st April (1966). Addressed to 'President, Mr. I.B. Tabata' and 'Chairman of the Meeting, Mr. N. Honono. 8 typed pages, I.B. Tabata Collection (BC925)

personal dislocation brought about by exile. As the chapter develops, this context is the crucial layering on which the rest of the exile period will be written around.

Fataar's frustration at not being allowed to work legally in the now independent Botswana was compounded when he was refused permission "to be even in this Muslim school as principal"⁶⁴⁰ in Lobatse.

And there was pressure on the exiles to leave or there was pressure on... Botswana had tried, so when they became independent, they passed a law about putting all exiles in one camp and preventing them from doing this, that and the other. Then that was taken up by the United Nations itself and they raised it inside the United Nations that Botswana had become a party to the international arrangement for refugees and that law was contrary to the camping; that they had to give all refugees opportunities for work; for employment; for study; and to travel.⁶⁴¹

Fataar describes his first year in exile as "trying to find work to keep body and soul together and also to see that the family in Cape Town had something."⁶⁴² By this time, Fataar's second wife and newborn son had joined him in Botswana. He thus faced the task of providing for two families at a time when he, and others in Lobatse, were forbidden to find employment.

"Anyhow," related Fataar, "that's the kind of life and eventually we got this shop which we ran, a bakery and all that and just one day a month off."⁶⁴³ Fataar indicated that he "was fortunate" that Samsodien (Sam) Chand and his family "allowed me to be in their lounge, sleep there and help them during the day in the little shop they had."⁶⁴⁴ Fataar

⁶⁴⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 30 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁴¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 29 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁴² Interview with Alie Fataar, 29 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁴³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁴⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

related with great anger at first, and then sadness, Chand's death at the hands of suspected apartheid assassins in 1990:

(spoken very softly) Three o'clock in the morning they must have come through the top there by arrangement or other and the house is just about two kilometres from the border town; there the house is and the shop and the garden and the big store. And they had information that he was assisting the PAC. They went into the house, shot the wife, shot the boy who was in matric and shot the two spastic boys and then put grenades or stuff 'round his body and blew up his body and bits of flesh all over the trees outside – the whole house was demolished.⁶⁴⁵

Samsodien (Sam) Chand's death occurred at the moment South Africa's apartheid killing machine was unleashing its most brutal retribution in the countries neighbouring South Africa, even as it unbanned the liberation movements and released political prisoners.

This was the regime from which Fataar and others had fled or moved into exile, and where he now Fataar found himself floundering “until this chap Van Rensburg came there, looking for a teacher.”⁶⁴⁶

A crucial insertion is necessary at this point. It attests to the intellectual, social and potential economic capital that qualified teachers held in exile in Africa. Tabata indicates to Wycliffe Tsotsi in the correspondence already referred to in this chapter, that, with regard to Zambia, “(O)nly professionals can find employment, particularly doctors, lawyers or teachers with the highest qualifications.”⁶⁴⁷

During the recorded interviews, Alie Fataar indicated that in September 1964,

⁶⁴⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁴⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁴⁷ Letter 'to Wyckie Tsotsi from IBT', 28 November 1966, I.B. Tabata Collection (BC925)

it was obvious now... I'd have to make arrangements because of their having grabbed Enver Hassim, the lawyer, and Tsotsi, and they grilled them, that they would come around to me and the others... And there I had prepared now. I said: 'Look, wherever I go, I may not get the OAU's assistance but I will be able to **teach** and that will be useful for the **Movement**.'⁶⁴⁸

Whether this was a retrospective account by Fataar or not, its importance lies in Fataar's counterpointing of the possible lack of assistance to him by the OAU, and the agency he was potentially able to exercise in exile by virtue of his teaching capital.

Patrick Van Rensburg threw a lifeline at Alie Fataar in this regard.

"I've got great admiration for him,"⁶⁴⁹ said Fataar, who went into considerable detail regarding Van Rensburg's background, indicating that Van Rensburg, who had been raised in, and had worked in Afrikaner institutions, "was working out a penance... because of what the Afrikaners did to the Africans, the people of South Africa."⁶⁵⁰

So we managed to run the Swaneng Hill School, building it up from nothing really. This thing started behind thorn bushes. Eventually, of course, we had some buildings up, made out of sunburnt bricks... whether you were a teacher there or a student, you all had to, you, know, put in your share... I helped and I was... carpentry and upholstery (laughs)... and also with painting; all sorts of things like that. And we managed to get a school going, the buildings and all, hall and all. I built a beautiful library there, for example.⁶⁵¹

The period of intense psychological, educational and material deprivation was broken by Fataar's appointment to the Swaneng Hill School as English Head of Department in 1966. He brought his love of Shakespeare here, too, fitting out a space in the library

⁶⁴⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁶⁴⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁵⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁵¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

where long-playing records could be played: "...we used to get British Council records; Shakespeare... and other various books on... set-work books."⁶⁵²

Fataar taught at Swaneng Hill for two years.

...we did quite well on their O-levels; the class of '67 passed very well – I had some very good first division passes in the English language and literature, and some of these went further. The class of '67, at least '66-'67, I'd prepared, together with others, for Cambridge O-levels and they went places overseas even. There was the one woman who became a meteorologist in America. There was the top one, er... Moses Lekaukau, who became an advocate... He's still very much a top official in government there."⁶⁵³

The discourse of academic achievement of selected pupils⁶⁵⁴ was discussed in the previous chapter, in which Fataar's privileging of the student-achievement trope was contrasted to a silence around his lesser-able academic charges. While this may very well be correct, it is potentially reductionist in that it represents Fataar as a unidimensional teacher, focused only on academic prowess.

Part of the intrigue, and quite frankly, the uniqueness Fataar brought to teaching, includes his repertoire of skills. Arguably, the tailoring, carpentry and general woodworking skills provided Fataar with a more nuanced appreciation of students' 'worth', as it were. This cannot, and does not, imply that Fataar did not privilege intellectual achievement above that of more practical skills. But his own foregrounding of his practical skills, as shown in the previous chapter, strongly suggests that he held a broader view of markers of scholastic worth amongst his pupils.

⁶⁵² Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁵³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁵⁴ Wieder and Fataar, 2002: 31

Certainly, at Swaneng Hill, Fataar, as English Head of Department, speaks equally proudly of his students' O-levels success as he does of working with students as they work over weekends and holidays to construct the furniture in the library.⁶⁵⁵ These are aspects of schooling which are unassessed and therefore not part of the formal matrix of discourses of student-achievement.

Fataar, unsolicited and on more than one occasion during the interviews, spoke animatedly about his work with colleagues and students alike. A typical statement reads: “We had all sorts of things we had to build and renovate and plant.”⁶⁵⁶ More pointedly, Fataar spoke about his own repertoire of skills within the core narrative of his own teacher-training:

You see, the fact that you got some education or schooling, as they call it; that you managed to get a degree by study, private study – it was quite an achievement in the community at the time (laughs). I remember it appeared in *The Sun*: I had got my B.A. Then becoming a teacher and learning something about the skills of carpentry and cardboard work. So that you have the intellect but you also have the practical skills. It afterwards came to be called... the polytechs.⁶⁵⁷

It is of great significance that Fataar explicitly links his intellectual advancement, including the notable achievement of reading for the B.A. degree by private study, and his acquired ‘carpentry and cardboard work’ skills learnt as part of the official curriculum at Zonnbloem Teachers’ College.

⁶⁵⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁵⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁵⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Had Fataar terminated the narrative at the attainment of the degree, it would denote his marginalisation of practical skills. He does not marginalise these skills, instead placing them on a continuum of valuable pedagogic elements in his virtual teaching toolbox.

In Serowe, and under the clearly positive, effective and affective leadership of Patrick Van Rensburg, Fataar rekindled his professional teaching life, even if, as shown in the earlier correspondence in the Tabata Collection, things were far from optimal in the political sphere. As at Livingstone High School, he is proud of having ‘built’ a school library with his own hands; as at Livingstone, he now encourages a broad range of student inputs into a Swaneng Hill publication named *The Lizard*.

I had *The Advance* journal⁶⁵⁸ at Livingstone High School. I was the sort of... overall in charge of it and there is one somewhere around called the *Resident Advance*. And then when I got to, er... to Lusaka... when I got to Serowe I again had *The Lizard*⁶⁵⁹, which I found, all written by the students except my little introduction... I mean the whole question now was for the kids to write themselves, to see themselves in print.⁶⁶⁰

The introduction to the magazine, titled “Why Lizard” is reflected in the 55-page, two-stapled, cyclostyled, typed school magazine as authored by ‘Spinzo Serame – Form IV’. Fataar indicates that the piece was written by the Form IV writer, “but of course I had to embellish it.”⁶⁶¹

It was fascinating, instructive and poignant watching Alie Fataar read through the introduction at a most leisurely pace:

⁶⁵⁸ See Figure 22 on page 232 for a reproduction of the December 1949 edition of *The Advance*.

⁶⁵⁹ See Figure 23 on page 233 for a reproduction of the cover of *The Lizard*, published at Swaneng Hill during Fataar’s period there from 1966 to 1967.

⁶⁶⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁶¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

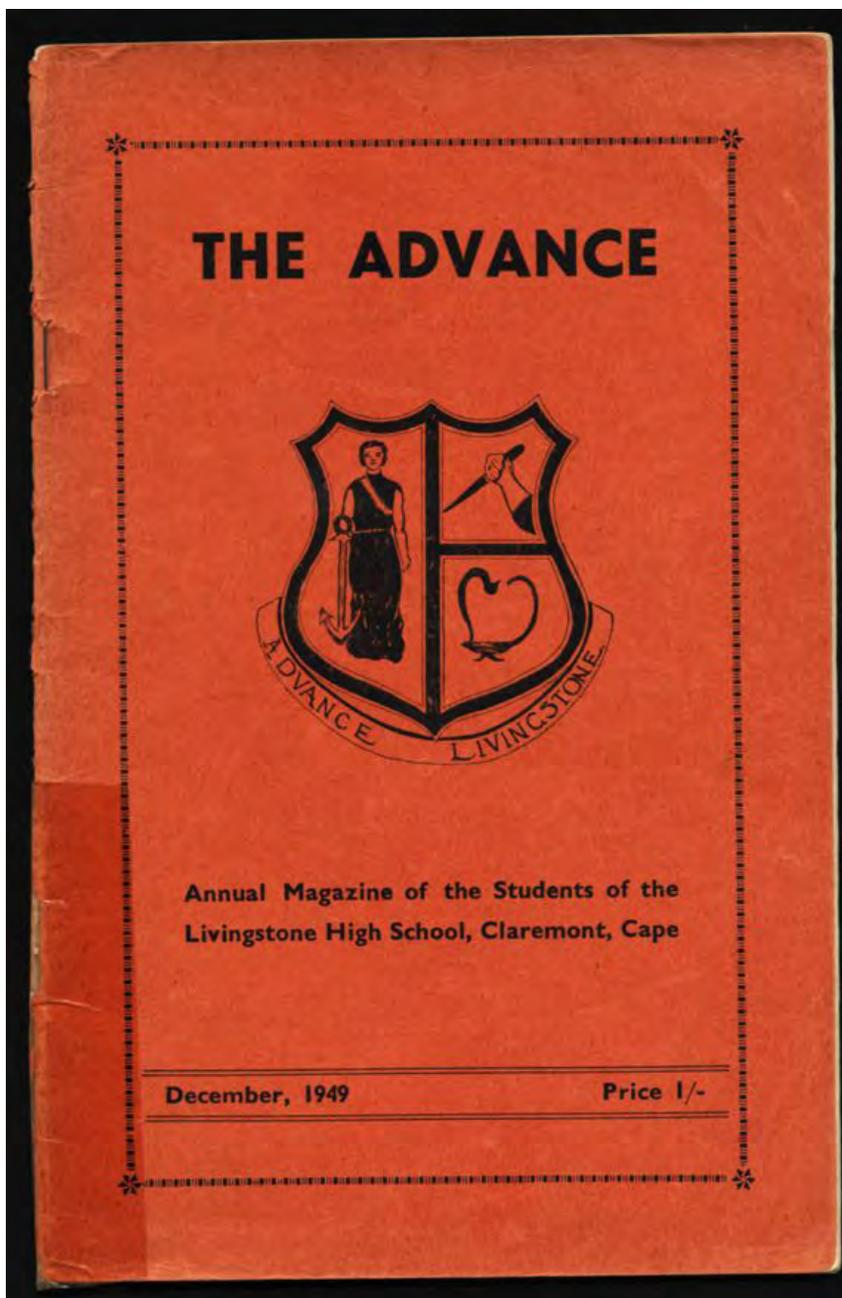


Figure 22: *The Advance*, of which Alie Fataar produced the copy of the 1949 edition, the cover of which is reproduced above, was Livingstone High School's magazine, which Alie Fataar indicates he co-ordinated along with other teachers and students. He mentioned the Livingstone High School magazine in the context of speaking about the Swaneng Hill School in Serowe, Botswana, where he was instrumental in producing their school magazine, *The Lizard*, in 1967. Image courtesy Alie Fataar

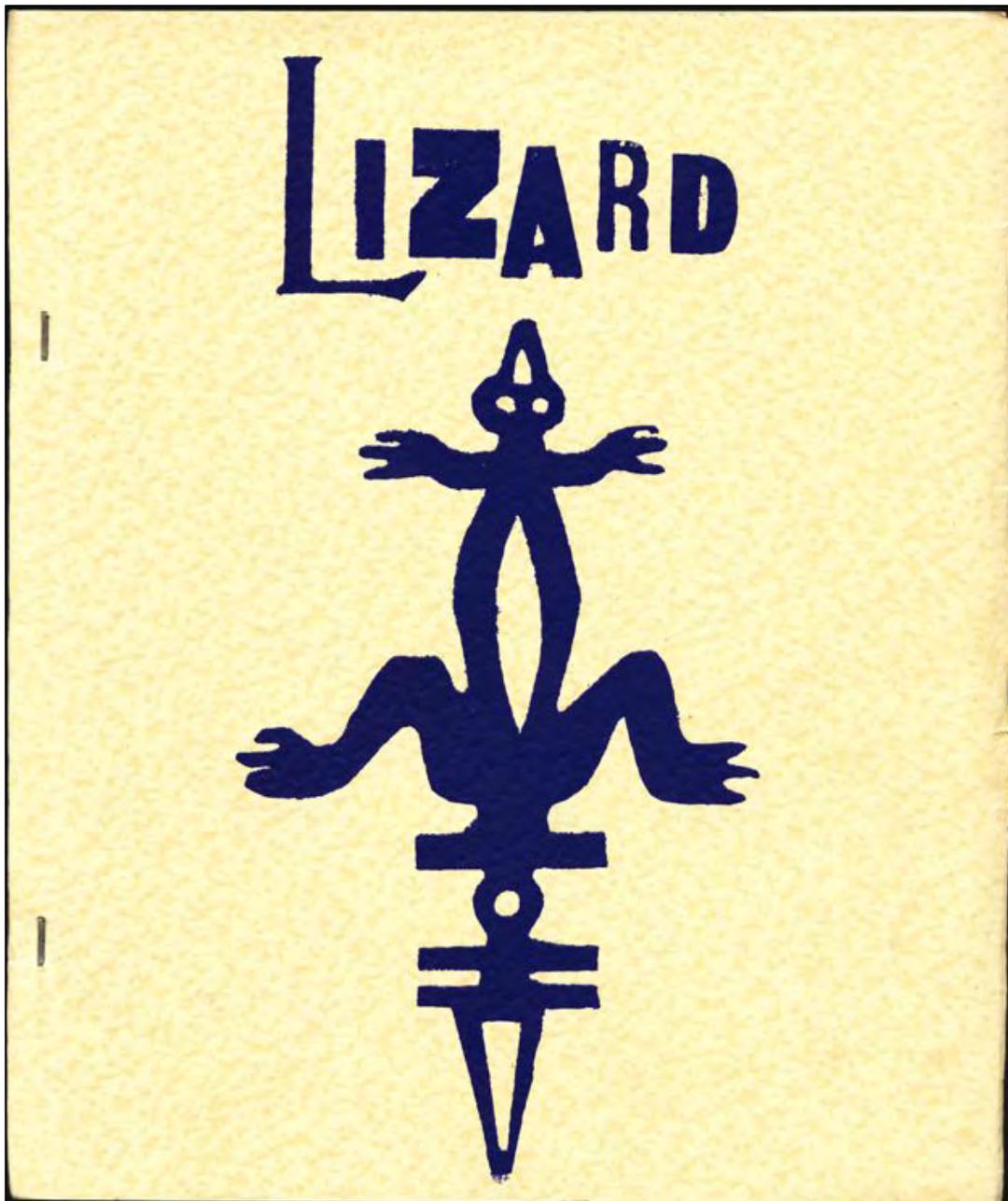


Figure 23: The cover above, of the 1967 edition of *The Lizard*, the magazine of the Swaneng Hill School in Serowe, Botswana, was produced by Alie Fataar as part of a larger narrative about building the school both in terms of pedagogy and the physical structures and infrastructure. As he paged through his copy, he read the 'Introduction' with a mixture of surprise, admiration and laughter. The contents of the 'Introduction', which Fataar indicated he 'embellished' for his student, are detailed in the body of this study, and include an exhortation to newly-independent Botswanan citizens to consolidate their new post-colonial state. Image courtesy Alie Fataar

I think I wrote this: ‘Armed with a lizard’s alertness, smartness, that can regrow its tail; and cleanliness; our newspaper should have a long and effective life. We commend this magazine to those who want to know how we, the Student Lizards of Swaneng, live and work here.’⁶⁶²

Fataar virtually expounds a philosophy of teaching in this short extract. He exhorts a deliberate consciousness; ‘smartness’ and rising from the dust after having been felled by life’s challenges (‘can regrow its tail’). He commends cleanliness, and ‘a long and effective life’. He continued reading:

A lizard is a very watchful creature. It is always alert and ever so ready to catch any fly passing near it... So our newspaper should show its watchfulness by having well selected articles which really have or carry some message to our people. Its hypnotic power would best be demonstrated if it could catch the interest of people of different educational standards.⁶⁶³

The reading was also suffused with hilarity. He continued reading from the introduction:

When grabbed by its tail, it just wiggles its body, [Mr. Fataar laughs] sheds that part of its tail that is being held, and then smartly runs off, as if to say: ‘My friend, I am too smart for you, I don’t mind losing my tail. I’ll grow another one and...’ [Mr. Fataar bursts out laughing along with YO] I haven’t read this for years...⁶⁶⁴

Fataar laughed easily and readily throughout the interviews, often at his own expense. The previous extract could easily have been read solely with a tone that was serious. The reflective Fataar moved easily between seriousness and mirth, without either of the two personas being subjugated.

⁶⁶² Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁶³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁶⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar. (The comma-splice evident in the published magazine is curiously ironic, given that Fataar was one of two teachers listed as ‘Advisers’ to the Editorial Board of *The Lizard*, and that he had at least been part of the writing of the Introduction by ‘embellishing’ it, as he had stated.)

I found this easy to navigate, appreciating the moments of lightness that, at times, made me forget that I was interviewing Alie Fataar for a serious academic study.

In dedicating the magazine-cum-newspaper, *The Lizard*, to readers outside of the school, Fataar indicates that “(T)his was directed towards the population who were recently independent⁶⁶⁵ and who were slow to catch on.”⁶⁶⁶

The political dimension of this ‘Form IV’ introduction is explicit and speaks, perhaps, to the expatriate’s desire to have been able to write a text like this to his fellow South Africans in their own post-colonial experience.

For now, though, he was ‘embellishing’ his Form IV student’s writing with language that suggests that he is beginning to feel part of the political fabric of his first country of exile. The use of ‘our people’ may, or may not be indicative of a sense of belonging, but it is suggestive, and particularly significant in terms of Fataar’s Zambian sojourn, which was to be far more extensive than his three years in Bechuanaland-Botswana. We will revisit the concept of ‘belonging’ in exile as this chapter moves later to the period of exile in Zambia.

Fataar described his two-year teaching stint at Swaneng Hill, which included physically building the school and its resources, growing food, teaching, mentoring student publications and the like in the following terms: “Then, you see, what... the kind of

⁶⁶⁵ Britain declared Botswana independent in September 1966.

⁶⁶⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

question you ask, is my work, my experiences, my day-to-day... now this is all in my **stride.**⁶⁶⁷

During the Swaneng Hill period, there was pressure from Lusaka for Fataar, who was functioning in his capacity as Joint-Secretary of the Unity Movement in exile, to move to Lusaka to augment the sparse human resources available in the Lusaka office.

Eventually the time came when we had to leave because of my health and they didn't have medical facilities, so the one doctor from Scandinavia, a very nice woman, very kind to me, she said: 'I've got the last few triangular tablets here for that headache you get and you take instead of three for the day, you'll have to take one for the next three days,' and I'd run out of them. The heat, you see.⁶⁶⁸

The importance of this narration is that it establishes that Fataar relocated to Zambia, at least in part, due to health reasons, rather than an overt political imperative to be present in Lusaka for more engaged work in the UMSA office.

Before he left Swaneng Hill and Botswana, Fataar requested a testimonial in his favour from Patrick Van Rensburg. The testimonial itself, reproduced as Figure 24 on page 237, is on a 'Swaneng Hill School Board of Governors' letterhead, dated 15 January 1968, and signed in blue ballpoint-ink by principal Van Rensburg, and reads in part:

Mr. Fataar's departure was a very great loss to this school because he was a very fine teacher, indeed, a very conscientious and hardworking person, thoroughly reliable and loyal, dedicated to his profession, a man of great integrity. As Head of Department Mr

⁶⁶⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis – it is worth noting again that Fataar invokes “in my stride” to characterise actions which are quite clearly significant to him)

⁶⁶⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

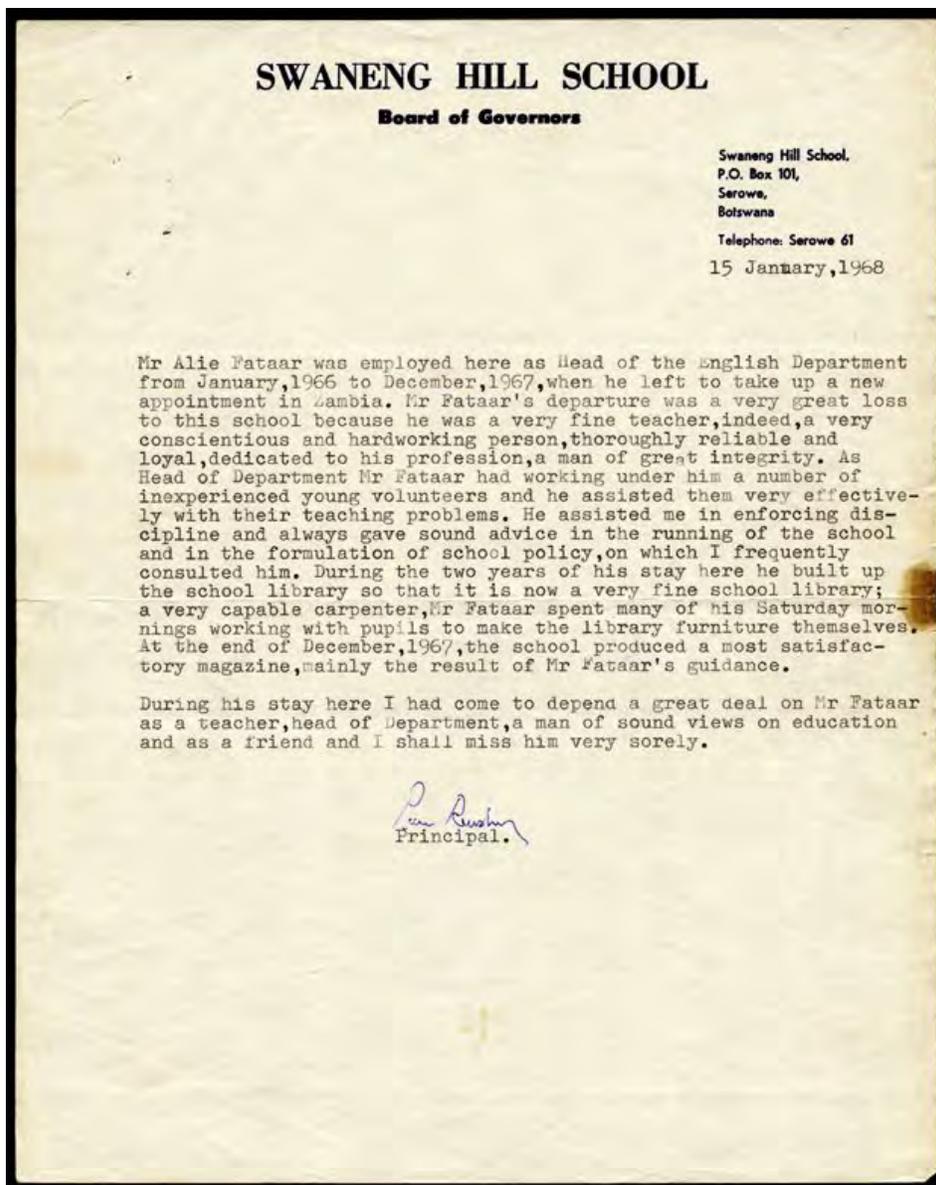


Figure 24: Alie Fataar's move into exile in March 1965 ushered in a period of hardship and imposed restrictions on the Unity Movement refugees in Lobatse by the then British Protectorate of Bechuanaland (later to become post-colonial Botswana). Alie Fataar describes this period in grim detail, indicating that it was a period during which he was prevented from formal work, including teaching. Support from the agency tasked with seeing to the well-being of the refugees was minimal. The testimonial in favour of Alie Fataar, reproduced above, was penned by Patrick Van Rensburg, a South African expatriate serving out a penance for his past association with the apartheid regime. Van Rensburg's offer of a teaching post at his Swaneng School in Serowe was a lifeline to Fataar, and it rescued him from the throes of depression, as he indicates in the body of this study. The testimonial speaks to the deep respect Van Rensburg felt towards Alie Fataar, and Fataar indicates a mutual admiration and respect for Van Rensburg. Image courtesy Alie Fataar

Fataar had working under him a number of inexperienced young volunteers and he assisted them very effectively with their teaching problems. He assisted me in enforcing discipline and always gave sound advice on the running of the school and in the formulation of school policy, on which I frequently consulted him. During the two years of his stay here he built up the school library so that it is now a very fine school library; a very capable carpenter, Mr Fataar spent many of his Saturday mornings working with pupils to make the library furniture themselves. At the end of December, 1967, the school produced a most satisfactory magazine, mainly the result of Mr Fataar's guidance. / During his stay here I had come to depend a great deal on Mr Fataar as a teacher, head of Department, a man of sound views on education and as a friend and I shall miss him very sorely.⁶⁶⁹

The explicit admiration and respect was mutual, as indicated by Fataar's assessment of Van Rensburg earlier in this chapter.

The quality of the relationship between Van Rensburg and Fataar is a crucial insertion in this study. Of Van Rensburg it can quite reasonably be said that he rescued Fataar from the malaise of unemployment, and exclusion from the teaching profession in exile. Van Rensburg's relationship with his English Head of Department went far beyond the rubric of a professional association, as the testimonial shows. There is a meeting of kindred souls, as it were, and Fataar spoke with unconcealed warmth about Van Rensburg as he related his departure from Swaneng Hill at the end of 1967.

Whereas at the end of his teaching career in Cape Town Fataar indicated his former pupil had been appointed principal 'over' him, here was a principal-to-teacher relationship which significantly boosted the self-image of the exiled Fataar. In many senses, Patrick Van Rensburg and Swaneng Hill made it possible for Fataar to begin his long and significant educational foray into an African reality beyond the borders of South Africa.

⁶⁶⁹ Testimonial in favour of Alie Fataar by Patrick Van Rensburg, Principal, Swaneng Hill School, dated 15 January 1968. Copy courtesy Alie Fataar.

As indicated earlier, Fataar's health suffered in the tremendous heat of the Kalahari, and Fataar penned a letter to Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda from Botswana. He contextualised the letter, as well as indicating its contents:

I could have been sent to Ghana where some of our chaps went to be trained by the Cubans. I missed that – when I got there they had already left. So, um... I now **had** to interest myself in education and the way I wrote the letter to President Kaunda when I was still in Botswana... is that 'I hope to be able to assist the youth of the country, the education that they've missed.'⁶⁷⁰

The formulation that Fataar provides here, that it was because of a failure of a political arrangement that he “**had** to now interest (himself) in education”⁶⁷¹ is perhaps, on the intertextual evidence provided in the interviews and complemented by correspondence in the Tabata Collection, disingenuous.

Fataar had indicated in an interview that he had already formulated, after the September 1964 meeting of the leadership cadres still in South Africa, that “wherever I go, I may not get the OAU's assistance but I will be able to **teach** and that will be useful for the **Movement**.”⁶⁷²

He had also indicated about his move to Zambia: “At first I didn't want to be in their (Lusaka office) politics – there were some problems.”⁶⁷³ In a separate interview, Fataar indicated that he had “sent word via Ursula to this Deputy-Secretary of Education (in

⁶⁷⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁶⁷¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁶⁷² Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁶⁷³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Zambia) who was in the TLSA there... Adamson. She had told them Alie doesn't want to be in Lusaka, send him somewhere else. That was why I was sent to Ndola.”⁶⁷⁴

The welcome Fataar and his wife Ursula received on first landing in Zambia in 1968 was, for Fataar, a continuation of the appreciation he had experienced at Swaneng Hill in Botswana. “Oh, we're so pleased to have teachers, qualified teachers like you,”⁶⁷⁵ education officials told Fataar as they escorted him to the hotel from where he would be processed by TLSA member Adamson and be posted to his first school in Zambia.

Chiwala Secondary School was located “about ten kilometres” from the centre of Ndola. The school was “in a rural sort of place but very much part of the city and then Ursula got appointed to a school in the centre of Ndola...”⁶⁷⁶ Fataar taught English at the school in 1968 and in 1969 assumed the position of Head of the English Department. Chiwala was a boys' school “and many of the girls went to private schools like mission schools, these Catholic schools and so on.”⁶⁷⁷ Figure 25 on page 241 depicts Alie Fataar standing in front of a wing of the Chiwala Secondary School.

Fataar was one of a large number of expatriate teachers in Zambia in the period immediately post-independence. He estimates that “80-percent of the teachers had to be

⁶⁷⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁷⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁷⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁷⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

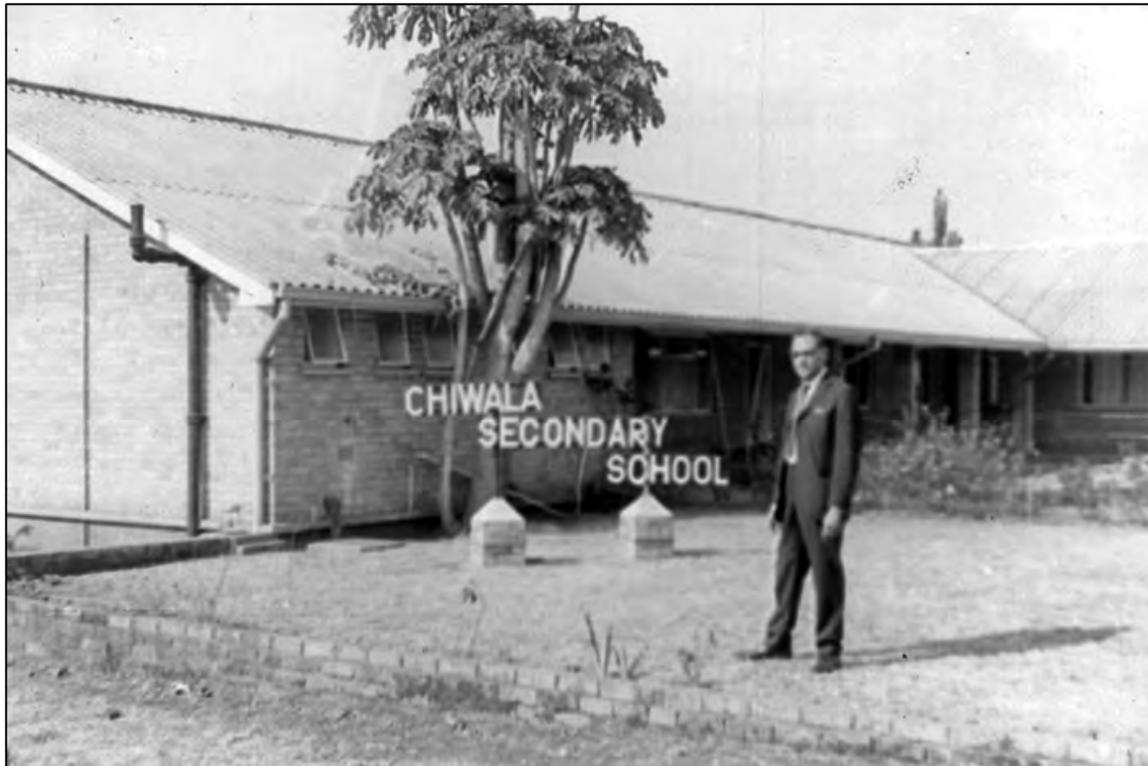


Figure 25: Alie Fataar is pictured in the grounds of Chiwala Secondary School in Ndola, Zambia, circa 1968. Fataar had moved to Zambia from Botswana, and requested a posting to a school away from Lusaka. He moved to Lusaka in 1970, where he taught for a short period at Munali Secondary School before attending a course in linguistics at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom. Photo courtesy Alie Fataar

imported,” and he taught with British and Indian teachers at Chiwala.⁶⁷⁸ Fataar bemoaned the presence of opportunistic, less-than-able expatriate teachers: “The quality of some of those teachers left much to be desired because for many of them it was just a way of earning some petty cash and foreign exchange to take with them, but when they left they were paid in sterling.”⁶⁷⁹

The post-colonial moment in Zambia, related Fataar, had produced a curious situation in that sections of the country’s very small urban-educated elite under the colonial order had been able to access tertiary education.

Now if you take Zambia, then what you find there is why did they have to have so many contract expatriate teachers because there were – I think the figure is right – only about seventy-odd graduates for that whole country, Zambia. And some of them were Unisa, private studies – some of course had been to university and were graduates, Fort Hare being one of the main ones... So that they were the educated classes in that sense. Then they now had to have a system of governance where it would appear that the Zambians were now in office; not necessarily in power, in office. So they had to pick, very often, these very graduates to put them in positions as ministers, as deputy-ministers and as, of course, what they call their secretary, what we call directors here... so that the educated segment left now for teaching and training was even smaller because you had to take out to put them into government offices throughout the country. Hence they had to recruit largely teachers from English-speaking countries like Britain, and then, of course, India and Pakistan, Sri Lanka – all English-speaking people – and so the primary and secondary schools were staffed – principals etcetera, heads of department, Science, Maths, English, etcetera – by expatriates.⁶⁸⁰

Of the immediate post-independence scenario in Zambia, Fataar indicates “that I saw things in the raw” specifically in terms of education.⁶⁸¹

⁶⁷⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁷⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁸⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁸¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

As Fataar settled in to his first teaching post at Chiwala Secondary School in Ndola, the pressure on him from the UMSA office in Lusaka increased.

...when the political office of ours wanted me to **resign** from the teaching, I, er... after three months... they wanted me, er... especially Tabata and Jane Gool – that I must be full-time in the office... so I was in the position where I had to... I refused. Very quietly, I said: ‘Look, I’ve given my promise to the President of the country that I would assist and he’s allowed me into the country on that condition. Whether I’d be allowed in the country as a freedom fighter is another question but I think that I am **morally-bound** now to continue with doing what I think I can do for Zimbabwe⁶⁸² (sic.) and therefore for Africa and for that matter for South Africa.’ And those were the words in which I said it to Tabata and Jane Gool. They came all the way to Ndola, a week or two after I was there and then they came with this idea. I said: ‘No, alright, every weekend. I have to get a car now and I can get a car from government, and, er... it’s only a matter of two or three hours then I’m in Lusaka and then back again Sunday evening to be at work. The whole weekend I’ll be there and holidays... three months... er, three weeks; I’ll be down there and do all the work.’ So they had to accept. I said: ‘As far as I’m concerned and this government is concerned, they cannot object to my holding a position where I don’t feature in **public** but actually I can do all the correspondence and I can write,’ which I did.⁶⁸³

This fundamental decision at the very beginning of the Zambian period of exile is of critical importance in Alie Fataar’s life-history. His narrative voice is strong and unwavering as he relates his decisions, and sense of loyalty to the provision of education in post-colonial Zambia, as uttered to Isaac Tabata and Jane Gool within the first weeks of exile in Zambia. He has also contextualised this arguably watershed moment in his teaching-political matrix by indicating that as early as September 1964, he had rationalised that teaching in exile ‘will be useful for the **Movement**.’⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁸² Fataar inadvertently substituted Zimbabwe for Zambia

⁶⁸³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁶⁸⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 23 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

On Tuesday 30 January 1968, Isaac Tabata ('B') penned a handwritten aerogramme to Dora Taylor ('D'), indicating: "As you know, Ali (sic.) is in Ndola. We went up to him this week-end. We want to keep him surrounded. He seems out of touch and still geared to teaching."⁶⁸⁵

Tabata's note to Dora Taylor may suggest that Fataar was reneging on a duty to the Movement, if it is read outside of the context of the previous pieces of correspondence quoted earlier in this chapter, revealing the internal strife within UMSA (and Fataar's interview narration that he had specifically requested not to be posted to Lusaka because, as he had stated: 'At first I didn't want to be in their politics – there were some problems'.)⁶⁸⁶

Fataar thus produced correspondence for the Movement over weekends and during holidays, while being in full-time (albeit contract) employment as a teacher at Chiwala Secondary School.

This extensive work for the Movement in exile is important to Fataar, and he spoke proudly of correspondence he had composed to various countries as UMSA sought political recognition outside of Lusaka as support from the OAU declined.

One of the most intriguing aspects of this period of exile was revealed during the production of a portrait photograph of Fataar during an interview. I had asked Fataar

⁶⁸⁵ Handwritten aerogramme, dated Tuesday 30 January 1968: To "My dear D", from "B", Tabata Collection (BC925)

⁶⁸⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

which photograph he would recommend for the title-page of the study, and he pointed to a black-and-white head-and-shoulder portrait shot. “You know what, this is Zambia. This is a Zambian tie there.”⁶⁸⁷ A copy of the photograph is reproduced as Figure 26 on page 247. I was extremely interested in pursuing this wearing of the tie of a foreign country, but decided to wait for a different occasion on which to ask about its significance.

Eight interviews later, Fataar himself revealed, unsolicited, more than I was expecting to hear:

Look, I joined a party in Zambia. I even joined the Teachers’ Union there. I didn’t want to be sort of a... just to get their money and... We didn’t know how long we were going to stay there, probably for the rest of our lives. (laughs) We didn’t know how long the struggle in South Africa was going to stretch itself out. So we just tried to face it.⁶⁸⁸

Two years before Fataar landed in Zambia, Isaac Tabata had directed a letter to “(A)ll members of the Executive of the Unity Movement, All-African Convention and the African People’s Democratic Union of Southern Africa”. In this letter, Tabata expressed the following:

Mr Mqotsi continued to come and work at the office after school hours but later we found that he spent less and less time at the office. We discovered then that he had secretly applied and obtained an additional job at the College of Further education (sic.) as teacher at evening classes... I, for my part, realised long ago that Mr Mqotsi had sunk his roots in Zambia and was finding it difficult to uproot himself.⁶⁸⁹

⁶⁸⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁸⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁸⁹ Letter “To all members of the Executive of the Unity Movement, All-African Convention and the African People’s Democratic Union of Southern Africa (APDUSA)” from I.B. Tabata, 8 June 1966, I.B. Tabata Collection (BC925)

This tension between full-time political work and full-time teaching in exile, here related to Livingstone Mqotsi, thus pre-dated the similar dispute with Alie Fataar some three years later in 1969. Figure 27 on page 248 shows Alie Fataar (who was banned at the time, and therefore was contravening his banning order), with Livingstone Mqotsi at the 1961 meeting of the Unity Movement and Apdusa in Kommetjie, Cape Town.

In Part One of this study, the seminal writing on exile by Edward Said was explicated as foundational to this life-history study of Alie Fataar, given that Fataar had spent the period 1965 to 1993 in exile in three countries in Southern Africa. Fataar's joining of the ruling party in Zambia, in particular, will be a key focus of Chapter Eight's reflection of this study. Said's representations of the exiled intellectual will be the theoretical frame through which Fataar's exile experience, more particularly his Zambian party-political affiliation, will be interrogated.

During his teaching stint at Chiwala, Fataar experienced the death of a current student. One of the documents I received from Alie Fataar, and copied before returning it to him, was a copy of a poem Fataar had penned "(T)o the memory of Joseph Chintu, Form V, killed in a road accident. A blue piece of note-paper had been attached to a copy of the typed poem. On the blue piece of paper was a note handwritten by Fataar: "The only time I lost a student I was teaching and it had a most devastating effect on me – hence the poem."⁶⁹⁰ A scanned copy of the typed poem is reproduced as Figure 28 on page 250.

⁶⁹⁰ Copy of poem written in "memory of Joseph Chintu, Form V, killed in a road accident." 20 August, 1969, Chiwala, Ndola, by Alie Fataar. Copy courtesy Alie Fataar.



**Figure 26: Alie Fataar is pictured in this passport photograph in 1968. It depicts Alie Fataar wearing a Zambian tie, and its presentation by Fataar during the interviews for this study produced an important dimension into the study, namely that he had joined the main political party during his long period of exile in Zambia.
Photo courtesy Alie Fataar**



**Figure 27: Alie Fataar and Livingstone Mqotsi are pictured at the three-day beach meeting of the Unity Movement and Apdusa in Kommetjie, Cape Town, in 1961. The two were Joint-Secretaries of the Unity Movement, and Mqotsi had been a teacher in South Africa until his dismissal from the profession, along with other teachers affiliated to CATA. After a period in Zambia, where both he and Alie Fataar taught while performing duties for the UMSA in exile, Livingstone Mqotsi left for the United Kingdom.
Photo courtesy Alie Fataar**

When I asked Fataar how the loss of a student made him feel, he stated that he had learnt of the death of another student after his (Fataar's) return from exile: "...you just think, you know... here you are, on, in your eighties... here's a young man in his... late forties... and he... can no longer... be of service... to humanity... for which you helped to prepare him..."⁶⁹¹

Revelations about the deaths of students spoke, of course, to Fataar's deep emotional bonds with his students. He was clearly moved as he related these sentiments, and his hesitant speech is captured in the numerous ellipses in the extract. He spoke softly and with discernible sadness.

The extract also reveals an important aspect of Fataar's view of teaching. He speaks of helping to prepare young people to be 'of service to humanity'. He regrets the loss of a student in more than personal terms: it is a loss incurred by nothing less than 'humanity'.

Of Chiwala and the actual teaching experiences there Fataar spoke little. One incident, though, speaks powerfully to the identity of Alie Fataar as an English-speaking teacher. In Chapter Four, Fataar had revealed how, as a young student at Livingstone High School, he had trained himself in the art of English elocution, reading Shakespearean and other classical English texts aloud to himself. It is repeated here in that it reveals the context in which it was narrated, and allows for further analysis of and insight into Fataar's exile identities:

⁶⁹¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

...the strange thing is... it must have done me a great deal of good, because many, many, many years later... somewhere in nineteen... sixty... eight... I was in Zambia... as a teacher, there... and a lot of expatriates... first time I go so far north... I'd never been to Europe... so the only English people I met were the local English speakers... among ourselves... find me a little party there... with some... chaps from England... doing... working... engineers in the mines and so on... the copper mines, there... we were chatting, so one chappie says: 'Oh, and Mr. Fataar, er, er, which university did you attend in the U.K.?' (laughter) 'My friend, this is the furthest north I've been from Cape Town!' 'You mean... you mean... that language you're speaking... you've never been studying at a university?' 'No, I've never been studying at the university!' (laughs)... I said: 'You know, you've been talking now for fifteen minutes. Do you know, half the time I never understood what you were saying? I didn't... but all of you understood what I was saying! You know why? I speak a standard English, whereas you come from various parts of England... all those dialects... all of that...' They said: 'You're right.' 'Of course I'm right!' (laughs) 'Of course I'm bloody right!' Hulle skrik hulle lam! [*They fell on their backs!*] And it struck me, God [Afr.]... I've been reading Shakespeare the way Shakespeare would've read it!⁶⁹²

The extract allows us to see Fataar in his most confident iteration of self. He is not cowed, nor is he subservient to anyone. He had previously indicated this trait with regard to raising contentious issues amongst colleagues in the TLSA and NEUM. Here he displays a brash confidence in the re-telling that is one of his striking markers of identity.

In addition, the code-switching (between English and Afrikaans) is fascinating and wonderfully ironic. Even as he indicates that he was 'reading Shakespeare as Shakespeare would've read it,' he slips seamlessly into an Afrikaans exclamation of delight.

Four years into his Zambian period, Fataar was awarded a British Council grant to attend a three-month short-course in English Linguistics at Cambridge University from 6 to 31 July 1971. The certificate of attendance for the course awarded to Alie Fataar is reproduced as Figure 29 on page 253. The insertion of the Cambridge University stint

⁶⁹² Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

into the interviews arose out of a question I asked concerning Fataar's experiences with Canadian curriculum advisers and information technology in Zambia. The transcript dialogue is as follows:

AF: Ja, then, of course, we had it at Cambridge University, you know.

YO: Right. So you attended courses at Cambridge as well?

AF: I was there for three months.

YO: Oh, for three months. Okay.

AF: I had a course there, which the British Council managed to get me... had to pay for... I had to find my own way there on my first leave, 1971 (coughs and clears throat), and we all went, a family of four. I attended Cambridge for three months, and it was Linguistics in the English Language.

YO: What was that experience like?

AF: Oh, it was **unique** in that I had (laughs softly) never been in a place where you had live performances of Shakespeare.⁶⁹³

The pride with which Fataar related this was palpable, though understated. He coughed, nervously, I thought, as he narrated this initial offering about Cambridge University. (Figure 30 on page 255 shows a suited Alie Fataar posing outside one of Cambridge University's academic departments.) It is curious and telling that his first response to my question about what his experience at Cambridge was like, invoked the notion that the uniqueness of the experience was that he was in a place, at last, where live performances of Shakespearean plays were the norm. The causal linguistic chain 'Cambridge-why-unique-live Shakespeare' is a remarkable testament to the centrality of Shakespeare in Fataar's identity.

⁶⁹³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)



Figure 29: In July 1971, Alie Fataar secured a stint at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom. He placed great emphasis on this period during our interviews, and indicated that one of the features that made it unique was that, for the first time, he was able to enjoy a live production of Shakespeare's works. In 1979, Alie Fataar attended a course at a second British university, this time the University of Lancaster, which was to prove seminal in his final period of exile in Zambia, and then in Zibabwe in the 1980's.
Image courtesy Alie Fataar

While Fataar does not indicate that he actively sought the stint at Cambridge, correspondence in the Tabata Collection indicates a long-held desire on Alie Fataar's part in terms of attending Cambridge University. It will be recalled that Dora Taylor had written: "The other letter is from Ali (sic.), England. So he achieved his aim of getting to Cambridge, is it?"⁶⁹⁴ The desire on Fataar's part, it appears, was known to Dora Taylor and Isaac Tabata, and, it is plausible to assume, to others in the Movement as well.

While it is difficult to infer an overtly negative tone in Dora Taylor's letter to Tabata regarding Fataar's achieving 'his aim of getting to Cambridge,' it is significant in that Taylor's letter plays out against a backdrop of apparent fury at Fataar's reluctance to relocate to Lusaka to work more directly in the UMSA office. In this regard, a clearly exasperated Isaac Tabata wrote to Dora Taylor: "Ali (sic.), blast him, is not coming to Lusaka till May."⁶⁹⁵

It is critical to reflect here on the judgmental stance regarding Fataar's academic desires. The political context sketched in the previous paragraphs, of course, indicate the tensions between the Lusaka political office and Fataar. This political context, therefore, places the burden of justification of his academic desires on Alie Fataar.

During a particularly heated occasion during our interviews, Alie Fataar spoke about the pursuit of academic credentials.

⁶⁹⁴ Letter, handwritten, 4 pages, from "D" to "B", c. July 1971, I.B. Tabata Collection (BC925)

⁶⁹⁵ Handwritten aerogramme from "B" to "D", Friday 23 January 1970, Tabata Collection (BC925)



Figure 30: Alie Fataar is pictured in the grounds of Cambridge University in July 1971. The period at Cambridge University, and his later period at the University of Lancaster, were periods of his life in exile that Fataar cherished, and spoke about with great pride. Photo courtesy Alie Fataar

You see there're people who pass themselves off as... I don't pass myself off as anything. Somebody said: "How many degrees did you have?" I said: "Degrees? What degrees? I didn't need any degrees for what I did. I went to two universities... renowned, you know, Cambridge and... but I didn't worry. You see, I went there to learn something. I didn't have to come with a piece of paper to say I was there. I was never at Cape Town University; I only attended a course in librarianship and I've got a piece of paper for that, but I can't say I'm Cape Town University. I studied a correspondence course, so there I got another piece of paper for my certificate." I said: "I could have got PhD. I bumped into so many characters in Zambia who, for example, were Doctor, Doctor, Doctor, PhD – and they weren't worth tuppence; they had been given to them." So I said: "It never entered my mind; I was too busy developing what I'd started off with."⁶⁹⁶

Fataar utilises discursive techniques here which are both interesting and revealing. First, he disavows elevating oneself socially because of academic achievements. He does so by referring disparagingly to those who 'pass themselves off' as intellectuals or thinkers, while they are not 'worth tuppence'.

Second, and significantly, Fataar indicates that he did not need degrees to contribute educationally and politically as he had done over several decades. He cites his Cambridge experience as one of two sojourns at 'renowned' British universities not in order to boast, but to rather indicate that he 'went there to learn something'.

In this reductive narration, Fataar speaks of no academic ambition. Attendance at the 'renowned' Universities of Cambridge and Lancaster are cited to indicate that the institutions were for learning only, not as part of a complex set of functional, emotional, personal, academic or other possible motivating factors or desire.

Before leaving for Cambridge, Fataar had left Chiwala in March 1970, and transferred to Lusaka where he taught at Munali Secondary School. Being in Lusaka enabled Fataar to

⁶⁹⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

work more intensively with the UMSA office, thus partially relieving the tensions of the period since his arrival in Zambia in 1968.

Munali did not feature prominently in Fataar's narrative. In fact, Fataar spoke of Munali in the past tense: "When I came back to Lusaka (from Cambridge), I was transferred then from Munali Secondary School..."⁶⁹⁷

Fataar returned from Cambridge in August 1971, and transferred to the Evelyn Hone College of Applied Arts and Commerce in Lusaka, assuming his post on 1 September 1971. Fataar joined the College as a senior lecturer in Communication.⁶⁹⁸ Interestingly, and completely out of the context of Evelyn Hone College, I raised the issue of a book I had read by Maurice Hommel, *Capricorn Blues*.⁶⁹⁹ Fataar indicated that he had not heard of the book. There followed a very lengthy set of interactions in which I outlined the contents of the book and my opinion on what made the work significant. Fataar then indicated that Hommel had taught at Evelyn Hone College: "So he was about to resign for another job, so he pushed me to apply for the job... So I applied and not on – not because of his recommendation – but because of my own, I got the job to lecture at Evelyn Hone College."⁷⁰⁰

During this lengthy discussion, Fataar counterpointed Hommel with Archie Mafeje, simultaneously conveying a flood of information that indicated that he knew quite a bit

⁶⁹⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁹⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁶⁹⁹ Hommel, M. (1981) *Capricorn Blues: The Struggle for Human Rights in South Africa*. Toronto: Culturama.

⁷⁰⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 26 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

about Hommel's background. It was a curious moment in the range of interviews we had held over more than six months, and speaks to a web of relationships which require similar or complementary studies to this particular work in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the dynamics of the period, the institutions, participants and other factors which will add to the historiography of resistance in South African education.

A testimonial in Fataar's favour (reproduced as Figure 31 on page 260) by Evelyn Hone College principal Humphrey Langa, a fellow South African, provides a useful chronological account of Fataar's stay at Evelyn Hone College. He was appointed to Evelyn Hone College as "Lecturer Grade I (English) but when he assumed duties he was promoted to the position of Head of Department, General & Social Studies".⁷⁰¹ Fataar's organisational ability is praised in that the department he assumed leadership of was described as "in a disorganised and chaotic stage (sic.)" but was "converted into a well-run efficient and orderly department."⁷⁰²

Fataar is described by Langa as "a gifted teacher" who "got on very well with his classes". Langa lauds Fataar: "We were fortunate indeed to have a man of his vast experience and ability to join the College."⁷⁰³

⁷⁰¹ Testimonial in favour of Alie Fataar by H.T. Langa, Principal, Evelyn Hone College of Further Education, dated 3 December 1973. Copy courtesy Alie Fataar.

⁷⁰² Testimonial in favour of Alie Fataar by H.T. Langa, Principal, Evelyn Hone College of Further Education, dated 3 December 1973. Copy courtesy Alie Fataar.

⁷⁰³ Testimonial in favour of Alie Fataar by H.T. Langa, Principal, Evelyn Hone College of Further Education, dated 3 December 1973. Copy courtesy Alie Fataar.

“In August 1972,” continued Langa, Fataar “was promoted to the position of Vice-Principal, Administration, and was thus placed in charge of all Administration in the College. He was overall in charge of the following areas; Accounts Section, Stores & Ordering, the students’ refectory, the Registry, transport, Security and the Administration Staff & General Workers.”⁷⁰⁴ Langa includes the following in his final paragraph: “Mr. Fataar has been a great asset to the College and one would have to look a long way to find a man of his calibre.”⁷⁰⁵

His loss to Evelyn Hone College in November 1973 was to be a watershed moment in Fataar’s life. He left Evelyn Hone as a result of his promotion to the post of Controller of Technical and Vocational Curriculum of the Zambian Department of Technical Education. This phase of his life is of tremendous importance to Alie Fataar, as evidenced from his narratives in this regard.

He worked extensively with Canadian curriculum advisors in his new post of Controller of Technical and Vocational Curriculum,⁷⁰⁶ persons whom he greatly respected. As Controller, Fataar was engaged in developing technical education curricula for all technical education across Zambia. He found the approach of the Canadian curriculum advisors invaluable.

⁷⁰⁴ Testimonial in favour of Alie Fataar by H.T. Langa, Principal, Evelyn Hone College of Further Education, dated 3 December 1973. Copy courtesy Alie Fataar.

⁷⁰⁵ Testimonial in favour of Alie Fataar by H.T. Langa, Principal, Evelyn Hone College of Further Education, dated 3 December 1973. Copy courtesy Alie Fataar.

⁷⁰⁶ The equivalent position of ‘Controller’ in the South African context is that of Director-General.

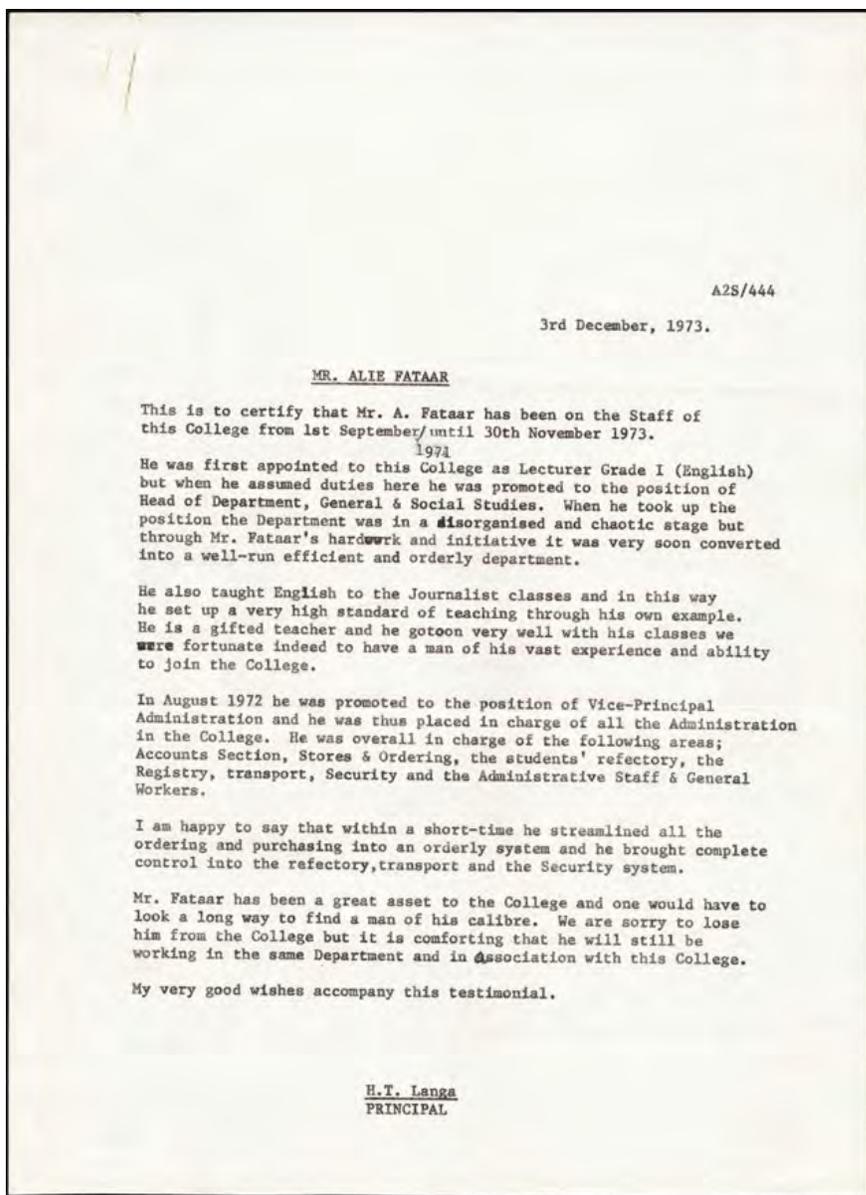


Figure 31: This testimonial in favour of Alie Fataar was issued by Humphrey Langa, a fellow South African who was principal of the Evelyn Hone College in Lusaka, Zambia. The testimonial is not copied onto the official letterhead of the college, and is a copy of the document which was later printed on the official college letterhead. The testimonial is a useful indicator of the variety of responsibilities Alie Fataar was tasked with at the college, as well as his movements and promotions within the institution. It also indicates Fataar's reason for leaving the college as his promotion to a more senior national posting in the Zambian education system. Here, too, the high regard for Alie Fataar by the school-principals he worked with is evident. Image courtesy Alie Fataar

That's another thing we brought up... the Canadians brought up into that area. [Pause: Mr. Fataar drinking tea] In Zambia, when it came to curriculum development and assessment, what is the objective of teaching a child say geography... oceano... geography of the ocean... oceanography. That particular one with regard to marine, fishing... now you bring it down to marine fishing; you bring it down below that, you know. Marine fishing for consumption, for commodity purposes, whichever... Now you must have specific objections... er, objectives for all these and then before you can write a curriculum or a syllabus, syllabus writing, you must state what you are going to achieve by putting this before the child, before the student. For every one that you write, you must first state if there is an additional objective – it must be stated. And so you have this thing across the various objectives, you know. For every particular segment, why are you teaching this one? Why are you teaching this one? What is your objective here and not one general objective for the whole....⁷⁰⁷

I asked Fataar whether he had been trained to do this type of work in South Africa. His response was emphatic: “No! No! That I learned when I was an inspector of the, er... secondary and post-secondary training in Zambia.”⁷⁰⁸

Fataar produced a huge range of curriculum materials across a diverse range of subjects for the Technical and Vocational Curriculum Department in Zambia during the period 1973 to 1980.

...skills training - any kind of training: whether it was a health assistant; or assistant health assistant in a hospital; or somebody who was a computer analyst; or whether it was somebody who is going to do... in the hospital, medical services; any kind of service - they were trained for three years. We had to develop the syllabuses for each one, in consultation of course, and with assistance by the Canadians who came out.⁷⁰⁹

The interviews took a very positive turn when I asked Fataar whether he had any materials from this period to demonstrate what he had been producing. He produced a pile of documents, though none were from the Zambian curriculum development period. All the curricular documents were from the later Zimbabwe period. Nevertheless, Fataar

⁷⁰⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁰⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁰⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

described a typical process during which these curricula were developed in Zambia under his auspices:

We'd have flannel boards and then we'd have all these pens and paper here, all ready, and then we'd put another unit in its place and then the modules – we developed modules, you see. It was a whole professional way of developing syllabuses. And I had ten of these people, one or two or three were expatriates, the others were the local families.⁷¹⁰

The enthusiasm Fataar exuded during his discussions of this period attests to his pride in the work he was doing at this stage. He travelled extensively across Zambia during this period, engaging with teachers at the various technical colleges across Zambia, and clearly loved this phase of his professional life. But there were challenges, which Fataar speaks about, and which rankled him visibly during his narration:

I had a problem with one, for example, he had a typical Zambian surname but he was a great wrestler. But the bloody problem with this chap is that when he wrestled over the weekend, on Monday he's not there, because his body's aching all over! Well for the rest of the week he was discussing wrestling with the other chaps, that's why I had to pull him up and then if the chap didn't turn on me and say: 'You're a racist; you don't like blacks.' So it went up to the head office and... so we had problems like that, lots of problems.

Fataar continued to develop curricula during this accelerated phase of education restructuring in Zambia, but as post-colonial realities set in, and problems with personnel ('lots of problems') increased, Fataar was offered another lifeline.

In 1979, Fataar was fortunate to win a second stint at a British university, this time the University of Lancaster. It was to prove a godsend, as Fataar attended a three-month course in English for Special Purposes.

⁷¹⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

This course was to be the bedrock of Fataar's new post-designations on his return to Zambia after his Lancaster University course. Fataar was informed by official letter⁷¹¹ of his membership of three executive bodies under the auspices of the Zambia Examinations Council. These posts were: "(a) The Executive Committee on School Certificate Curriculum and Examinations; (b) The Executive Committee on Technical Education, Vocational Training and Examinations, and (c) The Executive Committee on Research Evaluation and Educational Materials."⁷¹² He occupied these new positions for just a few months.

He and his wife, Ursula, attended Zimbabwe's independence celebrations in Harare in April 1980, and were happy to meet with an ex-student, Joe Culverwell, who was now Deputy-Minister of Education in Zimbabwe. Fataar relates: "Then Culverwell, of course, said: 'No, you've given enough. Now Kaunda can give something to us.'"⁷¹³ There is no indication that Fataar actively requested such a move, although the problems Fataar had encountered in Zambia may lend some credibility to such speculation.

Regardless of the origin of the offer to relocate to Zimbabwe, Fataar did not hesitate, and by 1981 he was residing in Zimbabwe, and had been appointed as Curriculum Specialist

⁷¹¹ 'Membership of Executive Committee'; letter to Alie Fataar from M. Mumbwe, Secretary, Republic of Zambia Examinations Council, Republic of Zambia Ministry of Education and Culture, 9 October 1980. Copy courtesy Alie Fataar.

⁷¹² 'Membership of Executive Committee'; letter to Alie Fataar from M. Mumbwe, Secretary, Republic of Zambia Examinations Council, Republic of Zambia Ministry of Education and Culture, 9 October 1980. Copy courtesy Alie Fataar.

⁷¹³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

in the Zimbabwe Education Department. “I also had to inspect schools and investigate problems,” Fataar indicated.⁷¹⁴

By now, Fataar had entered a period which he retrospectively referred to during our interviews:

I remember having to write to Gaddafi and others and then going to Egypt and then going to Damascus and Syria for training for our men. So these are... it’s been all packed into the first ten years of my exile because after that there were various reactions from the OAU which made it difficult for one to operate in that area. So that the latter part of my twenty-nine years was more sort of bedding down in the hope that things would change and of course they changed in a different direction in that the Soviet Union came to an end and they had to make a deal in the end, between the ANC and the South African government – and that was already on the cards from the 1980s when they let Mandela out.⁷¹⁵

In his own words, Fataar’s *active* political engagement with the Unity Movement in exile “were packed into the first ten years” of his exile period. His employment of the ‘bedding down’ metaphor for the last nineteen or so years of exile is indicative of his attempts to lead as normal a life in exile as he could. The ‘bedding down’ trope will form part of the discussion in Chapter Eight of Fataar’s exile experience as viewed through the analytic lens of Edward Said’s contribution to the literature of exile.

From 1980 to 1983, Fataar immersed himself with others in the Curriculum Development Unit, leaning heavily on the English course-materials and learning from his period at Lancaster University in 1979.

⁷¹⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷¹⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 29 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Fataar produced for me a large volume of neatly preserved materials, which he introduced in the following way: “And then, of course, this is all the stuff which I call my educational writing.”⁷¹⁶ A small sample of the materials produced during Fataar’s time at the unit indicates the breadth of work he and colleagues had undertaken in newly-independent Zimbabwe, in which the regime of Robert Mugabe championed education.

A short list of titles of documents produced by Fataar and his team during the first few years beginning 1981 is produced here, to indicate the range of work undertaken by his curriculum-development unit:

Oral/Aural Methods: Using Dialogue as a Learning Activity. Dated January, 1982 Seminar. Bylined A. Fataar.

Fataar, Alie (1982) Oral/Aural Methods in the Teaching of English. *Teachers' Forum*, August 1982, pp. 28-31

Fataar, A. (1984) *Continuous writing when teaching/learning English as a Second Language and a medium of instruction*. Mimeo.

Fataar, A. (1985) Teaching English Composition Writing: The New English Syllabus provides some answers. *Teachers' Forum*, 13(7), July 1985, 16-22.

Fataar, A. (1983) *Look-Say-Read Phonics*. Talk given by A. Fataar to Gweru S.P.S. Meeting on 13 July, 1983.

Fataar, A. (1984) *Z.J.C. English Examination 1983: Comments and Observations*. S.D.O. English, C.D.U. 20 January 1984. Mimeo.

Fataar, A. (1985) *English Composition: How much longer?*. Mimeo. 9 April 1985.

Fataar, A. (1984) *Controlled and Guided Written English*. May-June, 1984 Workshops. Mimeo.

⁷¹⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Fataar, A. (1981) *English as a Second Language and a medium of instruction: general approaches*. Salisbury, 9 September, 1981. Mimeo.

Radio 4: Primary English Programmes. *Programme No. 8: Games and Activities*. [Mr. A. Fataar, with Mr. M.P. Rahman and Mr. I.M. Smith presented 20 programmes on Radio 4, Zimbabwe. Mr. Fataar presented a few programmes, and acted as interviewer on others. These are transcripts, written by Mr. A. Fataar. 3 typed pages.]

All items listed were provided to me on 16 June 2003, copied by me, and returned when we met again on 23 June 2003 for our weekly interview. The list of documents gives a good sense of the kind of work Fataar produced during this period. Included are journal articles, papers delivered at seminars, teacher-workshop materials, texts of talks to teachers, official curriculum-design documents with comments, and a transcript of a radio-programme (one of twenty) which Fataar co-produced with colleagues M.P. Rahman and I.M. Smith for Radio 4 in Zimbabwe.

While speaking about his schooling life at St. Saviour's Primary School in Claremont, Alie Fataar had earlier indicated that "...it was all phonetic... and in no time we could read, on our own..."⁷¹⁷ Fataar had also paid tribute to the influence of a teacher at Zonnebloem College who had been instrumental in his affinity to the phonics method in teaching reading.⁷¹⁸ He lobbied insistently and ultimately successfully for the re-introduction of phonics into the Zimbabwean English curriculum, culminating in a policy decision that read: "Phonics may be used in combination with 'look and say or read' methods."⁷¹⁹

⁷¹⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷¹⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷¹⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

He traversed the country for many years during this initial period, holding countless workshops with teachers and education officials, and he reflected on the period thus: “...when you put all of this together in a matter of three or four years, I think I did a helluva lot... [Mr. Fataar laughs]”,⁷²⁰

Of the radio-programmes, I asked Alie Fataar about its importance and reception. The excerpt from the transcripts are revealing:

YO: This must have sounded fantastic on radio [Mr. Fataar and YO both talking]

AF: And it was **new**... they were... it was such pioneer work we were doing.

YO: What was your audience reception like?

AF: Absolutely a hundred and one percent!

YO: Would you get feedback and things like that, about this?

AF: Yes... And then the Minister... the Deputy-Minister was here. He said: ‘Alie, you’re doing a **marvellous** job! I hear from the teachers – wherever I go – that Fataar is just (AF makes clicking sound).’ I said: ‘Oh, man, you’re paying for the job.’

YO: But again, how important was that feedback, I mean the oral feedback and things like that, to you as a teacher, as a person?

AF: It only... it means that this void has been filled. [Pause] They’d been wanting this, you know, in their schools.⁷²¹

Forty-seven years after starting his teaching career at Cecil Road Primary School in Salt River, Fataar revelled in the responsibility to contribute to Zimbabwe’s quest for post-colonial educational excellence.

⁷²⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷²¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

It is no accident that Fataar invokes the concept ‘pioneering work’ to describe what he was involved in. The hyperbolic ‘a hundred and one percent’ conveys the sparkle in his eyes as we engaged during this exchange.

More poignantly, Fataar responds to the question of what this positive feedback meant to him as a teacher and as a person with the emotionally ambiguous “it means that this void has been filled.”⁷²² The pause after he said this spoke volumes. He filled the emotional space by deflecting the moment to the country and its teachers.

The void had truly been filled. Fataar reflected:

AF: Well, that was the apex of my experiences in exile.

YO: Would you call it the apex of your experience?

AF: That’s the top – I’m looking down now. But when I was doing this work then I could call myself an educationist, not a teacher anymore. I was teaching teachers. But to become an educationist... or I could speak of educationalist... but I just like the straightforward educationist. You are teaching people about how to teach others; about educating others, so that’s really education.⁷²³

The narratives Fataar had generously shared with me had traversed functionality, procedures, rage, despair, resignedness, and now, fulfilment. I recognised the moment as crucial to the study. My reaction to his narrative was profound, and it triggered feelings of great affinity for the teacher, Alie Fataar, as I sat opposite him across the small table in his living-room.

⁷²² Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷²³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

I recalled James Hilton's *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*,⁷²⁴ and in fact picked up and read (for the umpteenth time) excerpts from the book when I reached home after the interview that afternoon. Alie Fataar, I mused, deserved his morning in the sun, sitting comfortably in his chair, reminiscing about the boys and girls he had served over a period of five decades, and in four African countries.

Based on Fataar's very successful period in the Curriculum Development Unit, he was asked to perform special teaching duties for the Zimbabwean state. It was widely known that Fataar had used his 'English for Special Purposes' learning at Lancaster University to good effect in the curriculum-writing and teaching years from 1981, and so he was called upon to effect the same standard of teaching to smaller, more specialised groups of students:

Now there is that English for a specific purpose... if it is cookery or home economics, again, there's terminology which you wouldn't use when you're teaching a novel, or you're trying to do a play... Now that had to be very clear in the teacher's mind, you know. It was difficult at the start. I found in the end when I had to evaluate some of my own methods, er... Mugabe had asked me as President, through Joe Culverwell, the Deputy Minister of Education, he actually asked him to ask Alie Fataar... to come and teach English lessons to the Cuban doctors and dentists... you see, they come there and they must always have a Shona-speaking nurse with them but it was difficult for them so I had to go and work out vocabulary: what would a doctor **need**, you know.⁷²⁵

⁷²⁴ We had viewed the film version of James Hilton's *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, with Peter O'Toole in the title role, on dozens of occasions throughout my seven years of primary schooling at the now-destroyed (by apartheid's bulldozers) Sydney Street Primary School in District Six. The impact of that film, and the book when I later encountered it, was quite possibly influential in shaping a deep respect I hold for my teachers, and for teachers in general.

⁷²⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

This discussion led to my asking the following question: “How did you rate it as a success or otherwise? I mean, wasn’t that a tenuous experience?”⁷²⁶ The question and sub-question elicited the following response: “I just felt, look, I’m here to serve, as I said, that country of Zimbabwe, and I wouldn’t have been able to do this in South Africa.”⁷²⁷

I followed up with the following querying statement: “You sound as if your vision of teaching changed when you went into exile. As if a whole new repertoire opened up.”⁷²⁸

Fataar responded: “Very much. Very much. It wasn’t change. It opened a new view which you were not able to see here; everything was confined to this school and this community and... very **limited**... whereas here now, you are told: ‘Develop something, man.’”⁷²⁹

Fataar related in a very different context, but arguably related to the previous extract, that his teaching experience in exile was far more nuanced than “some of these people who write from the ANC point of view; they write from a narrow insight,”⁷³⁰ whereas Fataar could say: “I mean, I’ve been there; I’ve been in the education departments and I’ve been to university and I worked with university people and developed programmes, so my experience is much **wider** and more intimate.”⁷³¹

⁷²⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷²⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷²⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷²⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁷³⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷³¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

Apart from the presidential request via Joe Culverwell that Fataar conduct English for Special Purposes classes with the Cuban doctors in independent Zimbabwe, Fataar also recounted how he had been asked by the president to teach members of Zimbabwe's Criminal Investigation Organisation (CIO).

...this is the CIO, security chaps – Criminal Investigation Organisation – but it's political and the CIO chaps were ex-freedom fighters and they er... there were about twelve of them, come for the English. There were others who went to another room for maths... in the presidential compound. Once they let me in... as to... nobody would stop me. "No, this is the teacher of the CIO." So I actually had to teach the CIO, the Criminal Investigation Organisation, which was political, not so much criminal, but they called them the CIO. And, er... of course, now they've fallen from grace. But I must have been busy there for months and entered them, actually, for examinations. O-level exams – language and literature.⁷³²

The wide range of educational experiences to which Fataar was exposed in exile, and which he embraced wholeheartedly, had led him earlier to indicate that these experiences were the "apex"⁷³³ of his experiences during the exile period. Further, he had indicated that he could now call himself an "educationist."⁷³⁴

The final teaching act of Fataar in exile was a short stint at the Cranborne High School (where he is photographed in an academic gown on Figure 32 on page 273) after the Zimbabwean education authorities "discovered (in 1986, at the age of 71) I should be retired."⁷³⁵ He was "allowed another year or two (laughs)... and they made me choose

⁷³² Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷³³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷³⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷³⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

the school I wanted to be at, and, er... I could be the head of the English department there.”⁷³⁶

So I went to a previously white school, Cranborne High, and that Cranborne High was actually a school for ex-soldiers from the Second World War and they had a lot of airmenn there, Rhodesian airmen. And one or two of them... I forget the name of the chap who lost his leg... [YO: Was that Douglas Bader?] ...Douglas Bader was one of their heroes... so that school now was being integrated and you had very few whites – the whites left, so... it was a boys’ school... well-equipped – science and so on, labs and swimming pool – an Olympic-sized swimming pool – all that, you know.⁷³⁷

Alie Fataar retired from teaching in June 1988, indicating that “the students were getting out of hand, and the Head wasn’t putting his foot down, so I decided, no, I’d better give up this teaching...”⁷³⁸ “after 51 years in the service of Southern African schools, colleges and education.”⁷³⁹ The last ever photograph of Alie Fataar posing with a class of his students is reproduced as Figure 33 on page 274.

The photograph of Alie Fataar with his last-ever class is extremely significant. An aspect of this significance is the book held by the student in the front of the photograph. It is a copy of Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*.

The young boy who had practised his elocution, alone in a park, by reading aloud the plays of Shakespeare, is pictured at the formal end of his teaching life with a Shakespearean text prominent as an artefact of learning. Alie Fataar’s love of, and association with Shakespeare, is represented, here, albeit unintentionally, as a final, official representation of Alie Fataar as a teacher in a school classroom.

⁷³⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷³⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷³⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷³⁹ Fataar, Alie (undated) *Alie Fataar: a short biography*. Mimeo, 2 typed pages.

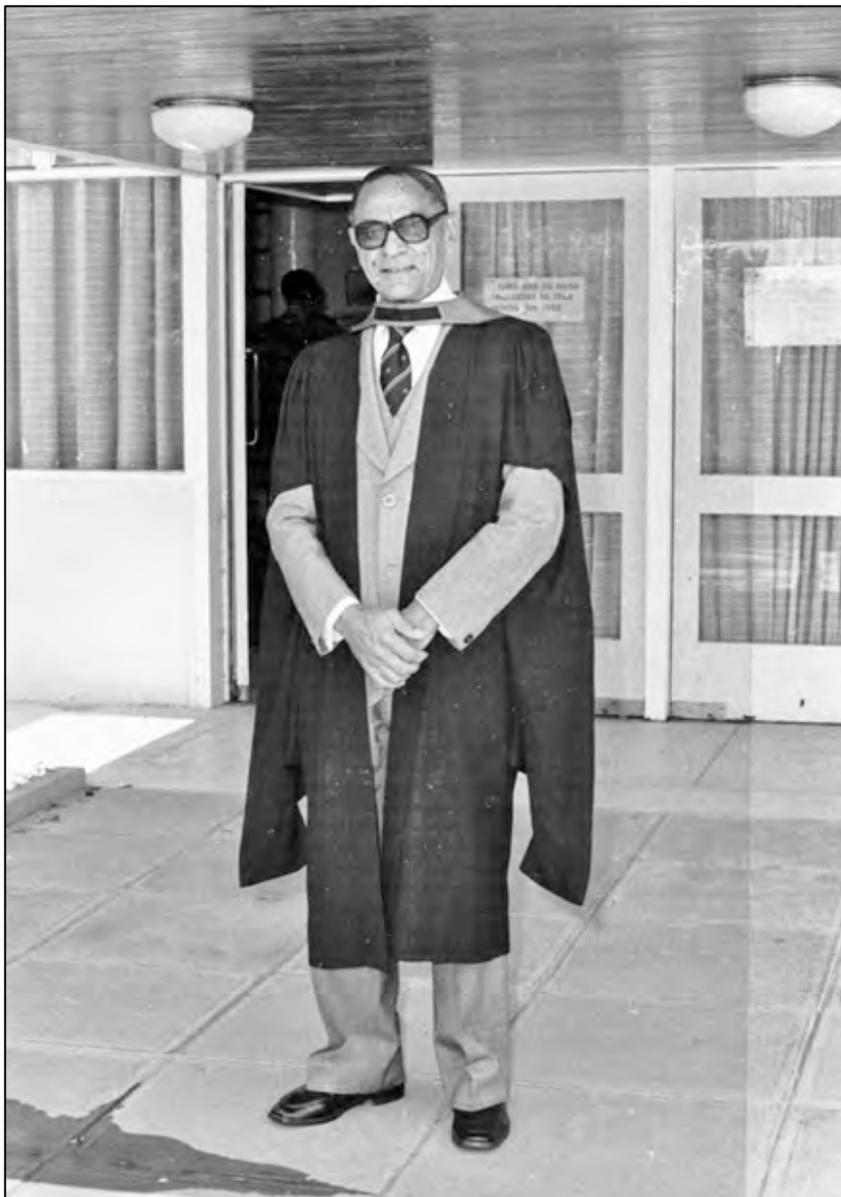


Figure 32: Alie Fataar's last teaching post was at the Cranborne High School in Zimbabwe. Cranborne was a former private school for ex-World War 2 soldiers, and one of the school's heroes in its previous iteration was Douglas Bader, the Allied fighter pilot famous for his wartime exploits even though he had suffered the loss of both legs. In independent Zimbabwe, the school had changed its pupil demographics, much akin to what occurred in post-apartheid South African schools. Of the photograph itself, Alie Fataar indicated that he must have borrowed the academic gown for a special occasion at the school. Photo courtesy Alie Fataar



Figure 33: Alie Fataar indicated that this was the last time he was photographed with a class of his students. The photograph depicts Alie Fataar surrounded in the school-desks by his students at the Cranborne High School in Zimbabwe in 1988, when he retired from teaching after 51 years in classrooms and education departments in South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The photograph is significant in many respects, but one marker of Alie Fataar's teaching life is highlighted in the representation above. The student in the foreground of the photograph is quite deliberately holding up a copy of William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. This is a poetic representation, in that Alie Fataar narrated, in Chapter Four of this study, that he had identified his English elocution-deficiencies as a young student at Livingstone High School. In order to improve his elocutionary skills, Fataar narrated that he had taken it upon himself to read Shakespearean and other texts aloud, by himself, in the park opposite their home in Surrey Street, Claremont. He had also indicated that a stand-out feature of his period at the University of Cambridge in 1971 was that, for the very first time, he had been able to enjoy the bliss of a live Shakespearean production. The representation of the Shakespearean text in this photograph inscribes Alie Fataar into a matrix of teaching and Shakespeare that could be said to exemplify significant indicators of his teaching life as narrated in this study.
Photo courtesy Alie Fataar

I posed a question to Alie Fataar about his feelings on leaving behind 29 years of exile: “Would you consider that you left a life behind or anything like that? Would there be such sentiment attached, or...?”⁷⁴⁰ Fataar’s response was:

As a teacher, yes, I realised I left hundreds of my ex-students there and they are in positions which they wouldn’t have been if we weren’t the teachers there after Independence. In that sense, you feel you make a contribution to a developing people, fully aware that it’s only the small toe of the steps. That there’s so much more to be done but that’s as much as you can do because you move on. Even when I left Zimbabwe, I mean, there too I felt, I’m going **home** now. Qualified to do what I did **there**, only to run up against these bladdy snares we’ve got here now.⁷⁴¹

Insights from Chapter Six

The key issues in this chapter concern the teacher-politico identity of Alie Fataar in relation to the demands/requests from the UMSA leadership in Lusaka on his time and commitment, and the exile-identity of Alie Fataar in Edward Said’s theoretical *oeuvre* on exile. In terms of the first issue, Fataar’s position is unequivocal. He makes an unprecedented move by stating to the exiled UMSA leadership that his political contribution in Zambia is to be interpreted through the lens of his commitment to *teaching* the children of the newly-independent African state. He achieves this by presenting a layered contextual overview of a foreign teaching-corps motivated in the main by money, whereas his is a political commitment in the form of education. In doing this, Fataar establishes emphatically that his understanding of teaching is that it *is* politics; that he *is* acting politically when he provides a superior educational experience to previously-deprived students who wish to propel themselves, and by extension, their new state into a modern, prosperous state for all its citizens. In the context of this study,

⁷⁴⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁴¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

then, it is in exile in Zambia that Fataar most resolutely affirms his, as it were, central or core identity, which is being a teacher. For Fataar, being a teacher is being political, and being political means teaching for democratic citizenship. Whereas in apartheid South Africa Fataar and his comrades fought a battle *to be able to teach*, here, in newly post-colonial Zambia, and later in post-colonial Zimbabwe, Fataar seizes the post-colonial moment to interpret his politics in terms of a commitment to teach those who need to be taught. His *de facto* relegation of the formal political work in the UMSA office occurs after teaching hours, and over weekends. All of this, of course, is inflected by the personal and political turmoil that emerged as one of the characteristics of the UMSA in exile, but Fataar does not linger on that. He engages in an intellectual space which Ben Kies and other NEUM ideologues had defined and emphasised, i.e. that the teacher is the supreme intellectual, and the primary agent of social change.

But Fataar goes a step further. In a state of exile, in which Fataar finds himself, Edward Said indicates that the intellectual must remain distanced from the lure of comfort in the group. To remain critical and alert, the Saidian model of exile demands that the public intellectual works within the system, but remains aware of the need to maintain critical distance in order to avoid the pitfalls of, here, specifically, post-colonial nationalism. Alie Fataar's period in Zambia contradicts this model. He joins the party which constitutes the state majority, and, as this chapter has shown, even adopts the insignia of the Zambian state in the form of wearing the Zambian tie. He is proud to point out the tie on photographs, and does not explore the implications of this embeddedness for his critical-intellectual identity. He partially explains this engagement as part of his supra-African identity; he is not South African or Zambian or anything else *per sé*: he is an African in

Zambia, and therefore adopts the local instantiation of that over-arching identity in geo-specific spaces. For theorists of exile, Fataar's case presents a fine opportunity for further analytical work. For one, the question of class, of economic independence or marginalisation, appears as a useful lever with which to begin to juxtapose the Saidian exile-framework against the model lived and conceptualised by Alie Fataar. The question can be posed here: if Alie Fataar was as economically stable as was the globally-acclaimed academic and public intellectual Edward Said, would Fataar have acted differently? In other words, does class mediate, with such power, the critical postures of the intellectual in exile? It is the focus, perhaps, of future studies.

For now, this study moves on to Chapter Seven, in which Fataar's return to South Africa is narrated, before the final chapter of the study, Chapter Eight, reflects on the study as a whole.

Chapter Seven: Return, continued resistance, two roads, and a fiery sunset

*How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.⁷⁴²*

“None of us in exile had any idea that we’d ever get home to a free South Africa.”⁷⁴³

Alie Fataar revealed that even though the South African liberation movements had been unbanned at the beginning of 1990, and many political prisoners released, “(T)here was a fear” regarding “what can they do with us now”?⁷⁴⁴ He indicated that when the realisation dawned that it was now possible to return to South Africa after more than two-and-a-half decades in exile, “we were not even sure – Ursula especially – whether we should go at the time we did, even in 1990 when we could come and **visit** only.”⁷⁴⁵

After three years of mulling the possibility of a full return from exile, Fataar disclosed that pressure from the UNHCR, “from 1991 to 1993,” culminated in an ultimatum: “This is your last opportunity to be taken off...”⁷⁴⁶ It is quite extraordinary to note the absence

⁷⁴² Excerpt from Alfred, Lord Tennyson’s *Ulysses*. Alie Fataar indicated that this was his favourite poem, which he loved reciting and teaching to successive generations of students.

⁷⁴³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 30 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁴⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 30 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁴⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 30 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁷⁴⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 30 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

of a narrative that unconditionally welcomes the prospect of return. Instead, Fataar is candid about the deliberate choices they faced, and ultimately had to make, as they contemplated their return from exile.

In December 1993, twenty-eight years after fleeing into exile, Alie Fataar returned to the soil of his birth.

...when I came back, I was the only one... because my sisters, all of them had died. All passed away. Their children and their **grand**children were at the airport to greet me. I couldn't understand this. I thought: 'Jislaaik [*My goodness!*]. This is Ramadaan!⁷⁴⁷ It's nine o'clock at night. They should be at Trawie!⁷⁴⁸ A few of them had babies in their arms. Gamja and all Omar's children and Toyer's children and Galiema and, of course, Rustum and... were all there. Anyhow... And then I had to take great decisions after that. The political family and the personal family – the relationship – I wasn't sure.⁷⁴⁹

After three years of deliberating about returning from exile or remaining in Zimbabwe, Fataar indicates that he articulated to himself that an important decision faced him, regarding 'the political family and the personal family'. Quite literally, Fataar relates that he posed this question to himself in the arrivals lounge of a South African airport.

Fataar re-explored the notion of the two families in a subsequent interview.

When I came back from exile in 1990, in the middle of Ramadaan, I was surprised to find over a hundred of my family there. There were only a small handful of my political family at the airport, that is my two sons, and their two children, and others, and cousins. No, sorry... there were over a hundred of my Muslim family, my own family, and my family there, and only a handful of the political family, on that occasion, at the airport.

⁷⁴⁷ The month in which Muslims having attained the age of puberty, and in good health, are required to fast from sunrise to sunset for a month.

⁷⁴⁸ This is a colloquial term for the non-obligatory late-evening communal prayers at the end of each day during the fast of Ramadaan. Fataar's exclamation here possibly indicates a judgmental tone, as attendance at these non-obligatory prayers is commonly equated with piety.

⁷⁴⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 30 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

And that already gave me the thought: ‘What are you part of?’ And that straightaway brought in this question of ‘which road were you on? Which road are you on now? And that’s the road I’ve been trying to be on since 1990, when I came back. (Long pause)⁷⁵⁰

It is extremely interesting to note the visceral impact on Alie Fataar of the large numbers of ‘my Muslim family, my own family’ present physically at the airport to welcome him on his return from exile. This large presence of ‘personal family’ is what Fataar proffers as the primary reason for his decision regarding ‘which road are you on now?’ along with the following observation:

And I had, as I had said the other day at a function of some nephew who turned... seventy, I said the idea was when I came back, I had been part of two families: the personal family and the political family. And in that process I threw more of my time into the political family. While I’m not out of contact with the personal family, I, on the occasion that I was to be there, whether it’s a wedding or a burial or something, a doepmal [*baptism*] or anything like that, er... I used to... but I wasn’t ninety-percent associated... probably ten or twenty percent. Coming back now, you’ll find politically, the political family is dispersed, in the Unity Movement, in the TLISA, and the **activism** of those days is minimal... and now being overtaken by the, er... broader, wider, er... toyi-toyi dancing, er... whatchacallit – populist struggle, and in the process... **drowned** out the more radical, purposeful structure that we had hoped to set up. So now then to... mend the fences... on the personal family side, and I had to get to know **who** they all were because there were the Fataars and the Gallows...⁷⁵¹

Fataar thus indicates that he took a considered decision to ‘mend the fences’ with his ‘personal family,’ and, by extension, the broader Muslim community, by virtue of three factors: first, the overwhelming presence of his personal family at the airport to welcome him back from exile; second, the ‘dispersed’ political family, and third, the ‘minimal activism’ of the Unity Movement and TLISA as he saw it in the face of ‘populist’ political

⁷⁵⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 28 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁵¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

currents which “drowned out the more radical, purposeful structure that (they – the Unity Movement, TLSA and kindred organisations) had hoped to set up.”⁷⁵²

Given the immediate impact of the initial presence at the airport of his ‘personal family’ on Fataar’s decision, we are left to speculate as to whether or not he would have made a different decision had larger numbers of political comrades turned up at the airport to welcome him.

The speculation notwithstanding, Fataar’s decision had a pronounced effect on his engagement with the Muslim community, in particular, after his return. Not one to be idle, Fataar began a deliberate series of intellectual and social interactions via newly-established community-radio station, Radio 786, which broadcast to the greater Cape Town and, later, Boland regions. Fataar was a regular and feisty phone-in voice on current-affairs programmes, and later co-hosted a late-afternoon current-affairs programme with an in-house anchor.

During our interviews, there were frequent references to papers he had prepared for a phone-in, or for broadcast. In the very first interview we conducted, the first mention of an interaction with the radio-station involved Fataar lamenting the fact that the station afforded, in his view, *personae non grata* access to valuable airtime: “Here we’ve got all this nonsense... all, this rubbish... government... Marais and Morkel, and all these

⁷⁵² Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

gemors [*rubbishes*]. And then the jargon's coming into it. And they come on to 786 as well."⁷⁵³

Fataar had struck up a good relationship with a presenter at Radio 786, Shahid Mathee, who at the time was a researcher at the University of Cape Town, straddling Religious Studies and History. Fataar referred to Mathee as “my, er, what shall I call it, authority, when it comes to the Islamic side,” whereas Fataar labelled himself as “just a layman” when it came to matters Islamic.⁷⁵⁴

This classification of ‘religious authority’ versus ‘layman’ was not just linguistic expedience. Fataar was actively placing responsibility on the shoulders of the Muslim leadership to come forward to clarify matters which Fataar felt strongly about.

It is necessary here to invoke a key passage related by Fataar, as it highlights a fundamental marker of Fataar's sense of self.

No, God, [Afr.] in all these years of my political participating, I was never afraid to go for the opposition, and never afraid to go for somebody within our midst who I felt was wrong, right up into exile, and right until I come back, and right up to today. And that's somehow in my nature, but only correct that you do not simply become a yes-man, because somebody above you has said so-and-so.⁷⁵⁵

He carried this same identity into the community he had newly (re-) embraced on his return from exile:

⁷⁵³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁵⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁵⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 28 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Now when it comes to Islam, I am **no** ulema (sic.)⁷⁵⁶ (a short laugh) and I don't pretend to be anybody here, knowing what is exactly in the Qur'an, in the classical Arabic, but I take it that the translations we've got are genuine. And therefore I really look at this, then I ask: 'What are we doing?' We should be asking ourselves: 'What can we do?' I could very well be sticking my neck out, as I say. But I want them to go for it... react... and they haven't.⁷⁵⁷

One of the recurring themes Fataar took up during his engagements with Muslim community-media was that of *sadaqah* (broadly interpreted by Fataar as 'charity'). It is necessary to return to Fataar's earlier categorisation of his young student days in order to contextualise the consistent critique he directed at proponents and those who religiously practised the concept of *sadaqah*:

As a teenager, we youngsters, we were the Young Turks. We were virtually wild, but somehow we had one agreement: that we would not take part in any form of charity that was being organised just after the Depression. People were impoverished and so invariably the liberals, and especially those in the Anglican Church, they used to organise what we still have today as CAFDA – Cape Flats Distress Association... And the point is that, together with other similar charities they came to the young people like us with a bit of education to roll us into this – but we refused to bite because we used to say to ourselves: 'What are we going to subsidise? – this whole system that produces the poor and we must now go and collect odds and ends of money and things in order to thereby keep the system going? It will never come to an end while we do-gooders are always there to feed them and clothe them and so on and so on.' Now that used to be our attitude. Now today we have a much larger proportion of people who need this and of course we, especially amongst the Muslims, are forever raising all sorts of eats-and-treats and funds and so on. Of course the very eats-and-treats are the very negative of it because of the amount of food that people can make up. It could very well just have been taking that food and giving it to the poor instead of making money for the rich to buy other foods to give to the poor. Anyhow, that's another conundrum. The point is that this *sadaqah* is the same as charity because you are the very people who do very little to see that the system is being tackled.⁷⁵⁸

⁷⁵⁶ The singular form of 'ulema' (learned Muslims/Muslim religious leadership) is 'alim'.

⁷⁵⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 28 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁷⁵⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 26 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

This admittedly lengthy extract draws a direct link between the radical youth, Alie Fataar, and the returning exile, now more centrally locating himself in the Muslim community, for reasons explicated earlier in this chapter.

He thus drew explicitly on political theory imbibed as a youth, and recontextualised the issue as it impacted on the primary community in which he now located himself.

His challenge to the Muslim leadership, too, drew strongly on his experience of, and his relationship with his father. He had related the following about his father as it referenced the responsibility and probable divine punishment of religious leadership who did not fulfil their divine duties in socially-responsive and responsible ways:

My father used to say, Imam Sedick used to say to them: “Ja, julle moet onthou. Die imams sal almal voor staan. Hulle wil hier voor staan. Hulle gaan daar ook voor staan. En dan gaan hulle vra: ‘Nou sê julle vir ons, wat het julle gedoen vir julle mense? Om te sê wat hulle moet doen en nie moet doen nie!’” [*Yes. You must remember this. The imams will all be standing right at the front of the queue. They all want to be in the front here, so they will all be standing in front there. And then they’ll be asked: ‘Now tell us: what have you done for your people? Did you instruct them properly as to what to do and what not to do?’*] And now you will find that if you didn’t tell them what to do, dan gaan jy eerste na die warm plek!” [*...you’ll be first to go to that hot place (Hell)!*] My father used to tell us that. Imam Sedick, from Wynberg, used to say... I’m saying what he taught **me**. And I must honour what my father taught me. You’re telling us to honour our elders, now he’s dead sixty or seventy years...⁷⁵⁹

By invoking his respect for his dead father by carrying out the lessons taught by him, Fataar subverts the patriarchal power-play exercised by conservative religious leaders who, in the face of strident debate, resort to a ‘respect your elders’ discourse to silence the naysayers.

⁷⁵⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Fataar also continued to operate within the ambit of the Unity Movement, Apdusa and the TLISA. Apdusa had requested of Fataar “whatever I’ve written that they can use.”⁷⁶⁰

He continued attending meetings of the TLISA, indicating proudly that he was “a life-member,”⁷⁶¹ and attended branch meetings of the now Education sector of the trade union NUPSAW. “I haven’t gone to many of them; occasionally I go when it’s convenient.”⁷⁶²

He still contributed to conferences of the Unity Movement, and on one occasion we shifted our weekly Monday morning interview session because of a Unity Movement conference over the previous weekend. “There’s a conference coming off next week, after Easter,” reported Fataar, “and I’ve prepared a paper on the global economy together with Anwah Nagia. He’s going to do his section. I’ve got my section finished.”⁷⁶³

Outside of these activities, Fataar also participated in the debates and public demonstrations of the Anti-War Coalition (AWC). He was a regular and familiar figure on the streets of Cape Town during mass rallies organised under the auspices of the AWC. As depicted in Figure 34 on page 287, where he is seen with a red marshall’s band around his arm, Fataar proudly identified himself with the New Unity Movement on the placards he painted himself in the flat in Wynberg:

...our Unity Movement placard, the big one, was “End all Imperialist Wars,” and we are saying “End all Imperialist Wars but support wars of liberation...” We are still Unity Movement people – the core of it - I am a double-title life-and-founder-member and in

⁷⁶⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁶¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁶² Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁶³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

that respect I speak so that we are saying that there are policies that still have to appear in the politics of South Africa which have now been shut off....”⁷⁶⁴

Fataar thus continued resisting oppression, participating fully in the debates and placing his body on the streets in acts of solidarity with those who bore the brunt of imperial aggression across the globe.

All the while, he maintained a critical intellectual stance against anything he regarded as necessitating critique. His challenge to the Muslim leadership, through his newspaper articles and participation in community-radio programmes, as he put it, did not receive a response from them, as he had hoped. He stated his own critical intellectual position in the following manner: “I’m critical, of course, as you’ve heard, of many of the things in **all** religions, **including** Islam. I’m critical of it, and I have a right to be critical of it, but it doesn’t make me less of a believer in it.”⁷⁶⁵

This extract is part of a more extensive reflection by Fataar, in which he contextualised his earlier political, educational and social lives, and began a recontextualisation into the present. Fataar began his narrative in the following way:

They say this Fataar was a Marxist, as I told you, because the Unity Movement was. ‘Hy’s ’n Marxist.’ [*He’s a Marxist.*] Now that surely can’t be left out, because the life I led politically is not the life I’m leading today, because I was younger – we were all younger then – and the young people today are also leading a life which the ordinary Muslims say they shouldn’t be doing and having all the fun and games, and baie min tyd vir die deen [*and very little time for the religion*].⁷⁶⁶

⁷⁶⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁶⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 28 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁷⁶⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 28 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar



Figure 34: At the age of 86, Alie Fataar is shown here holding aloft a self-painted placard at the start of an Anti-War Coalition march in May 2003 opposite the Muir Street Mosque in District Six, Cape Town. The Unity Movement is inscribed on the placard, and depicts Fataar's life-long adult association with the Unity Movement. The red band around his left wrist indicates that he had volunteered as a crowd-marshal. Age had clearly not dimmed the anti-imperialist ideology and solidarity which Fataar had embraced from his earliest association with the formations that were to form the core of the NEUM. Photo courtesy Alie Fataar

Fataar declared his ideological paradigm while discussing the social milieu operating during his youth. He stated:

Now when it comes to the older period of political... again, there we were with Goolam Gool, while he admits to not having been a Marxist – he was a radical nationalist, and whatever ideal he fed me on, was that sort of thing.⁷⁶⁷

There is nothing in Fataar's articulations about his political orientation that suggests any discarding or replacing as he re-enters South Africa. Instead, he invokes a 'two-roads' metaphor to rationalise the present.

They say that age brings you wisdom. I don't think it's wisdom; I think age brings you understanding. Age makes you hark back to what you did when you were younger, and say, perhaps you shouldn't have done that or perhaps that you were justified in doing, that you took two roads, that you took more to the one road, the political road, than the personal. But at no stage was I against the lower road, which some people tried to make out: 'He's a Marxist,' and all that.⁷⁶⁸

To what extent, if at all, is Fataar engaging in historical revisionism? I am mindful of Woolf's warning to biographers:

Suppose, for example, that the man of genius was immoral, ill-tempered, and threw the boots at the maid's head. The widow would say, 'Still I loved him – he was the father of my children; and the public, who love his books, must on no account be disillusioned. Cover up. Omit.'⁷⁶⁹

This study has consistently taken the research-orientation that 'covering up' and 'omitting' the tough questions from this life-history study of Alie Fataar is an act of diminishing the complexity, and therefore the historical legacy of the man. I hold the view, and will indicate this in the final chapter, that Fataar himself, by virtue of his own

⁷⁶⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 30 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁶⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 28 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁶⁹ Quoted in Pimlott, 1999: 37

critical intellectual persona, establishes the necessity for an honest and candid approach to matters intellectual in any study about him.

Just as Alie Fataar railed against being a ‘yes-man,’⁷⁷⁰ so, I suggest, honesty in search of intellectual clarity in a study of this nature is to honour the legacy and memory of the researched.

It will doubtless be contested. In that very contestation lies the potential for greater clarity and therefore another progressive step in adding to the historiographical oeuvre which places, at the centre, the lives of those who dared to resist programmatic social injustice at great cost to themselves, those they loved, those they lost along the way, and those who lost them to ‘the greater cause’.

So it is necessary to subject to critical scrutiny Fataar’s own possible historical revisionism, even as this section of the study speaks to Fataar’s aim of ‘correcting’ a historical record that has marginalised and deliberately removed huge swathes of historical participation from the official record. In a remarkable metaphorical confluence, Fataar inserts, in a very different use of the trope, the ‘two roads’ concept as employed by the All-African Convention, as he points to the distortion of the historical record:

I feel there has been so much deliberate misrepresentation, number one, of the programme and policy... programme and policy of the liberation movement, whether you call it Convention, Unity Movement, Anti-CAD, Teachers’ League, APDUSA, these all formed one huge liberation movement throughout the country; it was national. The teachers’ struggle might have been in various organisations in the provinces but they had the same thing in mind, whether it was African or Coloured or Indian people – they

⁷⁷⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 28 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

wanted the same equality. So all of this now spells one thing, nationally, not just local, so those would be the ideas of thousands of individuals and hundreds of organisations in the same stream – what we used to call ‘the new road’. The Convention called it ‘the new road’ and it still is ‘the new road’ because we haven’t departed from it – we – but the others have never joined it; they found little side roads, side ways and led them into the situation in which we are today. Now therefore those who were part of this biography, they need to be honoured. They can be honoured through this book where I draw attention to them because they’ve never been featured. You get strange characters being featured for having done little work, a little something here, there; then this person suddenly becomes a great hero. Even a scoundrel becomes a hero today, and so on, so that the history that’s being written, must be corrected; in a way, that is what I’m trying to do.⁷⁷¹

“Anybody can walk two roads,” Alie Fataar indicated, “but you can jump, skip, jump, skip...”⁷⁷² As late as the year 2000, Fataar’s ‘two roads’, and memories of his past association with the Muslim community during the most active days of the TLSA and NEUM continued to elicit strong public sentiments.

In Chapter Five, Fataar indicated that during the split in the Unity Movement in the late 1950s, he had been labelled a ‘kaffirboetie’ by members he refused to name. Earlier, I had asked him: “What kind of labels have you been labelled with in the past? And do they stick?”⁷⁷³ His response at the time recalled an incident during his stay in Medina before going on to perform the rites of the Hajj:

(Subdued) The worst one was on Hajj. The man died the next day. Said, “here’s” ...it’s someone you know. I won’t mention his name... he said: “There’s a communist going on Hajj...” In Medina. I said: “I’m very pleased to say a few words too, what you said about, this man in Cape Town who says, there’s a communist going on Hajj.” (pause of 5-6 seconds) I said, “now, you see, I was in a liberation struggle. I still am. And for that, I was put into a banning order... and in order for them to do it, the Vorsters had to pass a law which they called the Suppression of Communism Act. And after a while, they published forty, four or five-hundred names. And there was Alie Fataar. Banned in terms of the Suppression of Communism Act. They didn’t mention the fact that I stood for the Ten-Point Programme, which means full equality and the right to sit in parliament. If that

⁷⁷¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁷² Interview with Alie Fataar, 28 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁷³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

was communism, to appeal to America, that we are dealing with these people because they are communists. They had the trouble with Russia. Cold War. But then you had Alie Fataar there with Achmad Cassiem. Imam Achmad Cassiem, reference so-and-so, was he a communist? Were these all communists?" I said: "I'm very pleased to state that our struggle was for full equality; full democratic rights."⁷⁷⁴

Well into his eighties, Fataar used the occasion of the Hajj to articulate his life-long struggle for the liberation of oppressed peoples. It is significant that Fataar uses the occasion in Medina to re-establish a political platform on which to educate those who had been present on the occasion of his being labelled a 'communist going on Hajj.'

He uses the occasion to re-establish his identity as one of many whose 'struggle was for full equality; full democratic rights.' His use of 'our struggle,' amongst other things, places the onus on those listening to either identify with that struggle for 'full equality' or to align themselves with those who opposed or were apathetic towards politicians like Fataar.

In a deeply ironic way, Fataar used the occasion of the Hajj to broadcast a message of the universal responsibility of people to oppose oppression regardless of one's creed or faith. One aspect of that irony lies in the fact that the regime in Saudi Arabia stifles the political dimensions of the Hajj, relegating the annual gathering of millions of people to a series of rituals devoid of political content which should help shape an agenda of universal social justice.

By denigrating Fataar through indicating that a 'communist (was) going on Hajj,' Fataar was presented, some fifty years later, with the opportunity to address his original

⁷⁷⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

community which marked his first primary identity, namely the Muslim community, and once again communicate the ideas of the Unity Movement to people within the parameters of a sacred space to Muslims.

There is no indication in Fataar's narrative of any reference to a specific 'Islamic' discourse, which is indicative of what Fataar related in Medina, namely: "...you, see, I was in a liberation struggle. I still am."⁷⁷⁵ That struggle, defined in the same terms Fataar had employed from the early 1940s, was what Fataar was indicating still defined him, and what continued to drive his sense of social and political responsibility beyond his eightieth year.

The 'Hajj moment', as it were, exemplifies this study's cognisance of the extremely complex, competing forces which constitute 'Alie Fataar'. This will be explored more fully in Chapter Eight, but it is important to insert here, as Fataar approaches the last years of his more than eight decades of life, that, from his earliest narratives about the essentialising forces of religion, race and class which all attempt to define him, Alie Fataar engages in a dialectic in which all these competing forces are 'tamed' and never singly able to stimulate an essentialist philosophy of his selfhood.

These forces are named, subjected to rigorous interrogation through the informal learning spaces afforded by his father's critical persona; his induction into an Anglophone academic ethos from primary school, through high school, where Livingstone principal and TLSA leadership figure E.C. Roberts' radical ideas about religion and social justice

⁷⁷⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

significantly mark Fataar; to his intellectual mentors I.B. Tabata and Dr. Goolam Gool, and his close personal and political bond with Ben Kies: all of these create the conditions for a potentially schizophrenic impact on a life.

Through, and with all of these differentially tugging potential essentialisms, Fataar is able to navigate and bring sensibility to his life, adopting as a central identity his life as a teacher. It is Alie, Fataar, teacher, who emerges from Zonnebloem College of Education at the end of 1936, works exhaustively in school and the broader political arena from 1937 to 1964; it is Alie Fataar, teacher, who privileges his teacher-identity amidst concerted efforts to have him work full-time in the UMSA office in Lusaka; and it is Alie Fataar, teacher, who assumes an overtly pedagogic stance vis-à-vis the Muslim community (through the broadcast and print media, but also through lectures and speeches) into which he returns from exile.

His teaching life *is* his political life, and, as shown in Chapters Five and Seven, his political life is, for all intents and purposes, his family life. On his return from exile, Fataar returns to what this study theorises as a period of principled expedience, or a principled pragmatism. Chapter Eight takes these concepts further as I draw the study to a conclusion.

For now, it is crucial to state that Fataar's mission as a teacher, which involved, along with his comrades, nothing less than hauling his students, his immediate communities of recognition, his region and his fellow-countrymen-and-women out of the despair of successive colonial and internal regimes of servitude, is the axis of all the political,

personal, psychological and spiritual work with which he chooses to engage during his life.

Part of his ongoing political mission during the last years of his life involved thinking deeply about how to grow the Unity Movement in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

I said in the meeting yesterday when we were having a meeting yesterday – a meeting at the table as a group – I said, “You see, why we’re not growing, it’s because we only are one-tenth of the population, look at us here – we are still ‘Capiers’.” I said, “We haven’t got across to the people who should be in the Unity Movement. Originally the idea was to get Coloured, African, Indian and White but today of course, it’s ideological unity.” I said, “In those days you couldn’t go to Langa. We went there once and we were bashed up – by Liberals! I had to go in there on a permit, pretending that I’m selling clothes to people I sell to keep my son at university. I had to. I had some African women there, Unity Movement members, and they bought dresses and so-on for another firm. And I said, “Well, I have to go in there and I can look at the meetings of the groups there,” and so it went. So I said, “But today they can all come out and we can go in!”⁷⁷⁶

The extract serves to indicate how Fataar saw the opportunities presented by the changed political landscape in post-apartheid South Africa. The relative freedom of movement and association in the post-apartheid era was an opportunity Fataar saw for attempts at unity (now ideological in nature as opposed to the previous period in which the colour-bar had previously largely defined the parameters of the struggle).

In his observation of what he perceived as a lack of moving outside of traditional areas of recruitment and political activity, Fataar spoke to the still rigid geographical spaces which defined people’s movements across a still largely divided Cape Town.

⁷⁷⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 29 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

He was also invoking his history as an organiser, not content to maintain a status quo when there was organisational growth to be pursued.

“So you don’t think the Unity Movement is dying at this stage?” I asked.⁷⁷⁷ Fataar’s response was immediate:

Oh no! The ideas are there and people are now coming round. What we are going to do if we have the funds is reissue some of the pamphlets and literature during the negotiations because the younger people are unaware of what happened at CODESA and when they formed this liaison between the old and the new (laughs) and we’re back now to square one, that bridge, all this sort of thing; there was only a crossing over then. And now you have this crossover where it’s only just a question of making a cross on a piece of paper! (Laughs)⁷⁷⁸

In looking to the growth of the Movement, Fataar again alluded to the financial aspect of continuing to struggle at optimal level. It had fallen on the cadres of the Unity Movement throughout its history to source the funds for their struggle. I had asked Fataar about the financing of the many publications issued during the 1940s and beyond. He indicated: “Well, we just had to, Goolam (Gool) called it, self-fund, a few pounds... well, yes, we managed.”⁷⁷⁹

It is noteworthy that the intended re-issuing of the Unity Movement publications Fataar refers to are directed at ‘the younger people (who) are unaware of what happened at CODESA and when they formed this liaison between the old and the new’. In this regard, Fataar foregrounds a key aspect of his work as a teacher at Livingstone High School from 1938 to 1964: “We have to get the youth; we have to get the youngsters. If we haven’t

⁷⁷⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 29 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁷⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 29 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁷⁹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

got them at high school and colleges and universities... you'll never get them. I mean, here we got them in high school and in primary school....”⁷⁸⁰

It is interesting to note here that during Fataar’s narrations of teaching during his exile years, this pedagogy of liberation was absent. Was it the case, during the exile years, of ‘teaching as a political activity, but devoid of overt political content’ as had been the case in South Africa? Clearly, the Swaneng Hill magazine reference in Chapter Six indicated that Fataar was intent on moving newly-independent Botswanans to deepen their experience of the post-colonial democratic spaces which were opening for them.

Nowhere in the narratives, though, is there an indication, in exile, of the imperative to “(get) them in high school and primary school” as a matter of inducting young people into overt political struggle. Conditions in exile, of course, were different, but the notion of a different political reality outside South Africa is critical in marking Fataar’s teaching lives within, and outside of, South Africa.

Now, back from exile, of course, Fataar and his older comrades were no longer in the schools. He was thus making an appeal for an appreciation of, and a coherent programme in the present, in which the Movement could again focus on organising, influencing and recruiting in both primary and high schools, as he and his colleagues had done during their formal teaching lives in South Africa.

⁷⁸⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

During our last formally scheduled interview, I thanked Alie Fataar for having allowed me to interrupt his life by coming into his space, physically, emotionally, intellectually and in various other ways: “Mr. Fataar, I’m... how do you express thanks except by ‘Thank you’. Maybe the thanks will be expressed in the kind of... I hope this will be an ethical piece of work...”⁷⁸¹

Alie Fataar’s response is a powerful theoretical marker for this study, in that he framed me as a researcher in the following terms:

No, I’m very grateful to you, because the others who interviewed me had their own ideas. Now, for once, there’s somebody who is **closer** to what one wants, even from the point of view of Islam. Trevor and all the others with the book, they will be on the political side, whereas here, I think, we must put the spotlight on this other aspect.⁷⁸²

I found this intriguing, since I had been struck throughout the six-month interview period as to how often I had to re-direct the narrative (for analytical purposes) back from ‘the political’ to what I considered to be questions around ‘teaching and education,’ although no binary construct between these fields can be invoked.

In Chapter Eight, I discuss this further, and pre-empt that discussion by noting here that a general paradox exists in the study. Where I actively pursued discourses of teaching, especially during his Livingstone years, I found a preponderance of ‘politics’ in the form of his work in the AAC, NEUM, TLSA, CATA, CTFC, and APDUSA.

⁷⁸¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 28 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁸² Interview with Alie Fataar, 28 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

In contrast, and in keeping with Fataar's own formulation of going into exile in order to organise from the outside for inside, in other words, a clearly political framing, I encountered a richer vein of narrations about teaching – culminating in Fataar describing the period of exile as the apex of his career in education.

What then, it is necessary to ask, made Fataar declare: “Now, for once, there's somebody who is **closer** to what one wants”?⁷⁸³ This question is a key analytic element as the potential success or otherwise of this study is assessed in Chapter Eight, and is part of the assessment of the study's contribution to the literature around the researcher-researched matrix.

On Saturday 18 December 2004, I received a call from Alie Fataar requesting that I come to the flat the following day, as he had news he wanted to share with me. I visited him on Sunday 19 December 2004. He was to have his right leg amputated below the knee as a result of gangrenous toes.

There was no need for more words. Alie Fataar had spoken during the interviews of the deaths of his parents and sisters in relation to diabetes. He had related that his only surviving sister had had her leg amputated as a result of diabetes complications during the final stages of her life.⁷⁸⁴ It was an overwhelming moment, and I was deeply saddened, and honoured, to be a part of this process. Yes, I would visit him, and yes, I would hasten to complete the study.

⁷⁸³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 28 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁸⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

The last time I saw him alive was to bring along and change the batteries of the Sony digital recorder which he had bought in order to offset the need to type, as his diabetic-induced neuropathy hindered his writing. My wife changed the batteries for him, and we exchanged a few minutes of conversation centred mainly around his limited movement because of his being confined to a wheelchair. Those final moments also included his stated intention to record something for later transcription by his beloved grand-daughter. He was alert, and still focused on recording and disseminating his ideas via newer digital technologies.

Alie Fataar had bought the same model of audio-recorder I had used throughout the interviews, and the interview transcripts reveal the many detailed discussions we shared about this device and his desire to secure such a device. Fataar had pored over the manuals of my own recorder I brought him, and he probed and questioned me about the device I used as he handled it and learnt its operating procedures during several interviews, keeping me informed throughout of the progress of his efforts to secure the digital audio-recorder.

Alie Fataar passed away, and was buried on 9 June 2005, being laid to rest before sunset on the day of his death as per the practice of Islamic burials in the Cape and elsewhere. His simple grave lies in the same burial ground, the Mowbray cemetery, as that of Imam Abdullah Haron, Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman and Cissie Gool, contemporaries who had passed away more than thirty years before.

Near death, as during his life, Alie Fataar left a legacy in which he displayed a commitment to an intellectual scrutiny of self. Earlier in this chapter, Fataar had indicated that it was vital to organise and recruit new blood into the Movement from the primary and high schools. The fact that this was not being effected as before evoked the following deep reflection from Fataar:

...you look at yourself and think now, did I have a wrong conception of developments socially and otherwise? There were all sorts of straws in the wind, or more than straws in the wind; tendencies there where we should be going, nationally and internationally and you find now that you are not anywhere near what you had in mind then.⁷⁸⁵

It is a significant ‘admission’ by Fataar, and opens up a space in which sober analysis and critical introspection can occur. While Fataar’s reflection is about the choices made decades earlier, and whether these were useful or not, the introspection is applicable to all social actors, particularly those who embark on far-reaching social programmes based on particular ideologies.

Certainly, Fataar recognised the power of the present military-industrial complex and its global reach, extending as it does into post-apartheid South Africa via anti-poor neo-liberal economic policies which have seen South Africa become, in 2015, a more unequal society than at the advent of our democratic order in 1994. Fataar therefore issues a challenge to all social actors: think, reflect and debate – constantly. This study would be amiss were it to end on any other note than re-stating what Fataar prided himself on being: someone who was not afraid to challenge and debate, even if it meant coming up against friends and comrades.

⁷⁸⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 26 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

If Alie Fataar recognised, as he reflected on his life, that ‘you are not anywhere near what you had in mind then,’ then that frank appraisal is a challenge to be taken up by all who dare to stand against the tide of oppression. Alie Fataar and his comrades stood against oppression, and he recognised, as he neared death, a world in which his ideas and efforts needed to be constantly re-evaluated and re-focused if the imagined egalitarian world he had worked for all his life was to become reality.

Alie Fataar, perhaps, would urge us *not* to take our ideological certainties ‘in our stride’. Alie Fataar, the teacher, asks us to consider whether we have “a wrong conception of developments socially and otherwise.”⁷⁸⁶ Arguably, this candour suggests that Alie Fataar was able to move beyond his certainty of the past, and embrace a future in which admirable, profound ideas were to be rendered unstable. In so doing, Alie Fataar imparts his final lesson to us all. In performing that last act, he positions himself as a “man of ideas,”⁷⁸⁷ willing to question his own deeply-held beliefs.

In this last act, Fataar inserts himself into an intellectual space which challenges us to interrogate long-held beliefs in order to arrive at new insights, and potentially new ways of seeking, working towards, and achieving universal social justice, just as he and his comrades had done, and those left behind continue to do.

And er... we must admit... being in the liberation struggle, you must admit that if you were wrong, you were wrong; that you were optimistic, unnecessarily; you had illusions

⁷⁸⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 26 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁸⁷ Fataar had used this construct to characterise his father, whose intellectual energy Alie Fataar admired, as well as Dr. Goolam Gool, whom he credits, as we have noted in this study, as the person he was “closest to, both personally and politically” (Interview 21 July, 2003).

that these tactics would work against the very powerful machinery of capitalist imperialism.⁷⁸⁸

He was speaking to the debates around armed struggle in the 1960s, but the principle he establishes is universal. It belies dogmatic attachment to cherished beliefs and ideologies, and asserts an unending critical perspective on all ideas, with a view to coming ever closer to the goal of universal social justice.

As we left the Mowbray cemetery on 9 June 2005, we walked towards a fiery winter sunset. I mused about Tennyson's *Ulysses* as I walked away from the grave:

*Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.⁷⁸⁹*

Fataar had included the final lines of the poem on a half-page of typed notes headed as "Livingstone High School: 70th Anniversary 26 February 1996," which he had prepared for the occasion of his *alma mater's* 70th anniversary celebrations to be held at the school.

⁷⁸⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 28 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁸⁹ Excerpt from Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *Ulysses*. Alie Fataar indicated that this was his favourite poem, which he loved reciting and teaching to successive generations of students.

Alie Fataar, his comrades, and many other unsung persons, perhaps deserve ceremonial partings on their deaths. Perhaps they are more content that their *ideas* continue to be critically assessed, deemed relevant and still part of the political and intellectual contribution to local and global struggles in the present. This study is a modest contribution to the complex life and extensive contribution of one such person relegated to the margins of our South African historical imagination.

Insights from Chapter Seven

On return to South Africa after twenty-eight years in exile, Alie Fataar related that he was confronted with a question he had last confronted in the country of his birth almost three decades earlier, viz. what ‘community’ was he primarily part of? He makes it very clear that he *chooses* his primary post-exile identity, as an intellectual exercise as opposed to anything else. When he encounters very few political comrades, but large numbers of his personal family on the airport on his return from exile, and adds to this the realisation that the comrades of yesteryear are not as active as before, he engages in what I term a moment of ‘principled pragmatism’, choosing to invoke the metaphor of ‘two roads’ to connote the ‘road’ of his religious community, and the second ‘road’, that of his political family. As this study has shown, he does what he has done all his life: he makes a choice, and goes at it with everything he has. This pragmatism is consolidated when, over time, he begins to reflect critically and honestly on the outcomes of the struggles he waged as a member of the NEUM and TLSA. Here he displays the human contradiction of affirming the veracity of a life-project, whilst simultaneously urging his comrades to look, with him, squarely at what has been achieved, what has not, and why this is so.

He once again dares to disturb a settled, confident discursive terrain which holds that 'if we were to do things over, we would do it the same way again'. This, for Fataar, is not intellectually useful. It is highly significant that this proud, non-conformist teacher-politico, is able to ask the deep introspective questions necessary if he, his comrades, and the progressive movement he and they hold dear, are not to delude themselves, or, indeed, mislead the present in terms of strategic positioning in a time of much greater social and political complexity. He asks, in the last years of his life, whether the struggle he waged was strategically adept, and whether it was worth all the pain. For some, this type of enquiry is reactionary. For Fataar, the bold public intellectual who defied his enemies as well as standing up to his comrades with whom he differed, this is a revolutionary intellectual necessity.

His immersion in the politics of the now politically-confident (by virtue of the post-apartheid order) Muslim community at the Cape is overtly inflected with an intellectual project, in his eighties, which seeks to look at the world in its imperialist-brutalised state, from the multiple perspectives of socialism, Islam, and the burgeoning green movement. At the age of 86, this vibrant man acts as a crowd-marshall in an Anti-War Coalition march, and he proudly holds aloft a self-painted placard on which he lambasts then-president Mbeki for neo-liberal alliances with the modern architects of total war. In the few years of life he has left, he is held back only by a failing physical body. He engages with a range of new scholars, among them Naomi Klein, whose book he imprints with red marginalia, as he had done fifty years before with I.B. Tabata's *The All African Convention: The Awakening of a People*. He displayed, in these very last years of his life, the same commitment to understanding and *changing* the world as he had done all his

life. When he challenges the Muslim leadership to interpret their proclamations in terms of global tenets of economic justice, he sadly indicates that they do not take up the challenge.

In his introspection, Fataar displays the courage of the public intellectual who can quite clearly arrive at very sombre conclusions. In spite of this possibility, Fataar embodies the aged revolutionary who dares to question where others fear to think. It is at this moment, near the end of his life, that he most courageously exhibits his vivid, audacious, perhaps central identity of the teacher as supreme public intellectual. The unshakeable ideologue in him dares to pause, and that moment becomes a powerful exemplar of the Fanonian space of 'occult instability' between the passing of the old, and the new, which is as yet undetermined. Alie Fataar fills this vast space of possibility with his finest arsenal: his revolutionary intellect. In this huge moment, he confirms his central identity as a teacher, urging that 'we get them in the schools', as he and others had done so impressively in the midst of draconian measures to dehumanise and subjugate the oppressed in those very schools. Alie Fataar, teacher, urges the re-doubling of efforts by teachers in the present to use the schools as instruments of political awakening and recruitment, foregrounding, at the very end of his life, that he confirms the concept of the teacher as the primary catalyst of social change.

If we are to renew a commitment to equity and global justice, studies such as this life-history are small but deliberate contributions to the project that seeks to place the lives of the systemically-marginalised back at the centre of the academy.

This study now moves to the final chapter, in which I reflect on the study in terms of the research frame established in Part One.

Chapter Eight: Reflections, and suggestions for further study

This study utilised a life-history research methodology to excavate the teaching life of Alie Fataar, as narrated in over fifty hours of semi-structured interviews. In addition to the interview transcripts generated from the audio-interviews, the study utilised life-history documents sourced from the respondent, as well as photographs contained in the respondent's personal collection. To augment these data sources, archival materials housed in the University of Cape Town's Manuscripts and Archives Department provided a very useful set of contextual materials for interrogating, especially, the respondent's period in exile from 1965 to 1993. The use of the archival materials was guided by the study's general orientation that all such instantiations of the past are socially constructed, and not realist 'containers of truth' per sé.

The main aim of the study was to understand how Alie Fataar cohered a teacher identity as he navigated the complexity of competing essentialising identity-making forces, including class, religion and race. The study further sought to discover the diverse aspects of this teacher identity, and conducted this enquiry within a research frame that "open(s) up the possibility of extending the field of South African resistance history beyond documentary realist methodological boundaries".⁷⁹⁰ The study makes contributions to the fields of education and sociology, history, African studies, postcolonial and cultural studies, and utilises primarily qualitative research methodologies which draw from the literatures of life-history, ethnography and critical grounded theory. Throughout the study, I was informed by Bourdieu's caution regarding the blurring of the sociological gaze due to the "*social* origins... of the researcher; the position that the analyst occupies...

⁷⁹⁰ Rassool, 2004: 2

and the *intellectualist* bias which entices us to construe the world as a *spectacle*, as a set of significations to be interpreted rather than as concrete problems to be solved practically.”⁷⁹¹ In this regard, the writer of this study has foregrounded the researcher’s class, gender, educational, spatial and other markers of identity, and has inserted these in the text at places where instances of bias would otherwise be unintentionally missed, and the analytical moment passed by. Throughout the text, the complex issues of power-relations between the researched and the researcher have been made explicit, and the product of this awareness, utilised as it is in this study as an additional layer of analysis, is an integral element in being true to Bourdieu’s aversion to our construing the world as a spectacle. In this regard, this study is itself placed in the academy, and in the hands of critical researchers, as a socially constructed object, to be critiqued with all the rigour brought to any social production.

This final chapter of the study is in two sections. The first part attempts to draw together aspects of the complex range of narratives from the four chapters (Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven) under which headings Alie Fataar’s life-history was represented. This is effected in an attempt at identifying key insights from Fataar’s narratives, rather than any claim to a full synthesis of his narratives. The second part of this final chapter reflects on the methodological issues foregrounded during the writing, and locates its discussion in relation to the theoretical and methodological literature which was explicated in Part One of this study.

⁷⁹¹ Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 39-40 (original emphases)

In the second part of this chapter, I specifically address two complementary analytical dimensions. First, I critically assess the efficacy of the life-history method to make a contribution to the academic field of resistance studies in South African educational historiography. Second, I seek to add to the theoretical work around the researcher-researched matrix, particularly in the field of life-history studies. Throughout these two sections, as has been the method employed throughout Part Two, I organically foreground elements arising out of the study which are potentially useful for future research.

Insights from the life-history narratives of Alie Fataar

In Chapter Four, Alie Fataar places great emphasis on ‘community’, and details his birth into a religious and already racially-inflected, pre-apartheid community in which educational attainment beyond Standard Four is virtually unheard of. He is born in a moment in which the Russian Revolution is playing itself out, WW1’s savagery is almost completed, land-theft is legislated and forcibly enacted on the indigenous peoples of South Africa, and petitionist politics are the order of the day amongst the organised sectors of oppressed communities in the country.

Fataar is marked as the ‘other’ in several ways. He relates his witnessing of racialised divides between his family and his neighbours, with racist name-calling and overt violence a key element in his narratives about divisions based on ‘race’ in his own sphere of reference.⁷⁹² As a young Muslim growing up in Claremont, he recalls ambiguous readings of his upbringing, in that economic circumstances lock people into the same

⁷⁹² Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

misery of deprivation wrought by the Great Depression, whilst simultaneously he is marked as a Muslim whose neighbours oftentimes tell their own children to avoid playing with the ‘Slamse’ (Muslims). Within this framework, Fataar’s identities are often, though not exclusively, narrated within tropes of ‘otherness’ and economic hardship. Even within his narration of economic hardship, Fataar emerges as a confident, precocious young student, whose sense of self is bolstered by his early scholastic achievements. It is here that Bourdieu assists us in understanding what is at work. Fataar is inducted in the Anglican primary school in Claremont into a regime in which he tacitly recognises that education is a key currency that can be used to navigate his way into a world free of the deprivations he witnesses around him.⁷⁹³

As a young person raised in an Afrikaans-speaking home, and whose street-play and friendships are all conducted in Afrikaans, it is his introduction to his English-speaking teachers at primary school that imprints itself significantly on his young life.⁷⁹⁴ His places of early formal education are the sites at which he begins to accumulate what would become significant cultural capital, especially in the geographic, religious and (imposed) racial communities in which he is raised. Early success at school demonstrates to the young Fataar that educational success is a currency which translates into approval by his teachers, for whom he narrates intense admiration.⁷⁹⁵ Crucially, Fataar narrates his recognition of, and appropriation of other forms of social capital, in that he demonstrates his ability and willingness to fully immerse himself in the culture of schools. He wins the

⁷⁹³ Soudien, 2006: 107

⁷⁹⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁹⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

approval of his teachers, and is called on to assist in teaching his peers.⁷⁹⁶ This early reinforcement of a fledgling scholar-identity is crucial to the young Fataar, and he seeks ways of consolidating and extending his scholastic journey beyond what his immediate communities have experienced and express their approval of.⁷⁹⁷

As he enters high school, he is framed as atypical in terms of the majority of his defined communities of significance. As someone who feeds his own ambition to go beyond the educational attainments normally available to, and pursued by these communities, Fataar is confronted with “the great paradox of modern education”.⁷⁹⁸

Cultural capital is Janus-faced. It provides young people with the ability to think in more careful, oft-times even more refined ways. It simultaneously, however, and almost ineluctably, has the effect of setting apart those with cultural capital from those who do not have it.⁷⁹⁹

Fataar is not blind to the ambivalence of his new social status in his community, and constantly invokes the trope of economic hardship in locating his sense of being an integral part of his community. In the case of Alie Fataar, apart from the significance of educational attainment shifting him out of the broad class-positioning of his immediate spatial realities, he also overtly rejects the religious status-quo which, for him, provides little scope for understanding the social systems that impact markedly on his young life. He speaks of the uselessness of religious ritual in mitigating the rapid downward

⁷⁹⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁹⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁷⁹⁸ Soudien, 2006: 107

⁷⁹⁹ Soudien, 2006: 107

economic shift brought on by his father's retrenchment during the Great Depression, at a time when Fataar was just entering his teenage years.⁸⁰⁰

The rupture with his religious community is most starkly illustrated in this aforementioned context. He is not able to read Arabic, even into his eighties, but prides himself in reading English translations of, for him, the opaque Arabic text, into which he is never inducted.⁸⁰¹ Most significantly, it is his father, who at one stage kindled the hope that his youngest-born would study Islam at the revered Al-Azhar University in Cairo, who allows Fataar to exit his formal Islamic classes, and indicates that the young Fataar can continue his learning at home.⁸⁰² When the newly-qualified teacher Alie Fataar expresses his desire to lift his community out of the 'trap' from which he was able, through education, to extricate himself, he narrates this as a 'crusade'.⁸⁰³ He indicates that his desire for his son to register as a medical student at the University of Cape Town was an 'obsession'.⁸⁰⁴ He declares, unprompted, that this 'obsession' may be related to his own failure to qualify for university entrance after his senior certificate examinations.⁸⁰⁵

Crucially, Fataar illustrates in these narrations that he welds personal educational desire with a broader social desire to infuse a love of education and educational attainment in his community. He begins, as it were, in his own home, and extends this not only to his charges in the classrooms in which he teaches, but also to the wider parent body who he cajoles into sending their sons, and significantly in a conservative Muslim society, their

⁸⁰⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁸⁰¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁸⁰² Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁸⁰³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁸⁰⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁸⁰⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

daughters, to pursue education beyond standards four or five.⁸⁰⁶ For Fataar and his colleagues, investing time and effort in socialising wider community participation in an educational project rather than sending their children into the factories of the rich, is a necessary educational goal, but more crucially, part of a broader political project. In Fataar's narration, schools were a vital institutional mechanism for not only destabilising the dominant narrative of the ruling class, but also a recruiting ground for the best and brightest students to be steered into active, organised political participation.

It is significant that at the very end of his life, it is this mechanism of recruiting students from the schools into the political formations of the Unity Movement that Fataar urges as part of an aging but still socially and politically committed cadre of men and women. He appeals to his Unity Movement comrades and the teachers in the reconstituted TLISA in the form of the NUPSAW Education Sector to actively get them in the schools.⁸⁰⁷

For Alie Fataar and his comrades, teaching was multifaceted. The markers of committed teachers, i.e. optimal lesson preparation, interesting and provocative lesson delivery, focused and timeous assessment, assignment corrections, end-of-term evaluations and progressive pedagogies were enacted as an integral social good, but also as *part* of a greater political project in which education was pivotal.⁸⁰⁸ The teacher is a politico, and, as Ben Kies and Fataar articulate it in this study, teachers are the logical and most effective politicos because they have the educational capital and, as Ben Kies indicated, a

⁸⁰⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 31 March 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁸⁰⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁸⁰⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 21 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

modicum of leisure time.⁸⁰⁹ Outside of all other aspects of the debate around the status of teachers, it is critical to remember here that Fataar fully embraces the idea that organising teachers is a central tenet of mobilising and organising other members of society.

Entering teaching was to these progressive teachers an act of entering the broader struggle for social justice and full citizenship. The schools (here specifically in Cape Town) at which teachers like Fataar are located become places where “(T)hey and a number of other teachers... developed a range of formal and non-formal educational initiatives which sought to promote a counter-official consciousness and understanding of what it meant to be a citizen of Cape Town.”⁸¹⁰ Simultaneously, the schools become the recruiting grounds for potential membership of the other forums of the NEUM, including the Fellowships. Here, again, we may ask, who was recruited? How was this potential identified? What markers of potential were sought? There are perhaps clues to this process in the relating of student-disaffectedness, for example, in the work of Wieder and Fataar.⁸¹¹ Further studies, though, are needed in this regard, and the teachers of the period and their students who remain accessible to researchers are vital if the youth-recruitment strategies of the TLSA are to be fully explored and understood.

Teaching and politics, indivisible as they are to the teachers of the TLSA, exist in a personal-professional continuum. For Alie Fataar, as has been shown in this study, a stark separation is sought between family life and the politics of liberation.⁸¹² Significantly,

⁸⁰⁹ Jeppie, 1990: 135, quoted in Mary Simons, in Van der Merwe, H.W. and Groenewald, C.J. (eds.) (1976) *Occupational and Social Change Among Coloured People in South Africa*. Cape Town: Juta. Page 225.

⁸¹⁰ Soudien, 2006: 112-3

⁸¹¹ Wieder and Fataar, 2002

⁸¹² Interview with Alie Fataar, 9 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Fataar invokes the concept ‘family’ in two ways: personal and political.⁸¹³ It is a key discursive move in his life-history narration, and is tracked through the study from his earliest period as a qualified teacher through to the very end of his life, some sixty years later. Fataar’s narrations through Chapters Four and Five relate his growing sense of ‘standing apart from’ the conservative Muslim community. In a sense, it is the beginning of his exile, in that he largely disengages with the routines and rituals associated with the community. His critical intellectual stance during this period is mitigated by his exhortations to the community to educate their children, and through numerous political engagements with members of the Muslim community, including the fishing community of Kalk Bay, although they are not exclusively Muslim.⁸¹⁴

Throughout this study, Fataar suggested that being primarily on one road (political) does not necessarily imply that the other road (religious) is not being noted and partially traversed.⁸¹⁵ As posed in Chapter Seven, to what extent is this discursive formulation revisionist? Fataar himself makes a significant contribution to this speculation, in that he explicitly narrates that he had to re-evaluate his ‘two roads’ (in his retrospective narration, partial) binary formulation at the very moment of landing back in South Africa after close to thirty years in exile. That decision, as Fataar narrates it, is not a theoretical one. It is contingent on the physical presence of large numbers of his ‘personal family’ as

⁸¹³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 7 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁸¹⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 9 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁸¹⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 28 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

opposed to the small number of his ‘political family’ present at the airport to welcome him back to South Africa on his return from exile.⁸¹⁶

It is useful at this point to insert insights into aspects of the condition of exile as evinced through Alie Fataar’s narratives, and address the five questions posed in Chapter One to these exile narratives. First, exile does not appear to have constituted an “unbearable rift” between the “self and its true home”⁸¹⁷ for Fataar. In a major deviation from the theoretical position of Said, Fataar constructs an identity as an exile which appears to transcend a spatial component. Fataar’s narratives reveal that, during the period of exile, especially the post-Bechuanaland phase, he does not define exile as a spatially-bound entity. Instead, he projects a teaching identity as his ‘true self’, and in this sense, exile does present the longing for home, but it simultaneously, and, I argue, more emphatically, presents Fataar with an opportunity to expand his individual and educational-political desires. He retrospectively describes his teaching experience before exile as “limited”, and in fact, inserts the term “confined” in this context to describe his experience. He states: “...everything was confined to *this* school and *this* community...,” juxtaposing the considerable breadth of his educational experiences in exile.⁸¹⁸

Second, there is no evidence in Alie Fataar’s narratives around an “essential sadness”.⁸¹⁹ He consistently indicates his sadness at not seeing his children for many years after first encountering exile, but he does not suggest that this constitutes an essentialist

⁸¹⁶ Interview with Alie Fataar, 30 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁸¹⁷ Said, 2002: 173

⁸¹⁸ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (my emphasis)

⁸¹⁹ Said, 2002: 173

psychological state. He navigates this, as with many other instances of difficulty and pain with a Stoic 'I took in my stride', or some variant of the title of this study. Third, he never romanticises, glorifies or denies 'sadness', choosing instead to adopt a pragmatism which may well be translated as a form of psychological distancing, though he does not admit to this. He translates, as it were, his acknowledged sadness into a deep educational commitment to the children, older citizens, and leadership of the countries which shelter him in exile. Fourth, there was decided 'estrangement', primarily from his first family left behind in South Africa, and from the cauldron of political work in which he had immersed himself in South Africa. Even though his familial situation was tempered by his honest discussion of disturbance, and his political self had been severely impacted by the splits in the Unity Movement in the late 1950s, his disorientation during the first years of exile in Bechuanaland was tactile and unpleasant. In exile, he promotes his central identity in South Africa, that of a teacher, to the level of 'a teacher in and for Africa', and offsets his 'estrangement' from home with a determined, muscular teacher-identity that sees him not unsettled, but bedded down⁸²⁰ in exile, serving the cause of education in the three post-colonial African societies in which he finds political refuge.

Finally, Chapter One posed questions around what was 'left behind' and, if anything, what was 'retrieved' after his return from exile. For Fataar, it was clearly a range of contradictory elements which were left behind. Political realities coalesced with personal issues to present a mix of emotional and practical responses from Alie Fataar, although he does not ever suggest that personal issues formed any part of his decision to go into exile. He always privileges the political in this context. However, the narratives take on a

⁸²⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 29 April 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

strong affective dimension when he narrates his pain on hearing of his children's longing for him, and his desire to meet them again. The transcripts in this regard show evidence of long pauses in his narration, wistful register and tone, and his discursive switches in order to end segments of those conversations. Given these circumstances, Fataar's return is to a political reality in which he laments that the activism of years past has been overtaken by the realities of time and a changed, still-antagonistic, though post-apartheid political dispensation. Politically, he is thus able to 'retrieve' elements of the old comradeship he left behind, and he re-engages with these comrades and structures in a manner which is, to the uninformed outsider, not indicative of any of the deep scars which were carried into exile in the context of the organisational and personal splits of the late 1950s. Fataar is arguably also able to retrieve the more activist legacy he had left behind, by becoming a vocal contributor to Anti-war Coalition campaigns, and, increasingly, in agitating for an insertion of an ecological dimension to educational and political struggle. It from this complex arena of exile that Alie Fataar returns permanently to South Africa in 1993.

On his return from exile, in the context of a victorious discourse of an ANC-led transition to a post-apartheid democratic order, and the pre-eminence of a victorious populist politics, Fataar re-invents himself and constitutes a political persona which speaks directly to the by-now more politically-involved Muslim community, albeit predominantly in the form of accommodationist politics.⁸²¹

⁸²¹ Bangstad and Fataar, 2010

The disillusionment Fataar experiences on his return to South Africa is described as ‘snares’,⁸²² and incorporates the marginalisation of the TLSA and Unity Movement by a national discourse of an ANC-led and ANC-enabled transition from apartheid to democracy. But it is more than that. Fataar laments the return to a political field in which the fight now is to assert the continued relevance of an anti-imperialist politics. In this, the consistency of his socialist education in the Spartacist Club, the Workers Party, the TLSA and NEUM is not abandoned. Instead, he seeks ways of recontextualising this vast political theory and legacy of education and politics via engagements with the literature on feminist, green politics as in the works of Arundhati Roy and Naomi Klein.

Throughout the period of his return from exile in 1993 until his death in 2005, Fataar’s writings exhort his readers to broaden their engagement with concepts such as class-unity in the face of a crippling neo-liberal political-economic reality under GEAR, and the necessity for global anti-imperial solidarity in the face of the overwhelming grasp of capitalist hegemony across the planet.

It was revealed in Chapter Six that Fataar often steered the narrative away from the details of his teaching life in the South African classroom to a far more extensive narrating of the organised political work he was involved in. By way of contrast, when he was engaged in narrating his period of exile from 1965 to 1993 (his formal teaching life having ended in 1988), he explicitly privileged his educational life, encompassing as it did school-teaching and extensive curriculum-development leadership in both the post-colonial Zambian and Zimbabwean education departments.

⁸²² Interview with Alie Fataar, 14 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

Fataar narrated that his educational life in exile, more particularly his leadership of and engagement in curriculum-development work, were the ‘apex’ of his educational life.⁸²³

The period of exile “opened a new view which you were not able to see here (colonial and apartheid South Africa).”⁸²⁴ In South Africa, as wide-ranging and ambitious as his experiences politically and educationally had been, Fataar looked back on the period through the prism of exile and declared: “...everything was confined to this school and this community and... very **limited**...”⁸²⁵

At this point we are able to retrieve from Fataar’s collective narratives what constituted his teacher-identity. His teaching *is* his politics, and his classroom is not confined to a single institution. Fataar weds to his teaching an emancipatory political project that has everything to do with “the development of a free society”.⁸²⁶ Fataar develops his teacher-identity as his primary identity through the early influences of Isaac Tabata and Ben Kies, who place teachers at the very centre of constituting the most effective public intellectuals in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Throughout this study, Fataar’s narratives show that teaching supercedes any other marker of identity. At the heart of this is an understanding of teaching as the supreme instantiation of a public intellectual.

There is no need for Fataar to speak separately of his teaching and what is generally defined as progressive politics, i.e. organising for an egalitarian society premised on socialist ideals. Once Fataar adopts the definition of the teacher as the politico, all his

⁸²³ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁸²⁴ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

⁸²⁵ Interview with Alie Fataar, 16 June 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁸²⁶ Giroux, 2012: 8

teaching is political, and, concomitantly, all his extra-school political work derives intrinsically from his teacher-identity. This understanding of the teacher, Alie Fataar, is at the heart of his narratives. At no point does Fataar contradict this framing, and, crucially, he exemplifies this identity under the most extreme pressures, most clearly indicated by his rejection of the exhortation to leave teaching and work full-time in the UMSA office in Lusaka. His decision, as shown in Chapter Six, is to re-dedicate himself to teaching as a political project in the service of post-colonial Zambia, and its children. His political toolkit is his teacher's toolkit. His political act in post-colonial Africa is a teaching act.

In so doing, Fataar confirms for us his unswerving commitment to teaching as the ultimate manifestation of his role as a public intellectual. He works as a progressive, modern teacher, for a just world premised on the socialist ideals he had studied, critiqued and presented since his late teens in the progressive socialist groupings of what would become the NEUM and its associated institutions. On his return from exile, as this study has shown, Fataar re-engages with his embodied socialism to re-imagine with the Muslim community, and his comrades in the New Unity Movement and Teachers' League, that the world is a far more complex space, in which the earlier linearity of the proletarian revolution had long been undermined. Fataar does not retreat into an ideological laager, and navigates the thoughts, *inter alia*, of the assassinated Iranian scholar, Ali Shar'iati, whose biography thrilled Alie Fataar on his first encounter with this literature. Shari'ati's writings afforded a considerable excitement in Alie Fataar, and he was to explore the dimensions of Marxist and Muslim thought through the lens of the Iranian scholar, who, ironically, was either 'too Muslim' for some Marxists, and 'too Marxist' for some Muslims. Fataar recognised this mirroring with a chuckle, but it belied his sense of

urgency in devouring these works, alongside that of the newer layer of activist-writers like Arundhati Roy and Naomi Klein. Alie Fataar, the teacher with the scholarly interest in political economy, was not afraid to break ideological straitjackets, even in his final years. No doubt, this would have antagonised members of his political, religious and social circles, but he was intent on interrogating the taken-for-granted as part of his social responsibility as a public intellectual, packaged as it was into his identity as a teacher. For Fataar, being a teacher is being an intellectual, and he consistently frames his frequent post-exile intellectual insertions into the public domain in his persona as a teacher.

It is the central thesis of this study that Fataar is able to sustain an identity which is intolerant of racial, religious, political, psychological and social essentialism by virtue of a primary identity with which he consistently defines himself, and is defined, namely, Alie Fataar, teacher. For Fataar, teaching *is* politics; the teacher *is* the politico. Teaching, and a teacher identity, constitutes for Fataar the epitome of the engaged public intellectual. It is Alie Fataar, the teacher, who soars above the heaving essentialisms which seek to drag him and his comrades down to comfort-zones in which they are urged to abandon a political imagination that seeks nothing less than to replace racial-colonial rule with an egalitarian vision of a unified human race.

It is this study's assertion that, in the light of the extensive narrative *oeuvre* of Alie Fataar in the context of this study, Alie Fataar, teacher, *is*, to all intents and purposes, Alie Fataar. Alie Fataar's teacher-identity is the central axis of self through which he constitutes an identity, and through which he is able, and willing, to subvert and render reactionary all the essentialising forces which seek to define him. Alie Fataar, the teacher,

is not a reductionist self. It enables a life-time of progressive political imagination, organisation, writing, speaking and teaching that marks him as a radical participant in an emancipatory project which sought to destabilise, through teaching and its related intellectual projects, the racial-colonial and apartheid orders which successively harnessed its forces to crush the coming-into-being of a just social order.

It is Alie Fataar, teacher, who is able, at the end of his life, to look back and, while candidly acknowledging the contributions he and his colleagues had made in the broader resistance in education and beyond, is able to employ the most progressive intellectual tool available to the teacher as organic intellectual, namely, critical self-awareness and reflection. Certainly, as he nears the end of his life, he is willing to ask of himself the most difficult question of all: "...you look at yourself and think now, did I have a wrong conception of developments socially and otherwise?"⁸²⁷

Alie Fataar's necessary, introspective, even courageous, unanswered question presents a suitable moment to begin the final section of this study, namely, an appraisal of the life-history method in adding an important dimension to education resistance studies in South African historiography, and its related, embedded question of the import of the researcher-researched continuum in this process.

An appraisal of the life-history method in South African education resistance historiography and the researcher-researched continuum

(T)he ability of life history to focus upon central moments, critical incidents, or fateful moments that revolve around indecision, confusions, contradictions, and ironies, gives a

⁸²⁷ Interview with Alie Fataar, 26 May 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

greater sense of process to a life and gives a more ambiguous, complex, and chaotic view of reality.⁸²⁸

Recent theses by Kayser,⁸²⁹ Rassool⁸³⁰ and Hendricks⁸³¹ have added to the still-sparse academic offerings about the formations of the NEUM and TLSA. This, though, is the first known doctoral study of a teacher associated with the NEUM and TLSA to employ a life-history approach. In this context, it is imperative to subject the study to an introspection that is at once honest, acknowledged to be subjective, while it simultaneously assists future research in pointing to its potential successes and recognised shortcomings.

Throughout chapters four through seven, Alie Fataar has narrated a series of thoughts centred on incidents, events and processes. These narrations have emerged from Fataar's own offerings, as well as emanating from my questions and clarity-seeking interruptions of his narratives. Chapters four through seven have shown that the same narrative, seemingly presented as 'closed', can in fact be rendered unstable over time as the respondent spoke to the same issue from a different perspective.

Throughout this study, I have pointed to instances in which Fataar's written words (about his childhood, family, his studies, his work experiences) conceal rather than reveal the deep complexities, subtleties, challenges, failures and shifts that characterise his oral testimony. In this regard, Chapters Four through Seven demonstrate, I suggest, that a life-history approach to studies in education resistance can add meaningful, often unique

⁸²⁸ Sparkes, A. in Hatch and Wisniewski, 1995: 116

⁸²⁹ Kayser, 2002

⁸³⁰ Rassool, 2004

⁸³¹ Hendricks (2002 and 2010)

insights into the complex interplay between what is legislated, teacher agency and the navigation of multiple, conflicting contexts which force a constant appraisal and recontextualising of what comes to constitute a coherent teacher identity.

This study also reflexively assesses itself against the criteria for effecting a constructivist grounded theory study as detailed in Chapter Three. In this regard, what follows speaks to the criteria posited by Charmaz⁸³² in which she indicates that a successful constructivist grounded theory must fulfil several criteria to be deemed successful. This study views itself as a constructed work, mediated and influenced by my own research preferences, biases, blind-spots and preferences in sampling.⁸³³ In declaring it thus, this study acknowledges its declared location within a non-positivist, constructivist research orientation, open to the full range of critiques that should be standard for all social constructions. The study does not declare itself an 'object' but rather a social construction constantly in the making. Second, I have explicitly foregrounded my epistemological preferences throughout the study, thereby inviting the necessary critique that will accompany the study being inducted into the academy.⁸³⁴

Third, and crucially so, this study has attempted to approach all narratives included in the study as carriers of multiple meanings, inflected by the meanings brought to the narratives by both the researched and the researcher.⁸³⁵ Herein lies the real strength of this reflexive approach, as it has allowed for a contested, fluid and often unresolved series of meanings to be brought to the study. In this regard, the study explicitly opens itself to

⁸³² Charmaz, 2000

⁸³³ Charmaz, 2000: 528

⁸³⁴ Charmaz, 2000: 528

⁸³⁵ Charmaz, 2000: 525

an ongoing critique as new readings allow new meanings to be elicited. In this sense, rather than a neatly packaged study that brings ‘closure’ to the narrative offerings of Alie Fataar, the study facilitates a broader engagement with its contents as it traverses new discursive fields and actors who have a vested interest in Fataar’s narratives.

In terms of the writing itself, I have attempted to reduce the obfuscation of jargon by teasing out strands of meaning in order to provide a cogent analysis of Alie Fataar’s narratives.⁸³⁶ I have avoided the ‘careless production of... processual diagrams and conceptual maps,’⁸³⁷ preferring instead to present complex theory and formulations in prose form throughout. This is a truly liberating academic enterprise, forcing me as a researcher to clarify meaning and intention through accessible language and the deconstruction of metaphorical and other figurative devices employed by Alie Fataar as he narrates his life. This linguistic approach, of course, is not complete, as each linguistic formulation can be further deconstructed.

The final criterion established by Charmaz for a successful constructivist grounded theory study is the act of writing itself. In stating this, she constructs “an image of a writer at a desk who balances theoretical interpretation with an evocative aesthetic”.⁸³⁸ Here it is critical to indicate that it is the reader of this study who will judge the success or otherwise of the writing of this study. The writing process has been powerfully facilitated by a respondent who was keen to pour his narratives into the academic record.

⁸³⁶ Charmaz, 2000: 525

⁸³⁷ Charmaz, 2000: 525

⁸³⁸ Charmaz, 2000: 526

As indicated throughout this study, Fataar was simultaneously forceful, calm, ebullient, introspective and combative.

It is at this point that it is cogent to point to one of the key theoretical issues facing the writing of this study, namely the deliberate foregrounding of Alie Fataar's authorial voice. It has been a deliberate, explicit research aim not to 'subordinate' Alie Fataar's voice at precisely the moment that this study re-inscribes Fataar 'to the historical record'.⁸³⁹ This attempt involved deliberate choices at virtually every point in the study in which Fataar's narratives are placed. Decisions had to be taken as to whether or not to include larger textual segments from the interview transcripts, so as to provide Fataar's own narrated contexts, as opposed to shorter, more decontextualised fragments.

Simultaneously, the need to consistently pose critical questions to his narratives as the writing proceeded was critical to the success of this study. Unmediated by my critical researcher's voice, Fataar's narratives would be placed into the academic record via this study with little critical intellectual scrutiny. In effect, this has meant that Chapters Four through Seven are an attempt to privilege Fataar's narratives so as to cohere to a research aim not to 'subjugate' his authorial voice, whilst simultaneously, and unapologetically, inserting my researcher's voice (via interventionist questions, leading questions, clarity-seeking questions, comments, musings and conjectures) into the narrative. I trust that this has resulted in a dialogical text that maintains the integrity of Alie Fataar's narratives, while at the same time prodding, nudging and challenging his narratives as I sought

⁸³⁹ Rassool, 2010: 83

clarity and evidence of narrative-consistency or, in fact, narrative-contradictions and inconsistency.

Following from the discussion of narrative integrity, I reflect on the researcher-researched continuum arising from this study. It is useful at this point to discuss a key aspect of the relationship which surfaced between the researcher and the researched during the study, and its possible impact on the study. This is effected here as a deliberate insertion, as I reflect on possible biases, blind spots, and other related theoretical matters which may impact on the study.

As discussed briefly at the end of Chapter Seven, during the last few hours of our interview engagements, I began a ‘thank-you’ to Alie Fataar for his dedication to, and his enthusiastic commitment to our weekly interviews spanning nearly six months. No interview had been concluded in under three hours, with a few well over four hours, even though the transcripts reveal that I constantly sought to terminate the sessions at around two hours, given the fact that I did not want to overstay my welcome, nor to tire my respondent. I began my thanks:

Mr. Fataar, I’m... how do you express thanks except by ‘Thank you’. Maybe the thanks will be expressed in the kind of... I hope this will be an ethical piece of work...⁸⁴⁰

As indicated at the end of Chapter Seven, Fataar’s response was unexpected, but, as the initial surprise settled, I realised that what Fataar had provided the study was an

⁸⁴⁰ Interview with Alie Fataar, 28 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar

opportunity to reflect deeply about the inter-relatedness and complexity of the researcher-researched dynamic. Alie Fataar responded:

No, I'm very grateful to you, because the others who interviewed me had their own ideas. Now, for once, there's somebody who is **closer** to what one wants, even from the point of view of Islam. Trevor and all the others with the book, they will be on the political side, whereas here, I think, we must put the spotlight on this other aspect.⁸⁴¹

After the relatively brief analysis of this exchange in Chapter Seven, I wish to use this interaction to foreground some of the insights that can add to the literature around the complex relationships between the researcher and the researched, especially with respect to qualitative studies. Fataar had framed me in the same way as Alessandro Portelli had been 'researched' by his respondent.⁸⁴² Our interviews, I realised in retrospect, had included discourses which, perhaps, had not been fully engaged by other researchers who had been working with Fataar.

I had early on during our interviews recognised that one aspect of Fataar's re-engagement with the Muslim community on his return from exile was a re-directing of his main intellectual efforts towards a community he had addressed before as part of a larger canvas, not as the main focus of his political work. Instead of it being reductive, as I initially mused over Fataar's 'preferred' interviewer narrative, perhaps my research approach, and the fact that I knew the audience he was most directly engaged with at the end of his life, allowed Alie Fataar to narrate these aspects of his life more extensively

⁸⁴¹ Interview with Alie Fataar, 28 July 2003, Wynberg, Cape Town, conducted by Yunus Omar (original emphasis)

⁸⁴² Portelli, 1991: 30

than to anyone else he had encountered as an interviewer, certainly one conducting doctoral research.

I understand that the life-history approach, while creating dilemmas in sampling due to its generating a vast amount of data, simultaneously allowed me, as researcher, to oftentimes sit back, listen, and appreciate that what was being poured into the interviews by Alie Fataar were *his* narrative constructions of his teaching life. In that regard, Chapter Seven of this study, which deals with Fataar's narratives about his period of return, are key to our beginning to understand how Fataar attempted to bring to some sort of synthesis the multiple, often contentious strands of his life. Certainly, this study is immeasurably enriched by the grist of Fataar's narrations of the early turmoil and distance from the largely reactionary Muslim religious leadership into which he had been born. His narrations in this regard allow us to read his subsequent immersion in socialist thought and political action in a far richer way than would have been the case had I been intolerant of his narrations in this sphere of his life.

My being 'closer' to what he wanted in a researcher is a key moment in the researcher-researched relationship. I had clearly felt less unease about approaching Alie Fataar about conducting interviews with him for a doctoral thesis than many other persons with whom I was well-acquainted. On the other hand, I was wary about interviewing someone whose combative personality I had encountered via reading copies of *The Educational Journal* produced during the 1940s, and via his input on community radio after 1995. Yet this presented me with a chance to interview someone whose persona and fearless approach to debate I admired. In this sense, I probably framed and chose Alie Fataar as a

respondent because he represented much of what I believed constituted aspects of the organic intellectual: fearless, willing to challenge even those close to him, and able to articulate a vision based on progressive theory rather than adherence to senseless dogma.⁸⁴³

It is necessary and useful to reflect here on the researcher-researched tensions as they impacted on the production of this study. This section is prefaced by Pimlott's caution that "very few biographers⁸⁴⁴ ... plump for subjects they do not like...."⁸⁴⁵ As the study has shown, I identified strongly with biographical elements of Alie Fataar's story. Like my respondent, I was born into a Muslim home; had an under-schooled but critically-incisive father who inducted me into a critique of the deeper structures of my religious and class communities; was schooled by my father to actively work against racists and racism from a young age; became a high-school English teacher; was the school-librarian; loved teaching Tennyson's *Ulysses*; had an abiding passion for photography, and worked in community print and broadcast media in various iterations over the years. In that sense, I foregrounded these issues whenever I was aware of the confluences of our lives as they emerged during the interviews. While this initially produced tension, embracing these elements of biographical identification with Alie Fataar provided a depth of analysis that, I hope, enriches both a reading of Alie Fataar's narrative, as well as adding to the critical issue of the researcher-researched continuum in the production of studies of this nature.

⁸⁴³ Pimlott, 1999: 37 (Pimlott indicates "Very few biographers plump for subjects they do not like; and, if they start off liking a little, several years of immersion in papers and interviews, combined with a battle against self-doubt, tend to raise the liking several notches.")

⁸⁴⁴ While this study is not a biography, in this study I assume the role of partial-biographer, given that one of the key elements in the study involves the *de facto* biographical inscription of Alie Fataar's 'teacherly' identity into the academy.

⁸⁴⁵ Pimlott, 1999: 37

For readers of this study, of course, this foregrounds the question of whether or not I was able, in this study, to indicate my subjectivities, likes and biases with honesty, while simultaneously being able to maintain a critical intellectual distance to be able to subject to scrutiny, and retain academic integrity for both Alie Fataar and myself, through the dialogical nature of the interview process and the writing of this study. I believe the complexity of these tasks have borne fruit, in that the constant awareness of these tensions have been written, explicitly, into this study.

It behoves other researchers and critics to critique my assertions, but the study has arguably been successful in eliciting dense, contestable, contested, contradictory and novel narratives from the respondent, many of which do not feature in studies which have included Fataar as a respondent. More importantly, Fataar's apparent 'comfort' with regard to my interviews with him have allowed me to explore areas of his teaching life which were impacted on by personal circumstances which I was told he would never venture. These narrations, too, rather than debase the respondent, have facilitated analyses which, arguably, speak to the power of the life-history method to allow for a deep, meaningful, reflexive research process. It has also produced a research 'product' that begins to articulate the necessity of research that goes beyond hagiographic accounts of South African resistance figures to a research space where these persons are encountered as more complex, contemplative actors in multiple complex contexts, requiring far more agency than has hitherto been acknowledged and accorded them in biographical spaces.

In a policy context, it is apparent that meaningful policies with regard to teachers can only find traction in schools if teachers' multiple identities are acknowledged and purposefully engaged in policy-formulation arenas. Not to do so produces a policy mismatch in the post-apartheid period with the very actors required to re-invent a progressive education system that places the interests of all its participants at the heart of its endeavour. This, of course, applies to the voices of parents/care-givers, students, workers and other communities of interest as well. It is hoped that life-history studies of students and parents/care-givers with regard to education policy will also be undertaken in order to understand how these actors come to understand and position themselves in relation to education.

In concluding this study, it is noted that the study itself constitutes a work-in-progress, and is not claimed to be complete. Rather, the study has produced a view of one life, narrated through the multiple lenses of one respondent. It has foregrounded the sense that we have much to learn about the lives of those teachers who dared to imagine a better and just world for all. There is no 'closure' of this life. Instead, this study exhorts us to critically explore, in as much detail as possible, these lives of men and women who created a counter-narrative in education that dared to state that they could construct an alternative to the cynical, systemic deprivation their charges were subjected to by a racist-colonial officialdom.

It is the responsibility of those in the academy to deliberately broaden the intellectual enquiry around those, like Alie Fataar, who were, and largely still are, silenced by

successive colonial, apartheid and post-apartheid powers who trumpet a triumphalist, singular discourse of struggle and ideas.

Alie Fataar, in contrast to his oft-stated dictum of taking all challenges ‘in his stride’, went to his grave defiant of a triumphalist South African education resistance narrative. He did not take his re-marginalisation in a post-apartheid world ‘in his stride’.

I trust that the intermediacy of my pen, and the deficiency of my intellect, has not undermined the complexity and narrative-integrity of Alie Fataar, teacher.

APPENDIX ONE

Life-history questions, sourced from Atkinson, Robert (1998) *The Life Story Interview*. Sage University Papers Series on Qualitative Research Methods, Vol. 44. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Birth and family origin

What was going on in your family, your community, and the world at the time of your birth?

Were you ever told anything unusual about your birth?

Are there any family stories told about you as a baby?

What characteristics do you remember most about your grandparents?

What did you most like about them?

What did you like the least?

How would you describe your parents?

How would you describe your mother's personality and emotional qualities?

How would you describe your father's?

What are some of the best and worst things about them?

What do you think you inherited from them?

What feelings come up when you recall your parents?

What is your earliest memory?

Cultural settings and traditions

Were there any stories of family members or ancestors who immigrated to this country?

Was there a noticeable 'cultural flavour' in the home you grew up in?

What was it like growing up in your neighbourhood and house?

What are some early memories of cultural influence? (Music, art, language, dress code, food, films, books, comics *et al*)

What family or cultural celebrations, traditions, or rituals were important in your life?

Was your family different from other families in your neighbourhood?

What beliefs or ideals did your parents try to pass on to you?

What was your first experience of death?

What was it like for you?

Was religion important in your family?

How would you describe the religious atmosphere in your home?

Did you attend all the religious ceremonies, rituals or 'requirements'?

What was attendance like for you?

Was religion important to you as a child? As a youth?

What was the favourite religious celebration you observed?

Why was it your favourite?

Is religion important to you now?

What cultural influences are still important to you today?

How much of a factor in your life do you feel your cultural background has been?

Social factors

- Did you feel nurtured as a child?
- Were you encouraged to try new things, or did you feel held back?
- What do you remember most about growing up with, or without, brothers and sisters?
- Did you get along with your family members?
- Did your parents spend enough time with you?
- What did you do with them?
- What were some of your struggles as a child?
- What was the saddest time for you?
- How was discipline handled in your family?
- What would you say was the most significant event in your life up to age 12?
- Did you make friends easily?
- What childhood or teenage friendships were most important to you?
- What pressures did you feel as a teenager, and where did they come from?
- Did you tend to go in for fads, or new styles?
- Were you athletic?
- What clubs, groups or organisations did you join?
- Did you enjoy being alone, or was that too boring?
- What did you do for entertainment?
- Was social class important in your life?
- What was the most trouble you were ever in as a teenager?
- What was the most significant event of your teenage years?
- What was being a teenager like?
- The best part?
- The worst part?
- What was your first experience of leaving home like?
- What special people have you known in your life?
- Who shaped and influenced your life the most?
- Who are the heroes and heroines, guides and helpers in your life?
- Who most helped you develop your current understanding of yourself?
- What social pressures have you experienced as an adult?
- How did you use your leisure time?
- Is a sense of community important to you? Why? How?

Education

- What is your first memory of attending school?
- Did you enjoy school in the beginning?
- What do you remember most about elementary school?
- Did you have a favourite teacher in pre-school?
- In primary school?
- In high school?
- How did these teachers influence you?
- What are your best memories of school?
- What are your worst memories of school?

What accomplishments in school are you most proud of?
 How far did you go with your formal education?
 What do you remember most about your college education?
 What activities or organisations were you involved with in school? In college?
 What was the most important course you took in school? In college?
 What was the most important book you read?
 What did you learn about yourself during these years?
 What has been your most important lesson in life, outside of the classroom?
 What is your view of education in a person's life?

Love and work

Do you remember your first date? Your first kiss?
 Did you have a steady girlfriend in high school? (In primary school?)
 Was it a struggle for you matching your own attitudes toward sex when you were growing up with those of society?
 What was the most difficult thing about dating for you?
 What are your views on marriage?
 How would you describe your courtship?
 What was it about her that made you fall in love?
 What does intimacy mean to you?
 Do you have children?
 What are they like?
 What roles do they play in your life?
 What values or lessons do you try to impart to them?
 What have been the best and worst parts of marriage?
 Is there anything else about your marriage you would like to add?
 Did you have any dreams or ambitions as a child? As an adolescent?
 Where did they come from?
 What did you want to be when you were in high school?
 Did you achieve what you wanted to, or did your ambitions change?
 What were your hopes and dreams as you entered adulthood?
 What events or experiences helped you understand and accept your adult responsibilities?
 How did you end up in the type of work you did (and still do)?
 Has your work been satisfying to you, or has it been something you had to put your time into?
 What is important to you in your work?
 What comes the easiest in your work?
 What is most difficult about your work?
 Why do you do this work?
 When did you realise you had become an adult?
 Do love and work fit together for you in your life?

Historical events and periods

What was the most important historical event you participated in?

Do you remember what you were doing on any of the really important days in our history?

What is the most important thing given to you by your family?

What is the most important thing you have given to your family?

What is the most important thing you have given to your community?

Do you recall any legends, tales, or songs about people, places or events in your community?

What is different or unique about your community?

Are you aware of any traditional ways that families built their buildings, prepared their food, or took care of sickness?

What did your work contribute to the life of your community?

What has your life contributed to the history of your community?

Retirement

What was retiring from work like for you?

Did you miss it, or were you glad it was over?

How do you feel about your life now that you are retired?

What do you do with your time now?

Is there anything that you miss about your work?

What is the worst part about being retired?

What is the best part about being retired?

Have all your children left home?

How is it having an empty nest?

Do you have grandchildren?

Do you like spending time with them?

What do you enjoy most about your grandchildren?

What do you enjoy the least about your grandchildren?

What do you hope to pass on to your grandchildren?

Inner life and spiritual awareness

How would you describe yourself as a child?

Do you think you had a happy childhood?

What was your happiest memory from childhood?

Did you feel loved as a child?

Did you have any deep thoughts, or inner dreams, as a teenager?

What was it like to turn 30, 40, 60?

What are the stresses of being an adult?

What transitions or turning points did you experience as a teenager? As an adult?

What changes have you undergone since 40? Since 50 (or beyond?)

What role does spirituality play in your life now?

What primary beliefs guide your life?

Have you ever had a spiritual experience?

What is most important to you about your spiritual life?

How do your spiritual values and beliefs affect how you live your life?

Have you ever felt the presence of a spiritual guide within you?
 (How has this guide helped you?)
 Do you have a concept of God or a higher power?
 (What does this concept consist of?)
 Has imagination or fantasy been a part of your life?
 Do you feel you have inner strength?
 (Where does that come from?)
 In what ways do you experience yourself as strong?
 How do you renew your strength, if you are feeling really drained?
 What values do you not want to compromise?
 What do you see as the purpose of life?
 What do you see as the highest ideal we can strive for?
 Do you feel you are in control of your life?
 What single experience has given you the greatest joy?
 What is your view on why there is suffering in the world?
 Did you ever have any doubts about achieving your goal in life?
 Do you feel at peace with yourself?
 (How have you achieved this?)
 Do you have any kind of daily or regular practice?
 (How would you describe this?)

Major life themes

What gifts, tangible or intangible, are still important to you?
 What were the crucial decisions in your life?
 What has been the most important learning experience in your life?
 (What did it teach you?)
 Have there been any mistakes in your life?
 How have you overcome or learned from your difficulties?
 How do you handle disappointment?
 Are you satisfied with the life choices you have made?
 (Is there anything you would change?)
 What has been the happiest time of your life?
 (What was the least enjoyable time?)
 What relationships in your life have been the most significant?
 (How would you describe those relationships?)
 (Have they helped or hindered your own spiritual growth?)
 Has there been a special person that has changed your life?
 What have been your greatest accomplishments?
 Are you certain of anything?
 What are some things you hope you never forget?
 Is there anything in your experience of life that gives it unity, meaning, or purpose?
 How do you feel about yourself at the age you are now?
 What is your biggest worry now?
 In what ways are you changing now?
 What has been the greatest challenge of your life so far?

What has been the most awe-inspiring experience you have ever had?
What one sentiment or emotion makes you feel most deeply alive?
What matters the most to you now?
What do you wonder about now?
What time of your life would you like to repeat?
What was the most important thing you have had to learn by yourself?
How would you describe yourself at this point in your life?
Is the way you see yourself now significantly different than it was in the past?
How would you describe your worldview?

Vision of the future

When you think about the future, what makes you feel most uneasy?
(What gives you the most hope?)
Is your life fulfilled yet?
(What would you like to achieve so that your life will seem fulfilled?)
What do you see for yourself in future?
What is your view on death?
What do you most want to experience before you die?
How long do you believe you will live?
How would you like to die?
What three things would you like said about your life when you die?
Do you have any advice or wisdom for the younger generation?

Closure questions

Is there anything that we've left out of your life story?
Do you feel you have given a fair picture of yourself?
What are your feelings about this interview and all that we have covered?

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