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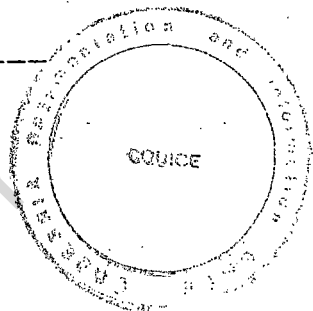
**The growing phenomenon of muslim militancy  
in South Africa since 1985 and the state's  
concerted efforts to neutralise it Cape Town**

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**January 1991**



*"The growing phenomenon of Muslim militancy in  
South Africa since 1985 and the  
State's concerted efforts to neutralise it"*



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*Submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the  
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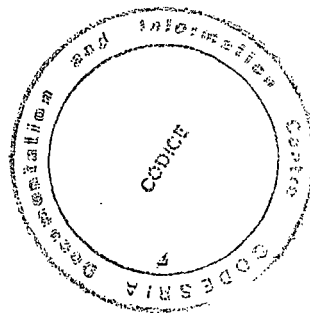
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The dissertation investigates and explores the growing phenomenon of Muslim militancy in South Africa since 1985 and the concerted efforts of the Apartheid State to neutralise it.

The growing phenomenon of Muslim militancy and the growth of Islam was demonstrated vividly in the township protest of 1985. For the first time this century, Islam began to assert its ideological power. Almost overnight the townships of the Western Cape, particularly, were forced to accede a new force on the terrain of ideology.

Over the last few years the Islamic phenomenon has suddenly attracted the attention of a cross-section of South African society ranging from the State, churches and academics.

This dissertation is a contribution to South African social and cultural history, and more specifically, it is an addition to the growing number of studies on the history of Islam in South Africa.

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## INTRODUCTION

As the Pretoria (Apartheid) regime became more desperate in crushing popular opposition to its discredited "New Deal", <1> the plight of a substantial number of Muslims committed to end Apartheid in South Africa also worsened.

The brutality of the Botha regime escalated in proportion to the resistance offered by the majority of the oppressed. Approximately 20 000 people were believed to have been detained during the 1985 - '86 state of emergency. A number of Muslims affiliated to the Qibla Movement and others linked to the United Democratic Front have been held in detention for an average of more than a year. Prominent among them were Achmat Cassiem, Yusuf Patel, Abdul Aziz Kader, Ashraf Forbes, Dehran Swart, Nabil Swart, Zainap Fadel and Naseegh Jaffer.

Two Muslims, Achmed Cassiem and Yusuf Patel, along with five others; Mbutwe Zulu, Siyabulela Gxange, Vincent Mathuryiva, Estiba Mohlolo and Daniel Nkopodi, faced alleged charges of terrorism as defined in terms of the draconian Internal Security Act and furthering the aims of the banned Pan Africanist Congress (P.A.C.). Another group in Cape Town were on trial for allegedly killing a security guard during an operation which involved an attack on a liquor outlet during 1985 in Cape Town's suburb of Athlone. The five Muslims involved in this trial were Nazir Bhawoodien, Sayid Ahmed Bhawoodien, Moegamat Yusuf Abrahams, Rushdien Abrahams and Nayeem Abrahams.

South Africa's nearly half-a-million Muslims made a political impact greater than their numerical strength, a visiting Muslim Scholar observed in 1986. (2) The truth of this statement was evident during the height of the 1985 political upheaval, which mainly took place on the streets of Cape Town's so-called "coloured" suburbs. Youths donned in Palestinian "Kafyyahs" (red-chequered shawls), engaged in confrontation with security forces were the stock-in-trade footage on European and American television screens. At mass funerals of the martyrs of the nation, shouts of Allahu Akbar (God is the Greatest) and banners quoting verses of the Qur'an featured prominently on the streets of Cape Town. Journalists, foreign editors and television crews from the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Washington Post, the British weekly's - Observer and Sunday Times - TV Networks ABC, NBC, ITV and BBC quickly lapped up the sensational news of a nascent and resurgent "Islamic Fundamentalism" in South Africa. Although the Western stereotype response was predictable, Muslims nevertheless felt cheated by the local media. News editors were only interested in covering the sensational and bloody events of rioting and political opposition in general, and were even less enthusiastic in giving significant coverage to the role of Muslims and their particular perspective. The irony is that even more serious weeklies, like the Weekly Mail, paid negligible attention to the Islamic phenomenon which had made its appearance on South Africa's political horizon.

Historically, the Muslim community in South Africa and the Cape in particular boasts a heroic tradition of resistance against the Dutch and British colonizers who were responsible for their displacement as slaves and political exiles from South-East Asia to Africa. '3'

Over the last few years the Islamic phenomenon has suddenly attracted the attention of a cross-section of South African society ranging from the State, churches and academics. The developments of 1985 - 1986 have not gone unnoticed by the P.W. Botha government or for that matter by one of its main political rivals, the African National Congress (ANC). In an address to the parliament in 1986, P.W. Botha linked the Muslims, to what he described to be the "pariahs" of the Middle East - Libya and Iran. He blamed both for exporting their revolutionary tendencies to South Africa in the form of financial and military backing for revolutionaries fighting South Africa's Apartheid rulers. Pretoria's (Apartheid's) intelligence services apparently intercepted a combined Pan Africanist '4' Congress (PAC) Muslim "hit-squad" in Athens on their way to South Africa. The group were allegedly on a mission to eliminate certain prominent black leaders who were collaborating with the Apartheid system.

In 1987 the South African government announced that five "Libyan-trained terrorists" (5) and two others who had assisted them had been captured by Pretoria's security forces while attempting to infiltrate the country. The Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, claimed that members of the Qibla group had been involved. The two Muslims among the group of seven had been identified as Moegsien Davids and Abdul Wahab Hamid.

Muslim resistance against Apartheid rule and white minority rule and their participation in the liberation struggle against apartheid, drew the wrath of the influential and powerful N.G. Kerk (6). In 1986, the N.G. Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church), and the "Staatskerk" (State Church), launched a scathing attack on Islam at its four-yearly general synod in Cape Town. Islam was described as a "false religion" (7) and the greatest threat to Christianity in South Africa, Africa and the rest of the (Christian) world. (8) The resolution was proposed by none other than a chaplain of the South African police, ds. Stoffel Colyn (Simultaneously, spokesman for several Muslim organisations expressed their outrage against the N.G.K. synod decision to start a "crusade" against Islam). Ds. Colyn told the synod "Islam was Christianity in disguise" and "One does not co-operate with something which is a threat to you".



"However, the synod said Muslims should enjoy freedom of religion, while Christians should at the same time discourage Muslims from participation in revolutionary action." (9)

N.G.K. report by professor Crafford also expressed its concern over the success of Islam in gaining followers among blacks, who saw it as an ally in the "Holy war against Apartheid".

The tenor of ds. Colyn's resolution which was adopted at the synod, as well as his proximity to state intelligence sources lends credibility to the theory of increasing Islamic militancy. The Muslims responded vociferously and founded an echo in virtually all Muslim Countries around the world. A major realignment between Muslims and those Christian ecumenical groupings opposed to the Botha regime and the pro-state N.G.K., were one of the major spinoffs of the debacle. P.W. Botha personally intervened in the conflict and assured local Muslims and replied to protesting Muslim governments abroad that "freedom of religion" was applicable in South Africa.

The South African government have also seized upon the Ahmad-diyah dispute as a method of diverting Muslim energies into safely non-political channels.

There is substantial evidence to prove that the apartheid state is very much concerned about the growing Islamic/Muslim militancy amongst South Africa's Muslims, particularly in the Cape. Muslims were continuously reminded of their co-operative and tolerant past with different white ruling class administrations during their more than 300 year presence in South Africa.

The past decade have been a watershed in the history of Islam in South Africa. Adil Bradlow asserts that "the growing militancy of the Muslim community has been matched by increasing State repression". (10)

He further argues that: "three main government strategies have emerged to counter the threat of militant Islam: the naked use of State oppression; the exploitation of the "threat" of Islam to other non-Muslim communities; and the manipulation of the Ahmadiyya issue to divert the energies of the Muslim Community." (11)

The political transformations that South Africa is currently experiencing has evoked moods of extreme optimism, disappointment and anxiety. South African Muslims who are an integral part of the broader South African society display similar sentiments.

This was most strikingly brought to fore by the "historic" National Muslim" Conference convened at the University of the Western-Cape, in Cape Town from 4-6 May 1990.

Many or most Muslim organisations and leaders hold strong and firm positions on the critical issues confronting the nascent nation at this crucial stage in the historical sojourn.

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## FOOTNOTES

1. New Deal - P.W. Botha's "New Constitution" of 1984 directed at "whites", "coloureds" and "Indians" (excluding "blacks")
2. Dr. Fathi Osman; Editor of the worldwide Arabiā Magazine July 1986.
3. No comprehensive history of Islam in South Africa has been published up to date. Information can be found in A. Davids, The Mosques of Bo-Kaap, Cape Town 1980; I.D. du Plessis, The Cape Malays, Cape Town 1972; Fatima Meer, Portrait of Indian South Africans, Durban 1969; Hilda Kuper, Indian People in Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1960; F.R. Bradlow and M. Cairns, The Early Cape Muslims, Cape Town, 1978; Hans Kahler, Studien Libel die Kultur, die Sprache und die Arabisch - Afrikaanse Literatur des Kap - Malaien, Berlin, 1971; an unpublished essay of R. Shell on The Establishment and Spread of Islam at the Cape from the beginning of Company Rule to 1838 submitted to the University of Cape Town in 1974 for the B.A. Hons degree; and an unpublished M.A. dissertation by Dr. C. du P. le Roux, Die Hamafitiese Ulama: Hulle rol in Suid-Afrikaanse Konteks, Rand Afrikaans University, 1978; an unpublished essay of Muhammed Shamiel Jeppie on Historical Process and the Constitution of Subjects: I.D. du Plessis and the Reinvention of the "Malay",

(Honours dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1987); an unpublished essay of Abdul Rashied Omar on the Impact of the Death in Detention of Imam Abdullah Haroon on Cape Muslim Attitudes.

(Honours dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1987)

4. The P.A.C. is a breakaway group from the ANC and is committed to a form of African nationalism.
5. Muslim Views; 1987  
Argus; Cape Times
6. N.B. Kerk - Largest church in South Africa, representing 40% of all whites and 67% of all Afrikaners.
7. Cape Times, Fr.; 24 October 1986: "NGK says Islam is a threat"
8. Ibid
9. Ibid
10. Arabia, February 1987: p.6
11. Ibid; p.7, 8 and 9

## CHAPTER 1

### APARTHEID'S "NEW DEAL" '1' REVISITED - A MUSLIM'S PERSPECTIVE: 1983 - 1984

When the National Party came to power in 1948 it promised and practised, more separation and more discrimination. This policy of Apartheid or segregation has resulted in most of the rights that has been curtailed.

#### The Revision of Apartheid Policy

In South Africa, the policy of Apartheid has resulted inter alia in segregated areas being set aside for occupation by members of a certain population group. The Group Areas Act '2' imposes control throughout South Africa over inter-racial property transactions and inter-racial changes in occupation - these were made subject to permit. Provision was also made for the proclamation of "defined" areas. Thus the Minister '3' determines: which population group shall occupy the "defined" area; and which "disqualified" persons must move out. At that stage there was no suggestion of a fragmentation of South Africa by the creation of separate "states". Why then did the ruling Nationalists change its discredited policy?

It became clear to the government towards that latter part of the 1950's that the existing form of Apartheid could no longer be retained. The Government had two choices: either produce a "new version" of Apartheid in line with contemporary standards or accept the inevitability of a racially mixed society. It chose the former and since then, the Government has relied on the fictional use of statehood and nationality to satisfy its citizens and the international community. In the early 60's external pressure intensified as a result of the Sharpeville <sup>(4)</sup> massacre and the institution of legal proceedings before the International Court of Justice. At the same time, Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd <sup>(5)</sup> admitted before Parliament that the Homeland policy was imposed as a result of external pressure. In 1961, he told Parliament:- <sup>(6)</sup>

"That is not what we would have liked to see. It is a form of fragmentation which we would not have liked if we were able to avoid it. In the light of the pressure being exerted on South Africa there is, however, no doubt that eventually this will have to be done ... If the whites could have continued to rule over everybody, with no danger to themselves, they would certainly have chosen to do so. However, we have to bear in mind ... new views in regard to human rights ... the power of the world and world opinion and our desire to preserve ourselves."

This plan was necessary to prevent the complete sacrificing of Apartheid and the preservation of white domination. The creation of homelands meant that "blacks" would become citizens of their respective homelands and allow the Government to argue that there are no "Blacks" in South Africa to be accommodated politically. This racist policy was also adapted by Zionist Israel against its Palestinian subjects.

#### The Crises of the State

Now we have the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act '77 before us. Again we ask: "why did the Nationalist Party change its policy?" It has often been said that the South African State is in a crisis. This means that the State is not fulfilling the role which the social system requires it to fulfill, if that system is to survive. Apartheid is in a crisis. This ideal, brought into the world and held before "white" South Africa as an all-encompassing policy of racial separation is beginning to disintegrate. Furthermore, the Apartheid State is also experiencing a crisis of legitimacy. It knows that it does not enjoy the support of the majority of the people and it makes various attempts to show that it does. (e) The South African government's way of tackling this crisis is to reform the political system. The media and some government propagandists seek to present reform as opposed to the presentation of the status quo - "a step in the



right direction". However, this type of reform in South Africa is not opposed to presenting the status quo but it is rather a more sophisticated way of maintaining the status quo.

This is so because the new constitution is based on the Population Registration Act '9 and on racial classification and it is this classification of the population into racial categories which is the basis of the Apartheid policy. This new constitution cannot exist without race classification. According to the new constitution, people must be classified "white", "coloured" and "Indian" before they can participate. The Government, in its turn, says the Westminster system cannot work. Why not? There was nothing wrong with it when it not only gave the Nationalists a majority in Parliament, but also the right to make laws for the nation even though they represented only a small "white" minority.

### The New Deal

But now that the pressure of change are becoming hard to resist and the demand for real Democracy is staring them in the face, they discover that the Westminster system will not work. The system they are now proposing harbours the same dangers. The Act retains all the undesirable features of Westminster and, by enshrining division and discrimination in its very essence, it ensures that the aim of "consensus politics" will be impossible to obtain. Will the new constitution effect genuine reform? Were the "coloureds" and "Indians" co-opted as mere bystanders to provide legitimacy or are they to be active participants in the decision making process? Does it include "blacks"? Will Apartheid remain unaltered or be abolished? These are just some of the questions asked at the time. To answer these questions it was necessary to look at the provisions of the Act and answer the simple question of what it offers.

According to the new constitution, the President is both Head of State and Head of Government. The Act reveals a radical change from the Westminster-type government by Parliament to a system in which the President will in many respects single handedly control Parliament and the Bills which flow through it. The most crucial

decisions now taken by Parliament will rest with the President. The President will be elected by a group of members of Parliament chosen as follows:

50 from the "white" House of Assembly; 25 from the "coloured" House of Representatives and 13 from the "Indian" House of Deputies. The NP majority in the House of Assembly will enable them to appoint all the members of the electoral college. Therefore, the NP choose those who choose the President. Since the "coloured" House chose only 25 members and the "Indian" House only 13, the NP's choice must prevail.

A complicated system to ensure that the various groups retain control has been written into the constitution. The new constitution is therefore built on the division of duties of government into "own" and "general" affairs, with the racially based Ministers Council dealing with the former and the so-called multi-racial Cabinet looking after the latter. The basic principle in identifying "own affairs" is that they are those "matters which specifically or differentially affect a population group in relation to the maintenance of its identity and the upholding and furtherance of its way of life, culture, traditions and customs". General affairs are those which are common to all groups. An examination of the provisions, shows that groups have little power to decide on their "own affairs". Take for example

education, which is an "own affair". Decisions to be made by any group on educational matters are subject to general legislation in relation to:-

1. norms and standards for the financing of running and capital costs;
2. salaries and conditions of employment of staff, and
3. norms and standards for syllabi, examination and certification.

Once the above conditions are complied with, there is little room for a particular group to exercise a policy. Also all decisions are subject to the provisions of the Group Areas Act. Therefore, even in "own affairs", the NP enforces its policy on every other group participating in the new constitution. The motive is quite straight forward: the whole range of Apartheid principles is enshrined in the constitution.

At this point the proposed structure of the legislature warrants examination; one central Parliament comprising Three Houses is proposed. The House of Assembly will be the chamber of "whites" and each group will elect the members of its House of its own voter's roll and decide in its own chamber on its "own affairs". The "coloured" House, (House of Representatives) will have 85

members and the "Indian" House (House of Delegates) will have 45 members. It is important to understand that all three Houses will meet separately in respect of matters defined for them as "own affairs", the particular House has complete "jurisdiction". Even in respect of "general affairs" the three Houses meet and legislate separately. What is important is that a Bill only becomes a law when it is passed by all three Houses separately. The question that arises is what happens if one or two Houses fail to accept the Bill dealing with a "general affair". The Government foresaw that these problems may arise and it is for this reason that the nominated President's Council (P.C.) has been included in the legislative process. It consists of 35 members appointed by the President, 20 will be chosen by the "white" House, 10 by the "coloured" House and 5 will be chosen by the "Indian" House. Again, as in the case of electoral college, the minority groups will be unable to make decisions which the ruling "white majority" does not want. The Act provides that when a conflict situation arises, the President will refer the Bill to the PC for decision. If the matter is referred, the Bill on which it has given a decision will be deemed to have been passed by Parliament and the President will have to abide by this. This role of the P.C. introduces a contradiction: it will play an influential role in the legislative process but none of its members would be elected. As can be seen from the brief analysis of the provisions of the Act, a four "white" to two "coloured" to one

"Indian" to no "black" formula is maintained throughout the constitution. This 4:2:1:0 formula means that the "white" House will decide who is to be President, control decisions of the President's Council and control all public affairs to the exclusion of all. More importantly, the constitutional formula ensures that Apartheid remains, only with a new face. This constitution not only excludes "Africans", but it is premised on their permanent exclusion and on the irreversibility of the homeland system. Under the guise of "power sharing", the new constitution strengthens "white" domination by maintaining ethnic divisions.

#### The Muslim's Standpoint

How should we Muslims react to a constitution that is based on racism? Islam not only recognises equality between all people irrespective of race, creed or nationality but it makes it an reality. God Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an: ﴿١٠﴾

"O Mankind! we have created you from a male and female. God make you into nations and tribes, so that you may know each other (and not despise each other). The best of you in the sight of God is he who is most righteous"

As God addresses mankind, and not only believers, it is clear that all human beings are brothers.

Maulana Maududi <sup>(11)</sup> in his book, "Human Rights in Islam", states that divisions into nations, tribes, races and groups "is for the sake of distinction, so that people of one race or tribe may meet and be acquainted with the people belonging to another race or tribe and co-operative with one another". <sup>(12)</sup> More importantly, "this division ... is neither meant for one nation to treat another with contempt or disgrace or regard them as a mean and degraded race and usurp their rights" <sup>(13)</sup> The verse from the Holy Qur'an mentioned above, is Islam's answer to racism and is exemplified by the Holy Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) in one of his sayings:

"No Arab has any superiority over a non-Arab. Nor does a white man have any superiority over a black man, or a black man, any superiority over a white man. You are all children of Adam and Adam was created from clay."

Muslims therefore has a duty to reject the Government's "New Deal", because the Apartheid laws remain the basis of the New Constitution. Apartheid is based on the belief that there is no basis for the reconciliability of people who do not share the same background. The Holy Qur'an however, teaches us that reconciliation and unity between people is indeed possible however different they may be. With regard to justice, the Holy Qur'an states: <sup>(14)</sup>

"O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against rich and poor) for God can best protect both. Follow that the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily God is well-acquainted with all that ye do."

How could we Muslims be witnesses to justice and peace on earth if we remain silent in the face of the ongoing injustices that Apartheid represents.

In conclusion, the Qur'an exhorts Muslims to resist oppression and injustice: (15)

"And incline not to those who do wrong and oppress others, or the fire will seize you; And you have no protectors other than Allah, Nor shall you be helped."



## FOOTNOTES

1. "New Deal" - P.W. Botha's discredited tricameral parliamentary system. See "New Constitution - 1984 / Van Riebeeck to P.W. Botha.
2. Act 41 of 1950 and Act 77 of 1957, as amended.
3. At first the Minister of Interior. From 1962 the Minister of Community Development and since 1965, the Minister of Planning.
4. 69 people were fatally wounded by S.A. police on that fateful day of 21 March 1960.
5. South Africa's "pariah" Premier from 1959 - 1966. He was assassinated in Parliament in 1966.
6. House of Assembly Debate, Volume 107
7. Act. No. 110 of 1983
8. P.W. Botha's trip overseas after the 1983 referendum to project an image of reform; alas, P.W. Botha's visit to Europe in 1984 attempted to achieve the same purpose.
9. Act No. 30 of 1950
10. Al Qur'an : 49

11. Mandudi: founder of the Jamaati - Islam Movement on the Indo-Pak subcontinent
12. "Mandudi: "Human Rights in Islam", p. 19
13. Ibid
14. Al-Qur'an: Surah Nisa : Verse 135
15. Al Qur'an: Surah Hud: Verse 173

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## CHAPTER 2

### THE GROWING MILITANCY OF SOUTH AFRICAN MUSLIMS

In recent years Muslims have come to play an increasingly active role in the National Struggle for liberation and justice. Milestones are the martyrdom of Imam Abdullah Haroon (27 Sept. '69) and the unprecedented Muslim involvement in the heroic uprisings of the oppressed in 1985. With the unprecedented revolutionary uprisings of 1985 in the Cape, "Islam fully asserted itself as a ideological force in the terrain of the liberation struggle". <sup><1></sup> "Almost overnight the entire world was made aware of an emerging tradition of Islamic radicalism." <sup><2></sup> Achmat Davids described the momentous political development of the Muslim Community from "Complacency to activism" <sup><3></sup> in a paper delivered at the fifth workshop on the History of Cape Town at the University of Cape Town. But the real significance of this new Islamic phenomena on the terrain of the struggle against the Apartheid State is most vividly illustrated by the responses it has received from some of the most influential quarters within the South African scene.

In a letter written by the jailed African National Congress (ANC) leader, Nelson Mandela, to the Chairman of the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) during 1985, he acknowledged the "Islamic phenomenon". <sup><4></sup>

At the highest echelons of state this Islamic phenomenon received attention. In April 1986 State President P.W. Botha in a speech delivered in Parliament referred to it directly when he said, <sup><5></sup>

"As you are aware we have a large Muslim Community who, like all other religious denominations, enjoy complete freedom of religion. Furthermore, you also know that South African Muslims are respected citizen of this country. However, a small group has emerged within this community who, under the influence of Libya and Iran and with funding from those quarters, have committed themselves, with the ANC and PAC, to terror and violence."

President P.W. Botha however not only issued a warning, but found the situation threatening enough to take immediate action and thus he went on to assure the members of his Tricameral Parliament that, "I have already issued instructions in this regard and our security and intelligence services are taking the necessary countermeasures." (4)

In October 1986, as has already been alluded to, the General Synod of the N.G.K. expressed its concern that Islam was being embraced as "an ally in the holy struggle against apartheid". (7) A Synod commissioned report further claimed that "a number of the leadership figures who advocate revolution in South Africa were radical Muslims". (8)

The extent of the growth of Islam was demonstrated vividly in the township protests of 1985. For the first time this century Islam began to assert its ideological specificity; a specificity that embodied unique elements of a programme of revolutionary struggle and reconstruction. Almost overnight the townships of the Western Cape in particular, were forced to acknowledge a new force on the terrain of ideology.

The oppressed and exploited inhabitants of the townships were not the only ones who noticed this sudden re-emergence of a revolutionary Islam. Within, especially, the ranks of the ruling classes concern was expressed about this new phenomenon; concern that reached the highest levels of the State.

With the declaration of the State of Emergency and the beginning of various Islamic organisations for the duration of the emergency, one witnessed the wrath of state repression and persecution. Then in the wake of the bannings followed a wave of detentions that put many Muslim activists behind bars.

Yet clearly State action have been constrained by this desire of the State not to alienate the entire Muslim community by over hasty action. Clearly within the ranks of the ruling classes avenues were being explored that will divide the so-called "radical" elements of the Muslim community from what are perceived to be the passive, concervative majority. (In this view propoganda condoning the latter reactionary expression of Islam has been encouraged even via the official mouthpiece of the SABC)

The Botha regime made a concerted effort to neutralise the militancy in the Muslim community. Its "Muslim allies" in the discredited tricameral parliament, sections of the conservative Muslim "clergy" (ulama) and certain marginalized community organisations were the most effective agents to accomplish such counter-revolutionary activities. In a major departure from its previous trend the state-controlled media had in recent times made a conscious effort to feature some Islamic religio-cultural issues in an attempt to explain the dynamics of the community as a strategy to placate the Muslims.

Meanwhile, the African National Congress (ANC), one of the vocal opponents of the Botha regime had also shown interest in using the Muslims as a religious entity. In the history of the ANC, several Muslims have served in key positions in the organisation, but it has not been recorded whether they had articulated any Is

Islamic ideological position in terms of the South African struggle. In a 1987 issue of the *Sechaba* '9' the Muslim militancy is praised. The militancy in the Western Cape during the 1985 popular revolt was attributed to the "synthesis" of revolutionary Islam and the national democratic movement." The pro - ANC/UDF grouping, the Call of Islam, is characterised as "the most popular and progressive Muslim movement in South Africa". In articulating its policy towards Islam, the ANC says: "Indeed it is only within the house of national democracy that there is room for the family of Islam. The Freedom Charter's recognition of different cultural groups and the call of the UDF to people of different religious traditions, to use these traditions for the destruction of racism and capitalism appeals to Muslims like nothing else in our history." The logic as to why Muslims should join the secular national democratic struggle was to ensure "that the movement does not degenerate into a narrow and religiously arrogant one", according to the ANC. '10'

Muslim resistance against Apartheid and white minority rule and their participation in the national liberation struggle, drew the wrath of the influential and powerful NGK (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk.

In November 1985, the *Financial Mail*, a leading South African business magazine, carried an interview with a Muslim activist, Maulana Faried Essack. In the lead paragraph it said: '11'

"Muslim radicalism is a growing feature in South African protest, and has been particularly visible in the recent Cape Town riots."

Notwithstanding the wide range of both positive and negative responses Muslim activism had received, the actual level and extent of its support within the Cape Muslim community is debatable. No doubt, the potential for exaggeration is always great and this case is no exception.

In a 1987 interview a prominent United Democratic Front (UDF) leader and National co-ordinator of a Muslim organization, the Call of Islam, was bold enough to claim that "90% of Muslims identify with activists" and "In the Western Cape, it would be hard to find a pro-apartheid Muslim". <sup>(12)</sup> During the height of the Muslim community's involvement in the Western Cape political upheavals in late October 1985, a prominent pro-nationalist Afrikaans daily, Die Burger, estimated that about 20% of the Muslims in the Western Cape participated in actions which could be described as "radical". Die Burger cited as its source for the estimate an interview with leaders of a conservative Muslim organisation, the Muslim assembly. <sup>(13)</sup> This estimate was subsequently challenged by an article by Jean de Mary in the Weekly. She estimated that the figure could be as high as 95%. <sup>(14)</sup> President P.W. Botha, in turn, said: "... a small group has



emerged within this community who ... have committed themselves, with the ANC and PAC, to terror and violence" (15) within a larger majority of "respected citizens".

While political observers are perhaps still intrigued to discover the precise estimate it seems likely that in the future the figures which now range between 20% to 95% will in all probability vary according to the ideological bias of the interviewer or interviewee. What however is of importance and significant is the concern to estimate the extent of political activism and its support base within the Muslim community - a clear indication that the phenomenon is alive and it is growing.

But the role of the historian is not merely to observe historical phenomena but to try and explain the underlying causes explaining the current developments within the Muslim community have already been postulated. The State President was convinced it was being inspired and instigated by international forces in particular, he pointed to funding from the revolutionary Muslim governments of Libya and Iran. The NGK's commissioned report by Prof. Crafford, of the University of Pretoria, broadens this view by pointing out that it was not only the Islamic Revolution in Iran which had inspired minority Muslim communities to take up a more aggressive political stance, but also the establishment of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) by the Arab Oil states in 1973 aimed at

helping developing countries and to strengthen Islam. Petrodollars, it is therefore argued, led to a general awakening of Islam throughout the world. <16> An article in the official ANC journal, Sechaba, opposes this perspective vehemently and attributes it entirely to the UDF: <17>

"The revolutionary fervour of the Muslims is not a phenomenon that fell from the sky and reach us via Iran. It is the result of two years of skilled work, which the Call of Islam learned from its sister organization, the setting up of community based infrastructures, a newsletter with a montly circulation of 30 000."

The mass Muslim involvement in the political upheavals of the Western Cape during the latter part of 1985 was most vociferous at the mass protest Janazahs or funerals. These mass funerals were reminiscent of the funeral of Imam Abdullah Haroon in September 1969. Unusually large numbers of Muslims attended these funerals. A Durban based Muslim newspaper, Al Qalam, described one of the funerals thus: "It was the biggest, mass Muslim funeral in Cape Town since the death of Imam Abdullah Haroon". <18>

An Al Qalam editorial in December 1985 proposed that it was the deaths of Muslims caused by security forces which shook and propels the generally peaceful Muslim community into the forefront of the struggle against oppression. <19>

While larger sections of South African Muslims identify the dominant secular political groupings ranging from the ANC, PAC and the New Unity Movement and the Apdusa, non-aligned centrist. Islamic groupings also exist. They are the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa (MYM), the Muslim Students Association of South Africa (MSA), Qibla Muslim mass movement and the recently established Islamic Party of South Africa. These organisations and groups have considerable youth and community support. While these groups actively resist the apartheid government and its discredited structures, they also maintain an independent position among the dominant liberation groupings.

Till now the participation of "Ulama" grouping in the liberation struggle has been negligible. However, at times certain individuals from among the ranks of the "ulama" have participated on an individual basis. With the exception of the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) in the Cape which opposed the tricameral system during 1984, the other ulama associations (Jamiats) have doggedly refused to provide direction or participate in terms of their own worldview in the National Liberation Movement.

During the 1984 anti-tricameral Campaign, of the Conservative Jamiats, only the Jamiate-e-Ulama of the Natal province issued a statement opposing the government's constitutional proposals because it discriminated on the basis of race. The Jamiat-e-Ulama of Transvaal, which represents a significant number of Muslims had not publicly declared its position towards the Nationalist government. While, the conservative Ulama are critical of the so-called "neo modernist" groupings which have addressed the political issues, they have not been able to provide an acceptable alternative.

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2. Ibid
3. Achmat Davids: From Complacency to Activism: The Changing Political Mood of the Cape Muslims (1940 - 1985), Paper delivered at the fifth workshop on the History of Cape Town, UCT, December 1985.
4. Letter from jailed ANC leader, Nelson Mandela to Chairman of M.J.C, Sheikh Abdul Gamiet Garbler, dated 04-03-1985, Call of Islam records.
5. Republic of South Africa, Debate of House of Assembly, Hand-  
sard, Third Session - Eighth Parliament, 14 - 18 April 1986, No. 10, p. 3590
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8. Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, Sendingskommissie, Memorandum of Islam submitted to ASSK by Prof. D. Crafford for the Cape Town General Synod, October 1986, p. 311

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10. For Sechaba, see American Muslim Journal, 29 August 1986, p.7
11. Financial Mail, 15 November 1985
12. Arabia: Islamic World Review, South Africa: The Muslim Factor, London, August 1986, p.23
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15. Republic of South Africa, Debates of House of Assembly, Hansard, Third Session - Eighth Parliament, 14 to 18 April 1986, NO. 10, p.3590
16. N.B.K.; Sendingskommissie, op. cit., p. 310
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18. Adl Qalam, Vol 10, No. 10, October 1985
19. Al Qalam, Vol. 10, No. 12, December 1985

## CHAPTER 3

### STATE RESPONSE TO INCREASING MUSLIM MILITANCY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The extent of the growth of Islam was demonstrated vividly in the township protests of 1985. For the first time this century Islam began to assert its ideological specificity, that embodied unique elements of a programme of revolutionary struggle and reconstruction. Almost overnight the townships of the Western Cape in particular, were forced to acknowledge a new force on the terrain of ideology.

The oppressed and exploited inhabitants of the townships were not the only ones who noticed this sudden re-emergence of a revolutionary Islam. Within the ranks of the ruling classes concern was expressed about this new phenomenon; concern that reached the highest levels of the State.

With the declaration of the State of Emergency and the banning of various Islamic organisations for the duration of the emergency, one witnessed the wrath of state repression and persecution. Then in the wake of the bannings followed a wave of detentions that put many Muslim activists behind bars.

In early April 1986, the South African President, Mr. P.W. Botha, inaugurated a new era in the repressive campaign against the forces struggling for their liberation of Apartheid in the sub-continent of Africa.

Alongside the traditional bogey of communism, President Botha declared that the State was also faced with an onslaught of "religious fanatics". P.W. Botha in a speech delivered in Parliament referred to it directly when he said:

"As you are aware we have a large Muslim community, like all other religious denominations, enjoy complete freedom of religion. Furthermore, you also know that South African Muslims are respected citizens of this country. However, a small group has emerged within this community who, under the influence of Libya and Iran and with funding from those quarters, have committed themselves, with the ANC and PAC, to terror and violence. <1> Aware of the rising tide of Muslim militancy, P.W. Botha further assured the members of his Tricameral Parliament that, "I have already issued instructions in this regard and our security and intelligence services are taking the necessary countermeasure." <2>

While it is time that MBr. Botha's statement heralds an important shift in the nature of State actions against Islam in South Africa, one would do well to bear in mind that for well over three decades the Muslim community has been facing the brutal repressive machinery of the Apartheid State.



In September 1969 for example Imam Abdullah Haroon died as the result of injuries sustained whilst in detention. During the massive waves of protest in 1976 and 1980 several Muslims fell victims of police action. (3)

It was however, only during the protests of 1985 that Islam emerged as a political force<sup>o</sup> in its own right, and as a consequence of this, a force that drew the appropriate response from the State. Indeed for the first time during the State of Emergency in 1985 - 1986 Muslim organisations were banned from conducting their normal activities. Although these banning orders were later set aside by the Supreme Court, it marked the beginning of a new era of intensified State repression. (4)

Thus far, however, the limited nature of the State's intelligence has meant that its repressive activities have been severely constrained. Unlike the African nationalist organisations which have been operating on a high profile for many years, organised political opposition from within the ranks of the Muslim community has only recently taken on such a public profile. As such there are important gaps in the State's intelligence; gaps it is at present frantically attempting to close. (5)

In accordance with such an appraisal it is important to note that at present the State is confined in its activities to the use of extended detentions, harassment and the use of smear campaign.

It is unable to move directly against Muslim organisations, because the State simply would not be able to ensure the effectiveness of repressive action.

Of the three tactics employed thus far, however, it is clear that the use of detention without trial is intended to fill gaps in the State's intelligence. In this respect several prominent Muslim "militants" have been detained including Achmad Cassiem, Nabil Swartz, Dehnan Swartz, Yusuf Paterl, Abdul-Ayyi Kader, Jamal-Ud-Din Hamdulay, Ashraf Forbes and Ashraf Mohammed. <6>

The interrogation and torture of detainees, was an attempt by the State to break their morale and faith.

Detention without trial for the purpose of interrogation is only one tactic employed by the State. Another equally common approach has been to harass prominent Muslim leaders, forcing them into exile. The most obvious cases were that of Imam Hassan Solomons and Sheikh Abdul Gamiet Gobler. During the 1985 uprising they were in hiding from police. Eventually they were forced to flee for their lives.

A no less significant element of current State strategy was its attempt to discredit popular Muslim organisations and leaders. Particularly affected in this respect was the Muslim Judicial Council (M.J.C.) which has over the past year been subject to a

particularly vicious smear campaign. Operating through fronts or anonymously, the State has accused the MJC of corruption and gross mismanagement of public funds; accusations that have no basis in fact. (7)

Pamphlets have also been issued that make wild claims about prominent Muslim leaders, attempting again to discredit what are undoubtedly popular leaders in the eyes of the community. (8)

It must be noted that apart from limited intelligence about Muslim militancy in South Africa, the Apartheid state is also constrained by its anxiety not to alienate, in the words of P.W. Botha, what is seen as the "majority of peace-loving Muslims" who are "good citizens" of this country. Heavy handed repressive measures would no doubt have the effect of driving this "conservative majority" into the hands of the militant "minority".

In the meantime, however, the State has been forced to wait for an appropriate point in time to act against the Muslim community.

FOOTNOTES

1. 'Republic of South Africa, Debate of House of Assembly, Hansard, Third Session - Eighth Parliament, 14 to 18 April 1986, No. 10, p. 3590
2. Ibid
3. Arabia, Islamic World Review; February 1987, p. 10
4. Ibid
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## CHAPTER 4

### NGK ATTACK ON ISLAM AND MUSLIM MILITANCY

In October 1986, as has already been alluded to, the General Synod of the NGK spread its concern that Islam was being embraced as "an ally in the holy struggle against apartheid". <sup>(9)</sup> Furthermore, a Synod commissioned report claimed that "a number of the leadership figures who advocate revolution in South Africa were radical Muslims" <sup>(10)</sup>

The Synod warned Muslims that: "Participation in radical and revolutionary actions and the incitement of people towards acts of terror would seriously damage the relationship between Muslims and the majority of Christians in south Africa as well as endangering the peaceful co-existence of the various religions". <sup>(11)</sup>

After an intense debate as to the appropriate strategy the NGK should adopt to counteract the "Islamic onslaught" the General Synod adopted a resolution proposed by the Chaplain-General of the South African Police, Reverend Stoffel Calyn. <sup>(12)</sup> The proposal read as follows: <sup>(13)</sup>

"Islam is a false religion and a great threat to Christianity in South Africa, Africa and in the world at large.

This declaration that Islam is a "false religion" and a "large threat" to Christianity, created a storm of protest in the Muslim community against the NGK. Despite attempts by the NGK to reduce the issues involved, to the level of mere religious squabbles devoid of political ramifications, has revealed their essentially political character. The fact that over two thousand Muslims attended a public meeting on the 29th of October 1986, called to reaffirm the Muslims' commitment to unity in the struggle against apartheid is clearly one example. That following a call made at that meeting, over two hundred Muslims defied an official ban and the wide-sweeping emergency regulations, to attempt to march on the NKG-Church in central Cape Town, yet another. However, perhaps most relevant are the comments made by the NGK itself, that the revolutionary potential of Islam, as perceived and acted upon by youths in the townships of South Africa, poses the most profound threat to the continued hegemony of Western Christian Civilisation - A threat that transcend even traditional bogey's such as communism.

It must be appreciated that attempts to highlight the events of October 1986 in terms of a religious war scenario, were tactics employed to initially depoliticise the whole issue, and secondly sow discord within the ranks of the Muslim and Christian communities. Arabic magazine argues: "To appreciate the political nature of the whole issue fully it is necessary to examine both

the broad historical context of Dutch Reformed Christianity in South Africa, and the particular context in which the resolution on Islam emerged. <14>

"With respect to the former it is important to note that the NGK is the Church of the majority of white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, and is in an important sense the theological expression of Afrikaner nationalism. It has, furthermore, played an important role in the shaping of contemporary South Africa, particularly since the Nationalist party victory in 1948. <15>

Turning firstly to the issue of the emerging crisis within the NGK itself, it must be noted that for the past forty years the NGK has provided the theological basis for the phenomenon of Apartheid. Since particularly the 1980's however, there has been growing dissention within the ranks of the NGK over this issue.

At the forefront of this struggle has been the NGK Sendingkerk which under the influence of progressive leaders like Dr. Allan Boesak has rejected the pro-apartheid stance of the "mother" White Church, declaring it to be a heresy, and contrary to the teachings of the Bible. By the mid-1980's it was becoming increasingly isolated from the mainstream of Christianity.

In important respects the NGK's blind acceptance of Apartheid was even lagging behind the "reformist" nature of the South African Apartheid State.

The election of Ds. Johan Heyns to the position of Moderator of the NGK was thus an attempt to bring the Church in line with the current vein of political rhetoric. While Apartheid was accepted as devoid of Theological justification, notions of seperateness and multi-nationalism still prevailed (as indeed they still do within the ranks of state officials).

Yet the "reformist" image of the NGK's 1985 four-yearly Synod, were not only to bring the church in line with the current ideas of State policy. Clearly an important element of presenting the NGK in a more progressive light was to encourage reconciliation with the dissenting "daughter" churches. This much seems clear in the noticeable dissapointment Dr. Boesak and others showed in the NGK's failure to condemn Apartheid outright. Accordingly, an Islam montly argues: "At the forefront of this struggle has been the NG Sendingkerk (the "coloured" affiliate of the NGK), which under the influence of progressive leaders like Dr. Allan Boesak has rejected the pro-apartheid stance of the white "mother" church, declaring it to be a heresy and contrary to the teachings



of the Bible. By the mid 1980's it has become apparent that the NGK is increasingly isolated from the mainstream of Christianity." (15)

Arabia goes further: "In this respect attempts have been made to bring the current line of NGK policy up to a point where it more accurately reflects ruling class perceptions; the election of Dr. Johan Heyns to the position of Moderator being a case in point. Yet the presentation of a "reformist" image, such as did occur at the NGK's recent synod, was clearly also a move intended to bridge the gaps between the NGK and its dissenting "daughter" churches." (17)

While such a radical break with past policy were never on the cards, it was clear that, like the State, the NGK is a battleground in which white political affiliations are reflected. In particular the divide between Nationalist and Conservative Party members and supporters led to some fiery debates during the synod. Yet the seriousness of the crisis of credibility in which the NGK now languishes, meant that on these issues, conservative supporters had to concede ground.

With regard to the question of Islam, however, it must be noted that within the synod there existed a groundswell of support for Dr. Stoffel Colyn's counter-motion that, instead of a reconciliatory approach, the NGK adopt a confrontationist stance - a groundswell that transcended party political affiliation. To appreciate this apparent contradiction between the supposedly reconciliatory approach of the synod, and the confrontationist posture viz-a-viz Islam, it is necessary that one look at the nature of events outside the NGK that have shaped NGK perceptions.

The salient feature of this context is the steady expansion of Islam in South Africa, particularly within the townships. As early as 1982 the NGK was becoming aware of the Islamic phenomenon and resolved to set up its own commission of Enquiry under the chairmanship of Prof. D. Crafford.

The Commission of Enquiry's terms of reference were exceptionally wide, despite the fact that the primary focus of the commission were to examine the means by which a more effective missionary program to the Muslim community could be developed.

The crux of Crafford's concerns were not Islamic fundamentalism per se, but rather the impact a militant Islamic ideology would have on the youth.

The Crafford Report notes with alarm the growth of Islam amongst black youth since the 1976 Soweto uprisings. The NGK Synod noted with alarm the following recommendations: <sup>(18)</sup> "Die Sinode is besorg oor die feit dat talle jong swartmense en bruinmense veral na 1976 hulle tot Islam begin wend as 'n ideologie wat die "bevrydingstryd" bevorder."

Islam was being embraced as "an ally in the holy struggle against Apartheid". Professor Crafford said racism, racial injustice, discrimination and humiliation of people were in conflict with "the message of God's justice and compassion." <sup>(19)</sup> The Argus also reported: "A substantial part of Professor Crafford's report dealt with the role of Muslim leaders in moves to fight Apartheid." <sup>(20)</sup>

Prof. Crafford's report also made reference to the influence of Libya and Iran as encouraging this process of militancy and radicalisation: "He said radical Muslim leaders who had undergone training in Libya in "revolutionary methods" were offering Islam to black youth as a religion for the oppressed, in contrast to Christianity which was described as the religion of the oppressors." <sup>(21)</sup>

Furthermore, a Synod commissioned report claimed that "a number of the leadership figures who advocate revolution in South Africa were radical Muslims". (22) Alarmingly the Crafford report cites the opening of Soweto mosque in 1985 as clear example of this growing threat posed by Islam.

In conclusion, I would like to state that Dr. Stoffel Colyn's confrontationist resolution have united the Muslim community of South Africa, Africa and the rest of the world against the NGK attack on Islam. Instead of dividing the Muslim community in this country, NGK has facilitated the growing unity of the Islamic brotherhood.

## FOOTNOTES

9. , Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, Handelinge van die Algemene Sinode te Kaapstad, October 1986, p.253
10. Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, Sendingskommissie, Memorandum of Islam submitted to ASSK by Prof. D. Crafford for the Cape Town General Synod, October 1986, p.811
11. NGK; Handelinge, 1986, op cit., p.255
12. Cape Times, 24 October 1986
13. NGK, Handelinge, op cit., p.254
14. Arabia, Islamic World Review, February 1987, p.7
15. Ibid
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18. Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, Handelinge van die Algemene Sinode te Kaapstad, October 1986, p.253
19. The Argus, Friday, October 31, 1986, p.19

20. Ibid

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## CHAPTER 5

### THE AHMADIYYAH DISPUTE

The Ahmadiyyah dispute is a method used by the South African State authorities to divert Muslim energies into safely non-political channels.

The Ahmadi issue has been prominent in south Africa ever since the Cape Division of the Supreme Court handed down the judgement that a secular court is "best able" to determine who is and who is not a Muslim.

"The sectarian Ahmadiyya movement started missionary work in its Qadiani form in 1946 in south Africa. In 1959 an Ahmadiyya publication Al-Asr was started which after a long interruption was again continued since 1975. Due to drastic action against this sectarian movement especially by the Cape religious leaders, Ahmadiyya influence which was powerful in the nineteen-fifties and early nineteen-sixties, was curbed" (1)

The Ahmadiyya dispute reached a turning point when the "Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaati have initiated proceedings that could well lead to the sale of the mosque and cemetery". (2) This issue raised a storm within the Cape Muslim community. On two successive weekends thousands of Muslims turned out to demonstrate their "disgust and abhorrence at this callous act ...". (3) In order

to determine appropriate countermeasures a working committee comprising of members of the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC), the Council of Masaajid, the Muslim Youth Movement (MYM), Qibla and the Call of Islam has been established.

The President of the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC), Sheikh Nayeem Mohammed, vehemently condemned the actions of both the Ahmadis and the Cape Supreme Court. He argued that, "there is not religious freedom in South Africa, because that state has allowed the courts to enter into an issue that goes to the core of a people's religious beliefs". <sup>(4)</sup> He went on to reject "with contempt" the ruling of the courts saying that "if we can't fight them in the courts we shall fight them in the streets." <sup>(5)</sup>

The militant statements of Sheikh Nazeem Mohammed reflected the sense of outrage that engulfed the Cape Muslim community. The Ahmadiyya dispute has become a central focus for progressive Islamic organisations.

The Muslim Youth Movement (MYM) has clearly stressed that the entry of progressive Islamic organisations into the Ahmadiyya dispute was a deliberate attempt to "minimize the destructive emotionalism that has characterised previous strategies against the Ahmadis." <sup>(6)</sup> The point that had to be driven home was,



"that Ahmadism is but one of many anti-Islamic forces, and movement workers should at not time over-emphasize or overplay certain ant-Islamic forces at the expense of greater enemies." <7>

The Cape Muslim community are aware that the Ahmadiyya dispute has been manipulated by the South African authorities to divert the growing political consciousness of the Muslim community.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Journal for Islamic Studies, No. 1, 1981; Rand Afrikaans University; "Islam in South Africa: A General Survey; p.20
2. Arabia; February 1987; "The Ahmadi red herring", p.8
3. Ibid
4. Ibid, p.9
5. Ibid
6. Ibid
7. Ibid

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## CHAPTER 6

### POLITICAL CO-OPTION OF MUSLIMS IN SOUTH AFRICA

"They wish you would compromise, so that they can compromise." (1)

Political co-option has reached frightening proportions among Muslims in South Africa. "Alarmed concern for sections of the Muslim community arose out of a 1988 conference held at the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) presumably on "Shari'ah" or "Islamic law".

The conference was represented by several local and overseas scholars. The participants attended in good faith for academic and scholarly reasons. But, we hope the same could have been said about the motivations of the Rand Afrikaans University's Centre for Islamic Studies. It is obvious that a Centre for Islamic studies at an Afrikaans University which is the heartland of Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid in itself raises suspicion.

The Centre for Islamic Studies' intellectual approach does not differ much from the Orientalist attitude where Islam are treated as an exotic, erotic and strange phenomenon. By no stretch of imagination can the intellectual discourse and intellectual bent of the Centre, by virtue of its very location, be said to be any different from the overall pro-state establishment which Rand Afrikaans University constitutes.

The Apartheid regime has a consistent policy of placing a pro-state actor in close proximity to the Muslims. In the 1950's and 1960's I.O. Du Flessis - close adviser to P.W. Botha at the time - tried unsuccessfully to lure Muslims into the evil of "Malayism". They succeeded in making some sectors of Cape Town's Muslim clergy permanent and subservient quislings of the Apartheid regime. To date these so-called Ulama have a record of never uttering a word in condemnation of injustice, racism and state oppression in South Africa.

Today senior members of the Jamiat-e-Ulama Transvaal enjoy that same proximity with the Centre for Islamic Studies at RAU and its central actors. The question must be asked why are these clergymen so close to the Centre and in whose interest does the Centre work? Do their political and economic interests coincide in favouring a pro-apartheid and pro-capitalist South Africa? Who attended the July 1988 conference? What were the objectives of the Conference? Who sponsored the Conference and who sponsors the Centre? What is the relationship between the Centre and the state security apparatus? What is its relationship with the various pro-imperialist missiological strategies of the reactionary churches in South Africa, especially the NGK?

We have no doubt that some of the international and local guests were invited under false pretenses. But we sincerely believe that they could be informed and made wary of the strategies of the apartheid state and its Orientalist quislings. Academic and material support for an institution which works against the interest of Islam and Muslims should also be withheld at all costs. The Centre for Islamic Studies at RAU had unashamedly remained silent on the NGK's attack on Muslims in 1986. The head of the Centre, a Professor Kobus Naudé, enjoys a close relationship with that mountpiece of the South African government - the SABC - as adviser and commentator on Islamic events locally and internationally. If indeed the Centre was concerned about Islam and Muslims it should have by now attempted to address and further the academic debate relevant to all people in South Africa, and especially the Muslims - which is a struggle for liberation from the evil and ungodly system of Apartheid.

Historically, the Orientalist enterprise had always been that of defining the Muslim, controlling them and subjugating them in the process. Knowledge of a particular group meant power over that group. IN brief the Orientaliser maxim is: "To work is to subjugate".

Al Qalam, a Muslim monthly, argued the following concerning the devious strategies of the Centre for Islamic Studies at RAU: "We have no doubt that the Centre at RAU works intimately with the security apparatus in South Africa which according to P.W. Botha is determined to suppress revolutionary Islam". <sup>(2)</sup> It continues: "The Centre is a harbinger of political co-option in the service of apartheid and racial capitalism in the form of strategically calculated proposals for the introduction of Muslim Personal and Family Law". <sup>(3)</sup> Al Qalam also draw parallels with the Israeli experience: "In Israel Muslim Personal Law structures have successfully managed to keep sections of the ulama-co-opted in plush positions as Qadis and Muftis in the service of the State at the price of murder and genocide of innocent Palestinians". <sup>(4)</sup> In Colonial Algeria Studies have pointed out how in the throes of the revolution the Ulama were fully co-opted in the state-sponsored Qadi-structures where they had to be jurors of their own oppression.

Al Qalam has realiably learnt that certain individuals who constitute the Transvaal Ulama actively serve on the censor board in terms of the Publications Act. It is the same censor board that bans issues of Al Qalam and other publications for they dare expose the injustices perpetrated in South Africa.

It is not unreasonable to suggest that the Centre ate RAU and certain Muslim quarters are in cahoots and served as apologists for Apartheid and the State.

In conclusion, it is appropriate to say that "today in South Africa there are two types of Islam pervading the terrain. An Islam in the service of the unjust political authorities of the day and an Islam supportive of the revolutionary struggle of oppressed people, on its own terms, in fulfillment of the Qur'an's imperative of justice". (5)

"And (Trust in Allah's promise that) those who are bent on wrongdoing in time come to know how evil a turn their destinies are bound to take!" (6)

FOOTNOTES

1. Qur'an; 68:9

2. Al-Qalam; July 1988; Vol. 13, No. 7; p.8

3. Ibid

4. Ibid

5. Ibid

6. Qur'an; 26:227

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## CONCLUSION

During recent years, Muslims have come to play an increasingly active role in the struggle for freedom and justice. Milestones have been the Martyrdom of Imam Haroon and the large scale Muslim involvement in the heroic uprisings of the oppressed and exploited in 1985.

The Muslim population in South Africa can be proud of a tradition of resistance against the State. Muslims were exiled from South East Asia and sent to the Cape because they became a threat to the governments in their own countries. It is here that they were enslaved, but the strong spirit of resistance remained.

During 1985, the Muslim youth emerged as a powerful force against the racist state. The streets were filled with youths and parents who were ready to protest against the state. During these periods various organisations were reactivated, that of Call of Islam, Muslim Students' Association, Qiblah and the Muslim Youth Movement. Out of these organisations strong leaders emerged who were prepared to sacrifice their lives for a Just Cause. These organisations form part of the Islamic Movement in South Africa. Imam Abdullah Haroon who died in detention on 27 September 1969 remains one of the great heroes of Islam in South Africa.

To stifle the militancy that the earlier Muslims showed, the State positioned Dr. I.D. Du Flessis to make inroads in the Muslim community. He introduced the concept of "Malayism" which categorises Muslims as Cape Malay. This strategy adopted by the government was aimed at neutralising the political strength and impact of the Islamists. The State has also attempted to co-opt Muslims by extending all sorts of promises of goodwill to them.

Whilst on the one hand adopting severe repressive measures, we have also seen the State resorting to co-opting those Muslims, who Botha describes as "respected Muslim citizens". At the forefront of this strategy has been the SABC, TV's Network programme. This propoganda mouthpiece sought to project Islam as a docile, ritualistic religion, laden with group conflict. This was clearly apparent from the heavy emphasis on the Ahmadiyya issue.

Most recently, in October 1986, we saw the counter measures against Islam taking on another dimension. This time it was the State church, the NGK who, with its attack on Islam, sought not only to belittle and discredit Islam, but also to drive a wedge between Christian-Muslim unity. A unity which had been forged out of the revolt of 1985.

The Muslims of South Africa have to provide a synthesis between their Islamic ideals and the South African reality. The Islamic Movement in South Africa should therefore make Islam a practical and effective means to bring about change here in our beloved country.

Although Islam has a strong revolutionary message, we have been spectators to our own reality for far too long. Almighty God asks us in the Holy Qur'an: "And why should you not fight in the cause of God and of those being weak, are ill-treated and oppressed. Men, women and children whose cry is: O Lord, rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors and raise for us from Thee one who will protect and one who will help." The Muslims of South Africa can play a decisive role in the destruction of racism and capitalism with the revolutionary message of Islam. Those Muslims who see themselves as activists have to face major challenges as their struggle is also to articulate an Islamic response in the Liberatory Movement without compromising their Islamic identity and sacred Islamic principles.

The conditions in South Africa are conducive for us to start activating our organisations and structures. The current political conditions demand that the masses play a central role in deciding

the future of the country. Therefore, the Muslims as part of the broader South African society should become actively involved in the eradication of Apartheid.

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### C. Conference Papers and Notes

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**T**HE Bô Kaap has shed its romantic tourist guide cloak and becomes a "no go" area for visitors lusting after colourful ethnic.

This unique corner of Cape Town used to be a highlight of the tourist itinerary. Visitors "took it in" somewhere between the compulsory cable-car ride and the mellow afternoons in the winelands.

Appendix:

# The Bô Kaap: A restless picture postcard

**B**UT the characters in the fairy-tale fabricated for the camera-bellied curious have staged a minor revolt.

They've stepped out of the photo-studies to say peeling paint isn't picturesque. It's uncomfortable. People are living there, among the talk of Georgian heritage, most of it falling down around them.

The locals in the "Malay Quarter" say they are tired of smiling for the postcards and this insistence on "tourist attraction".

Bô Kaap guide Ishaak Abrahams says his formerly popular walking tours of the area are now a thing of the past. People have threatened him with angry reactions if he brings any more "whites" to gawk and happy-snap.

This part of the city (Abrahams calls it "the spiritual ancestral home of the Cape Muslims") is the only 18th-century townscape left in South Africa.

"It's very unfortunate that

Here western palates could experiment with spicy dishes while proud locals spun stories of princes, slaves and rebellious noblemen. Arabian Nights in Upper Wale Street.

Tourists clattered down the steep cobbles past the tumbledown ruins of Chiappini Street. They excused the shameful neglect of crumbling Georgian facades as part of the "quaintness" of the quarter.

They marvelled at the few 18th-century buildings that have been beautifully restored. Then went away and bought watercolour reproductions downtown, from the cottage craft shops.

The Bô Kaap was a nice, quiet area where the curry simmered timelessly. Once a year the coons' painted faces perspired behind mirror sunglasses and everyone was jolly on cue.

*There was a time when tourists went sniffing in the Bô-Kaap for traces of Eastern history or a good dish of curry. The neighbourhood behaved just as monuments should, looking colourful on cue and oozing history. But the descendants of the slaves and exiled princes have pulled down the Cape Dutch shutters on the peep show, telling onlookers to move along while they get on with the business of living in troubled times under Table Mountain. Sylvia Vollenhoven took a look.*

political emotions are running high now," says Abrahams regretfully.

**T**HE feeling among the area's 9 000 inhabitants is that they don't want to live in a "zoo".

"People don't like being looked at as museum-pieces, rather than human beings," says Achmat Davids of Longmarket Street, author of several works on South Africa's Muslim community.

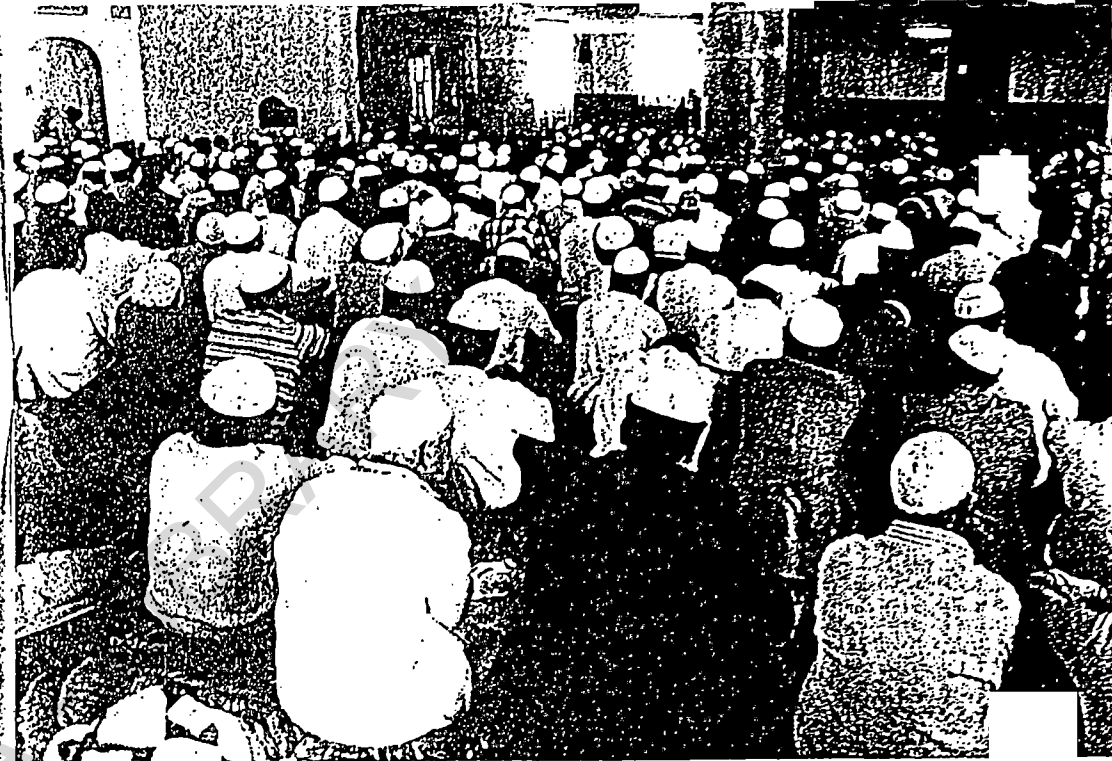
"The area needs to be developed as an integral part of the city, not something cut off and different. What residents mainly object to is the idea that the area needs to be upgraded for its historical value and tourist possibilities rather than because it is a neglected area where people live."

**B**UT it's hard to ignore the "historical value" of the Bô Kaap. It goes a lot deeper than just the romanticised call of the muezzin, mouth-watering recipes or nagtropic (coons).

Way back in 1945 I D du Plessis wrote of the place: "No picture of life at the Cape would be complete without the gay colours added by the local Malays (the more accepted term is Muslims).

"The Feast Of The Orange Leaves, the wedding ceremony, the rhythmic sword trial watched over by Chailfa (Khalifa), choirs marching through the alleys of the Malay Quarter from dusk to dawn to sing the Old Year out and the New Year In, the sudden sight of mosque and minaret — without these Cape Town's canvas would be all the poorer."

But things have changed:



Every Friday the faithful gather in the 11 mosques of the Bô Kaap, including this, the largest, in Chiappini Street.

★ Historian and author I D du Plessis is not that popular in the "Malay Quarter" any more. Some people say he was patronising and ignorant about Islam.

★ The Muslim Choirs will not take to the streets in their multi-coloured saltns this year because of the unrest.

★ Imam A M Saban of the Chiappini Street Mosque — the biggest in this part of town where there are 11 mosques — says Khalifa displays and coons have nothing to do with Islam or Muslim culture.

But most important is the fact, say the residents, that this should never have been a Muslim Group Area. Originally it was a place for everyone — all races and religions — lived happily together and that's the way they would like to see it again.

Not the "Malay Quarter", but an old and interesting part of greater Cape Town, is all they want to be.

The Scotsche Kloof Civic Association has had to fight several battles with the authorities to allow non-Muslims the right to

stay — though most have lived there all their lives.

**T**HE problem is compounded by a serious housing shortage. Development in the area has been slow since the City Council proclaimed the area a slum and expropriated a large tract of land north of Upper Dorp Street in 1934.

After the expropriation the council allowed more than half of the original buildings to go to ruin.

For the rest, shortage of funds and a remarkable lack of official concern has meant scant restoration and a neglected heritage. Hardly what happened in Tulbagh after THE earthquake.

"(People) did not believe the 1934 action was purely for health reasons for it took the City Council almost 20 years to restore the first 15 dwellings and only since 1970 have a further 52 been restored.

"It is clear therefore that for almost 40 years a generation has grown up in dwellings which were considered health hazards," writes Achmat Davids in his book Mosques of the Bô Kaap.

But one important building that has been saved from official apathy is the Bô Kaap Museum in Wale Street . . . down the road from the unpainted walls with posters and graffiti urging boycott support and "fight apartheid emergency".

Built in 1768, the museum is the oldest building in the area and for many generations was the home of the Effendi family. It was restored by industrialist Anton Rupert.

**A**FTER the National Party came to power they declared the Bô Kaap a Group Area for Muslims in 1952. In the section of the Bô Kaap known as the Malay Restoration Area, 68 dwellings were subsequently renovated.

Contractors are currently busy building 106 more (some will be new houses and others will be restored) as well as a community centre at the top of Wale Street.

Scotsche Kloof Civic Association chairman Hassan Gasant estimates, however, that about 600 families are in dire need of homes. Even more important, the homes being built are going to be

may c... he fi... rear...  
 most... ies... in...  
 tumbledown buildings who need  
 accommodation.

Gasant says people would have  
 opted for less expensive dwellings  
 had they been consulted. "The  
 importance of the architectural  
 heritage cannot be put before the  
 needs of the people.

"It's a matter of building houses  
 we can afford. Our first need is  
 homes — not houses that will fit  
 into the area for historical  
 reasons."

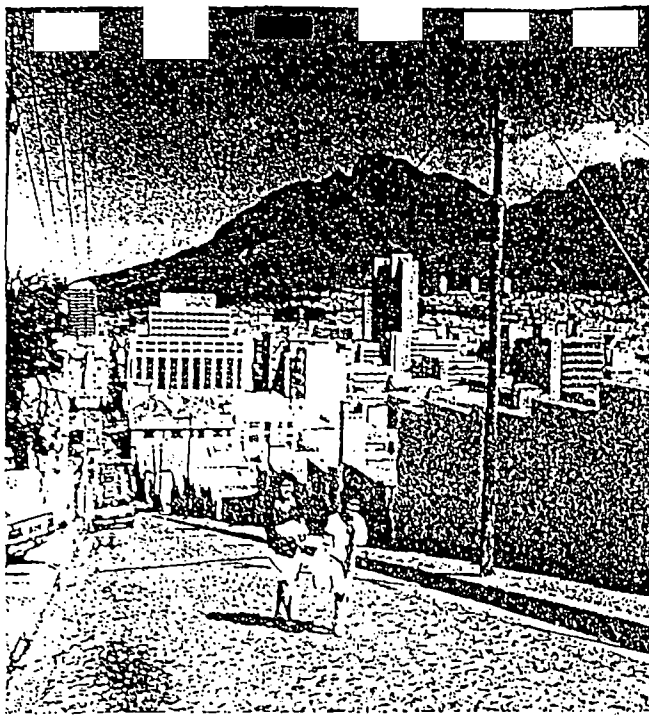
**C**HIAPPINI Street Mosque's  
 Imam Saban bemoans the  
 fact that so much of the  
 "culture" connected with Islam and  
 sought after by the visitors has  
 nothing to do with their religion.

"I reject the coons and Malay  
 choirs as totally un-Islamic. The  
 first of January has no significance  
 for Muslims — we use a different  
 calendar," he says.

"Prancing and dancing in the  
 streets started with the slaves once  
 a year when they were given some  
 freedom for a day," adds Gasant.

During a lengthy chat with the

*From the top of the steep  
 cobbled streets of last century  
 the Mother City looks starkly  
 modern.*



*Bô Kaap tour guide Ishaak  
 Abrahams says white visitors  
 aren't very welcome in the area  
 anymore.*

Imam and civic association  
 officials. It became clear that  
 political tensions ran deep. The day  
 before, one of the association's  
 executive members had been  
 detained and petrol-bombing,  
 stoning and the shooting of a pupil  
 had turned the Bô Kaap into  
 anything but a picture postcard.

Achmat Davids says whites are  
 "not all that welcome" in the Bô  
 Kaap at present, but sees this as a  
 temporary political tension.

"It's a pity because we have a  
 lot to show them in terms of our  
 cultural history. We are an integral  
 part of Cape Town.

"But when tensions ease people  
 will not be that aggressive. Recently a white man was robbed  
 in the area on a Sunday morning  
 and the community was very angry  
 about it.

"This is a low crime area and a  
 settled community where those who  
 deviate from the norm are  
 ostracised," says Davids, who is  
 project director for the Muslim  
 Assembly.

**R**ESIDENTS say they have no  
 idea where the contention  
 is. A pathetic political image of



the Kaap... records  
 that there was a major clash  
 between rioting Muslims and the  
 authorities way back in the 19th  
 century.

It happened at the Tana Baru  
 cemetery on the slopes of Signal  
 Hill, the oldest Muslim burial-  
 ground in South Africa which was  
 in use until 1886, when it was  
 closed down in terms of the Public  
 Health Act.

In January that year, two days  
 after the closure of the Tana Baru,  
 Muslims buried a child there in  
 defiance of the authorities.

"Rioting broke out and law and  
 order was disrupted for three days  
 thereafter in Cape Town. The  
 cemetery riots of 1886 were  
 probably the most significant  
 events in the 19th century history  
 of the Cape Muslims," writes  
 Davids.

**T**HIS is only part of the history  
 tourists used to learn on Bô  
 Kaap tours. For the rest, the  
 tales from Scotsche Kloof are  
 varied and fascinating:

Several prominent early Cape  
 Imams (priests) are buried in the  
 Tana Baru with the best-known  
 being Imam Abdullah Kadi Abdus  
 Salaam.

He was a prince from Tidore in  
 the Ternate Islands and was  
 brought to the Cape as a prisoner  
 in 1780 after having allegedly been  
 involved in a conspiracy with the  
 English against the Dutch  
 colonialists in the East.

The Muslims at the Cape were  
 denied their holy book, the Qur'an,  
 at the time but while captive on  
 Robben Island the prince wrote four  
 full copies of the Qur'an from  
 memory.

He also wrote works on Islamic  
 jurisprudence which became the  
 main reference work for the Cape  
 Muslims in the 19th century and  
 was responsible for the first  
 organised Muslim school in Cape  
 Town.

As a result of these  
 achievements he was awarded the  
 title Tuan Guru (Master Teacher).

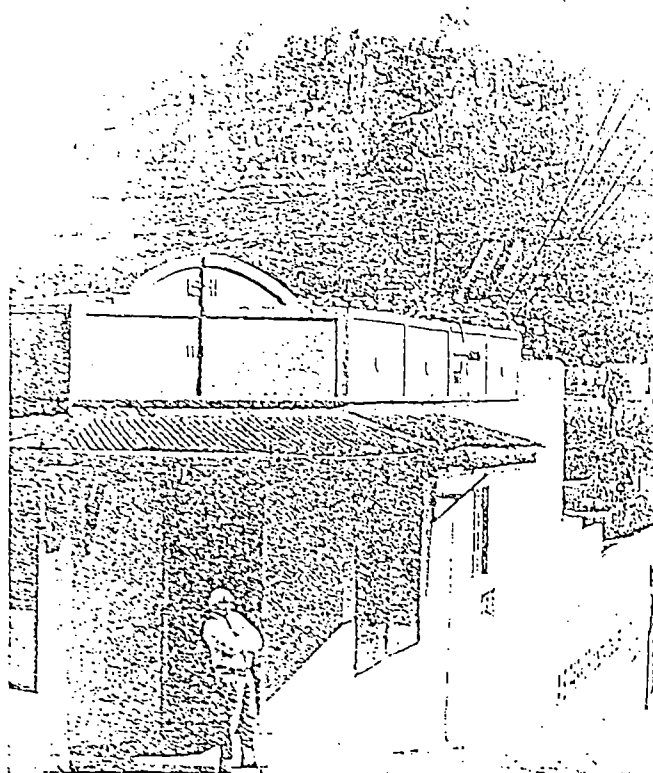
"He had great mystic powers  
 and many legends have been woven  
 around his life," states Mosques Of  
 The Bô Kaap.

One such legend claims Tuan  
 Guru could turn vegetables into  
 stone. According to the story, he  
 was walking across Riebeeck  
 Square on his way to buy  
 vegetables when he spotted a  
 farmer with a cartload of sealed  
 bags. When Tuan Guru asked what  
 they contained, the farmer replied  
 facetiously: "Stones."



*ABOVE: Sheikh Abburraghiem Sallie of the Chiappini Street Mosque in  
 the traditional dress of a Muslim cleric. BELOW: The curator of the Bô  
 Kaap Museum, Mr Gamat Dawood, in the museum's bridal chamber.*





It's a tightly-knit community where the old corner shop still survives and people like Hadji Abdulla Sadulla, right, have lived all their lives.

The prince responded by teaching the bags and later the farmer found, to his dismay, that his potatoes had indeed turned to stone. He rushed off in search of Tuan Guru, who obliged him by restoring his potatoes to their former state.

**A**NOTHER grave — this one can still clearly be identified — is that of Abubakar Umarah who was brought here in 1848 as a spiritual guide to the Cape Muslims.

Effendi wrote a treatise on Islam called the Bayanudin, which became the second book to be published in Afrikaans and in Arabic script.

His family home was restored several years ago and is now the Bô Kaap Museum. The round table in the lounge of the museum is the one on which he wrote the Bayanudin.

By an even more amazing turn of historical events, the first Afrikaans book was written in Arabic script by a Muslim leader. The "Al-Qasid Al-Matim", printed

by a Greenmarket Square printer M C Schoegevel in 1856, appeared six years before the first book in Afrikaans using Roman script.

In a paper headed The Development of Afrikaans: The Muslim Contribution, Achmat Davids writes:

"Afrikaans is generally regarded as the language of the Afrikaner, the cornerstone of Afrikaner nationalism, the one feature which makes the Afrikaner a distinctive nation.

"Yet it is a myth to believe that it was solely the creation of the white Afrikaner...

"At best Afrikaners standardised the language and identified for Afrikaans its rules of syntax and grammar. But Afrikaans existed prior to its being formalised, as a medium of expression among the slaves and free blacks in the Cape colony in the early years of white settlement.

"Afrikaans was the creation of the slaves brought to this country from South-east Asia and the coastland of the African continent.

COR... slaves were forced to speak the language of their captors but could not master high Dutch. Instead they spoke a dialect which later became a low form of Dutch and developed into Afrikaans.

"In the first three decades of the 20th century several works in Arabic-Afrikaans appeared. It was then the established written language of the Muslims of Cape Town," says Davids.

In his book First Catch your Eland, Laurens van der Post also points out the tremendous influence eastern slaves had on the development of Afrikaans.

Words like kakalok (cockroach), piesang (banana) and biryani (a rice dish) all have Eastern origins.

So perhaps the Taal Monument should have been closer to Signal Hill than Paarl Mountain! Add to this the fact that the Muslims of the Bô Kaap claim "copyright" on bredies and a lot of the boere resepte and you really have the cat among the historic pigeons.

**W**HAT'S more, long before the "heresy" of Professor Hans Heese, the folk of the Bô Kaap have been saying Voortrekker leader Piet Retief was a direct descendant of the Rajah of Tamborah who arrived at the Cape in chains in the 17th century.

And Ishaak Abrahams, who's writing a history of the Cape Muslims, says Simon van der Stel's grandmother was Indonesian. His research has unearthed a succession of Muslim princes and kings who were stripped of their titles and exiled to the Cape by the Dutch. Abrahams himself is a descendant of the Prince of Tidor or Tuan Guru.

The most famous prince exiled to the Cape was Prince Joseph or Sheikh Yusuf, the brother of the Sultan of Macassar on the island of Celebes. He was given special privileges when he arrived in 1691 with his 49 followers.

Through Sheikh Yusuf's intervention in 1697, the Rajah of Tamborah was released from the stables of the castle where he had been imprisoned. According to historian Robert Shell, the Rajah then married Sheikh Yusuf's daughter and one of their sons, Dawid Saltania, is an ancestor of Piet Retief.

Saltania married a white woman, says Shell, and a well-known Afrikaner family are descended from the couple.

