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Title: Anti-Social Bandits Culture Resistance and the Tsotsi Subculture on the Witwatersrand During the 1940s and 1950s.

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I

With a few minor exceptions, the tsotsi gangs which roamed the Witwatersrand during the 1940s and 1950s never involved themselves in "politics". Because they were almost by definition unemployed they were also marginal to the struggle between capital and labour. A study of the tsotsi subculture is therefore in danger of becoming politically irrelevant, a colourful sociological study detached from broader social power struggles. This paper attempts to offset this danger from the outset by broadening the definition of "political" to embrace culture and ideology. I will place the tsotsi subculture within the context of the struggle for cultural hegemony in South Africa. Not only did the tsotsi subculture occupy a significant niche within the cultural fabric of urban South Africa, but, I will argue, it represented a powerful counter-force to the cultural hegemonic status quo.(1)

Although tsotsis never challenged state power in any direct way, it could be argued that they represented a threat to the consensus culture more profoundly than did political organisations with clear political programmes. Although organisations such as the ANC and the Congress Youth League challenged hegemonic cultural notions of racial domination and supremacy, they simultaneously embraced most of the values of the dominant western culture throughout the 1940s and 1950s: patriarchal family structures; reverance of education; disapproval of drugs, alcohol and promiscuity; adherence to the law; respect for private property (though of course this did not apply to the Communists who had penetrated these organisations); revulsion of violence; a sense of living for the future rather than for the here-and-now; the work ethic. It was against these cultural elements that the tsotsis rebelled. They created for themselves an insulated alternative culture which was considered "unnatural", an anathema to both blacks and whites, both working class and bourgeoisie.

In this section I will attempt to place the concept of subculture into a theoretical framework, drawing extensively on British marxist subcultural theory, particularly theory generated at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (BCCCS). Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts, all associated with the BCCCS, articulate probably the clearest and most coherent marxist approach to youth subcultures in their seminal 1976 article, "Subculture, Cultures and Class", published in a book edited by Hall and Jefferson entitled Resistance through Rituals.(2) Clarke et al insist that subcultures can best be explained through class analysis; they attack a wave of post-war subcultural theory which dumps class in favour of generational analysis. Many of these post-war theorists argue that as the standard of living of the working class in Britain rose, and as consumerism gradually penetrated the working class, generation replaced class as the central antagonism in British society. Subcultures are seen as a

product of the new consumer age in which youths suddenly have money to spend and assert their independence from the older generation. Clarke et al reject this argument on the grounds that subcultures are still basically a working class phenomenon and that the improved standard of living of the working class has been exaggerated. In order to understand subcultures, they argue, you first have to look at the parent working class culture; subcultures ultimately arise as an attempt to "resolve the contradictions" within the subordinate culture. Although they acknowledge that there are vital generation-specific factors mediating the experience of working class youth, working class youths share essential baseline experiences with their entire class. These shared experiences, they argue, should be the starting point for any analysis of subculture. Generational factors are then important in shaping the specific responses of working class youth to cultural and economic subordination.

British subcultural theorists such as Phil Cohen, Clarke et al and, more recently, Brake, Humphries and Hebdige have been concerned to examine the relationship between subcultures and the dominant hegemonic order (3). Hegemony is the dynamic, shifting consensus culture which emerges out of the clash between ruling class and working class cultures. Hegemony ultimately reinforces ruling class control by absorbing and neutralising elements of resistance within subordinate cultures. But hegemony is not as instrumental a concept as that of "ideology": whereas ideology is generally regarded as a construction of the ruling class engendering a "false consciousness" amongst the working class, hegemony is a constantly adapting consensus culture forged out of diverse real and valid lived experiences confronting one another. "A lived hegemony is always a process," argues Raymond Williams, "...it does not just passively exist as a form of dominance."(4). The working class accepts and gives consent to numerous elements of ruling class culture and thereby allows for hegemony but elements of working class culture may remain confrontational and hostile to ruling class culture, elements which, if they become too powerful, can create a hegemonic crisis. In such cases, these confrontational elements either have to be absorbed and neutralised by the hegemonic order or, as a last resort, the ruling class has to fall back on the coercive might of the state in order to preserve the social hierarchy. The trade union movement is a good example of a working class cultural element which has the potential to cause a hegemonic crisis. In advanced western democracies trade unions have generally been culturally absorbed but there have certainly been important instances in which coercive force has been required to subdue them. The concept of hegemony was, of course, devised to explain bourgeois domination in advanced western democracies, societies in which consent is forged primarily through ideological and cultural means rather than through coercion. Nevertheless, this does not suggest that coercion is absent in the forging of hegemony. Social consent is a far cry from social contentment; consent can involve resignation to the status quo. Fears for security and safety can be as significant as cultural cooptation and absorption. In other words, elements which are

hostile to, and aware of, cultural and economic subordination, such as workers with a "working class consciousness", can still participate in, and help to constitute, the hegemonic culture.(5)

Clarke et al, Humphries, Hebdige and Brake all broadly agree with Phil Cohen's contention that "the latent function of subculture is this: to express and resolve, albeit 'magically', the contradictions which remain hidden and unresolved in the parent culture."(6) In other words, through an appropriation of certain styles and rituals, working class subcultures challenge, or deal with, working class commonplaces such as exclusion from political power structures, hard work for low pay, no ownership of property, drab clothing, crowded family units, limited leisure time, etc. In addition, working class youths face generation-specific problems such as schooling and youth unemployment. The resolutions to contradictions are "magical" in that they fail to tackle the "real" source of the contradictions; the resolutions involve creating an artificial and insulated environment which escapes rather than fights those contradictions. For instance, the fierce territoriality of subcultures can be seen as a magical solution to the lack of ownership; subcultural clothing styles can be seen as a magical solution to exclusion from expensive bourgeois clothing styles. Subcultures also create alternative status structures based on, for instance, criminal and physical prowess. This is necessary because of their definitionally low status and exclusion from channels of upward mobility, such as good education, within the hegemonic culture.(7) Phil Cohen's "magical" formulation is potentially functionalist in that it implies a false consciousness on the part of the members of the subculture; they fail to address the real source of their oppression i.e. class exploitation. The formulation fails to grasp the extent to which these youths are historical actors making choices and seizing control over aspects of their own lives. Nevertheless, the concept of "magic" does capture the immediacy of the subcultural response which cuts across legal and socio-economic constraints. Once a youth gang establishes "ownership" of a street the members will not be daunted by a bureaucrat who shows them the official title deed.

Subcultures express themselves through their style and ritual. What they express is a denial of consent, a rejection of the hegemonically determined "natural". They challenge hegemony precisely through rejecting consent. Although they are largely powerless and unwilling to fight the material contradictions in society, they challenge the hegemonic cultural consent which reinforces and reproduces those material contradictions; they refuse to let the hegemonic order airbrush those contradictions out of existence. As Hebdige puts it: "Style in subculture is ... pregnant with significance. Its transformations go 'against nature', interrupting the process of 'normalization'. As such, they are gestures, movements towards a speech which offends the 'silent majority', which challenges the principle of unity and cohesion, which contradicts the myth of consensus."(8) It is not so much the ruling class culture against which the subcultures define themselves as against the historically forged hegemony.

Subcultural styles draw on both working class and ruling class imagery. Subcultural images are rarely alien. They become "unnatural" through their contextual use. In fact, the power of their symbolism depends on their familiarity. All cultural images are symbolic; a crucial element of the hegemonic project involves the creation of social conformity in the symbolic comprehension of those images. Subcultural style involves the subversion and deflection of the "natural" meanings of familiar images. Clarke et al provide an excellent example.

> The bowler hat, pin-stripe suit and rolled umbrella do not, in themselves, mean 'sobriety', 'respectability', bourgeois-man-at-work. But so powerful is the social code which surround these commodities that it would be difficult for a working-class lad to turn up for work dressed like that without, either, aspiring to a 'bourgeois' image or clearly seeming to take the piss out of the image. This trivial example shows that it is possible to expropriate, as well as appropriate, the social meanings which they seem 'naturally' to have: or, by combining them with something else (the pin-stripe suit with brilliant red socks or white running shoes, for example), to change or inflect their meaning. (9)

The ruling class and the working class, then, are involved in an ongoing struggle to constitute the hegemonic culture. The cards are always stacked in favour of the ruling class, of course, because of its control over media, property, commodity production and, in the last resort, the means of coercion. The hegemonic culture is a dynamic and constantly contested terrain: there are elements of both working class and bourgeois culture which cannot automatically be absorbed and neutralised, elements which can lead to a crisis of consent. Ultimately, consent involves acceptance (even if resigned acceptance) and compromise. Although coercive power always lurks behind the hegemonic order, western bourgeois democracies depend on that cultural consent for their survival. Working class youth subcultures, although experiencing broadly similar conditions to those of the rest of their parent culture, withdraw consent. The subcultures, though unwilling and/or unable to challenge the material contradictions in society in an overtly political way, highlight social contradictions through their style and ritual. Formal, legal political activity is itself generally viewed as a form of cultural collaboration. Subcultural anger and ridicule is often directed as much against the parent culture as against ruling class culture because the parent culture, though subordinate, participates in, and gives consent to, the hegemonic cultural order.

The greatest weakness of British marxist subcultural theory is that it fails to give adequate attention to non-class social cleavages in explaining the subcultural phenomenon. Race, ethnicity, gender and generation, though dealt with sensitively

and seriously, tend to be subordinated to class in a hierarchy of explanatory importance. The result is that key points of social identification and cleavage are often underplayed in analysis. Marxist subcultural theory provides an extremely useful point of departure for any subcultural anaysis. It does, however, have severe limitations. It generates a necessary but inadequate set of analytic questions. Social categories such as gender and generation have to be allowed an autonomous analytic status in order to broaden our understanding of urban subcultures. In this thesis, then, while accepting that the BCCCS tradition has generated the most incisive tools of subcultural analysis to date, I attempt to build in important autonomous cross-class dimensions which would be obscured by a rigid base-superstructure model.

Apart from pointing out its broader inadequacies, it is also important to assess how appropriate British marxist subcultural theory is to the specific case study of South Africa in the 1940s and 1950s. How useful is all this theory in analysing the tsotsi subculture of Johannesburg? The South African case involves two significant departures from this British subcultural model. First, the South African state has historically been far more dependant on the coercive rather than the cultural elements of hegemony for social control when compared to western bourgeois democracies. Second, and most obviously, South Africa has a particularly powerful racial dimension which intersects with, and mediates, class. In other words, the very notion of a working class subculture becomes somewhat awkward, at least without careful adaptation.

Does hegemony, and therefore cultural resistance, lose all meaning in the South Arican context? I would argue that it is dangerous, particularly before the 1960s, to underestimate the extent to which the hierarchical order was maintained through the cultural elements of hegemony. The South African police force and defense force were still relatively small while the permanently urbanised African population was already substantial. The strictly regimented compound system, of course, contributed to the ruling class's coercive apparatus but this only really involved the control of migrants in the mining sector. The majority of township Africans hated the government and the apartheid system and yet they also acquiesced, albeit often resignedly, to the hegemonic cultural order. They gave their consent to non-violence, to the work ethic, to private ownership and the sanctification of private property. The tsotsi subculture provided opposition, arguably the only significant opposition, to cultural hegemony. They rejected the passivity and consent of older generation Africans. So, although the tsotsis were "anti-social" and "apolitical", a study of South African urban resistance in the 1940s and 1950s would be incomplete without paying attention to them. Following Gramsci, it is necessary to view "all expressions of anger, despair and alienation in class society as potentially erosive of ideological hegemony."(10)

Tsotsis were almost exclusively African (though many "coloureds"

participated in the subculture in Sophiatown where they were residentially integrated with Africans). Whereas subcultural boundaries were fairly clearly defined in racial terms, class definition was more ambiguous. Broadly, the tsotsi phenomenon could be described as a working class subculture. But class categories cannot be applied too strictly in defining the subculture; clearly, children of the small urban petty bourgeoisie (minor landlords, shop-owners, clerks, teachers, ministers) often participated in gangs or adhered to the wider tsotsi style.(11) It would be more appropriate to see the subculture as a phenomenon of the township, or what Mattera and others have called "the ghetto".(12) The township itself has to be seen as the complex interweaving of class and racial subordination in South Africa. The townships were segregated and controlled residences for the African working class which serviced urban capitalist enterprises. Class and racial spatial separation, therefore, provides a crucial context in understanding the parent culture of the tsotsi subculture. In dealing with the issue of class boundaries, two important facts should be borne in mind about the township petty bourgeoisie: first, it was extremely small and, second, it was spacially interwoven with the working class and often indistinguishable in material terms.(13) The children of, for instance, standowners or teachers shared the same streets as working class children; they too were likely to become involved in local street gangs. Don Mattera's father was a relatively well-off standowner in Sophiatown yet this did not inhibit Mattera's active involvement in a gang called the Vultures.(14) The children most likely to be insulated from the tsotsi subculture came from a heavily christianised fringe of the township communities which emphasised education, nuclear family life and christian morality. This element was often, but not necessarily, petty bourgeois. Because of this emphasis on the nuclear family, mothers tended to be full-time housewives even if this entailed material deprivation. The children therefore received greater parental supervision than the average township child and were kept in school at virtually any cost. The extent to which children were isolated from tsotsi life depended to a large extent on the active intervention of parents.(15) Parents from this "decent fringe", as Godfrey Moloi puts it, often sent their children to schools in the countryside in order to isolate them from tsotsi influences.(16)

Having assessed the significance of class and race in the identity of the tsotsi subculture, it is important also to address ethnicity and gender as components of subcultural identity. Ethnicity, it appears, played no recognisable part in tsotsi gang identity. Gang members often came from widely diverse ethnic backgrounds and communicated with one another in the Afrikaans-based tsotsitaal.(17) Occasionally gangs were ethnically homogenous; gangs were generally street-based and parents of the same ethnic background tended to cluster together wherever possible, particularly in the less regulated freehold townships. Nevertheless, ethnically homogenous tsotsi gangs emphasised their urban identity; they quickly adopted the style and language of the wider urban youth subculture.(18) In

fact, "urban-ness" was central to the tsotsi self-image. Tsotsis looked down upon those who had come in from the countryside; they referred to the newcomers scornfully as "moegoe", "worsie" or "bari". Boys who came in from the countryside were given a hard time by the tsotsis; "moegoes" had to become tsotsis themselves or remain victims.

Sexuality, unlike ethnicity, did play a crucial role in tsotsi subcultural identity. Although prestige and status spheres were male dominated it would be inaccurate to describe the tsotsi subculture as exclusively male. I argue later that females played an important, though subordinate, role within the subculture. Although females were present, the exploration and expression of male sexuality were central to the tsotsi subculture. The gangs, which formed the core of the wider subculture, were almost exclusively male and the clothing style associated with the subculture was worn by males. It was extremely unusual to find a female referred to as a tsotsi. Gender relations and the construction of subcultural sexuality are explored in depth in Chapter Four.

The tsotsi subculture was very much a youth phenomenon. "Youth", however, was, and remains, a term bandied about by administrators and academics with very little precision. The term is hazy on both ends of the age scale; "youths" hover somewhere between childhood and adulthood. In this thesis, I use the term in the following way. On the lower end, youths are becoming too old for primary school and, perhaps more importantly, reach puberty. They start to become sexually active and exploratory. Youths are generally restless, unsettled and have few responsibilities. On the upper end, young people cease to be "youths" when they begin to find jobs more easily (see the discussion on this issue in Chapter One) and start to think about marriage and family responsibilities. Male youths range roughly between 14 and 25 years of age; female youths are likely to be 13 to 21 years of age. This definition of youth would accord well with the age boundaries of the tsotsi subculture. It was unusual to find a tsotsi who was in his late twenties. They would "settle down, get a job, get married". Older gang members gradually moved out of the subculture and the void was filled by young "up-and-comings". Within the gangs there was age hierarchy; the older members were generally the leaders but they reached an age at which they were expected to "move on".(19) Some of the bigger gangs, most notably the Spoilers and Msomis of Alexandra, had leaders who were well into their thirties and forties but this was extremely unusual. The Spoilers and Msomi leaders were not really thought of as "tsotsis"; they were big criminals, while rank-and-file members were youths and tsotsis.(20)

Whether the hierarchisation of class is accepted or not, what remains powerful in the BCCCS approach is its insistence on examining the parent culture as a starting point to any analysis of subculture. Once this base line has been established, the focus can shift to the specific generational factors which mediate the experiences of youth. In the South African context

(and possibly in other urban contexts as well) it is useful to understand the parent culture not unproblematically as the working class culture but as the ghetto culture, a formulation which reflects all the tensions and contradictions of an extraordinarily complex urban environment. But this "ghetto culture" is particularly difficult to define. In the last decade or so, South African sociologists and historians have taken great pains to disaggregate African urban culture, to demonstrate and explain its diversity, incoherence and internal tensions.(21) Divisions, which are still apparent to this day, abounded in the 1940s and 1950s: between ethnicities, generations and sexes, between tenants and landlords, between migrants and the permanently urbanised, employed and unemployed, skilled and unskilled, established urban dwellers and recently urbanised, traditionalists and christians ... This process of disaggregation has been vital. Nevertheless, it is necessary to draw out the common threads as well, to create some sense of a consensus ghetto culture. What cultural and ideological elements were broadly regarded as "natural" to the diverse ghetto culture? It is an important question because it is precisely these elements against which the tsotsis defined themselves, the elements which were regarded as "straight". And the essence of any subculture lies in its particular definition of "straight".

Urban youths, of course, shared many material experiences with their parents: overcrowding and poor facilities, low wages, constant pass law and beer raids, an absence of meaningful political representation, the humiliations of racism. But they also had to cope with specific generational experiences: extraordinarily high youth unemployment, poor and inadequate schooling, daily parental absence and sheer boredom.(22) This mixture of experiences, both in common with the subordinate parent culture and specific to youth, lies at the heart of the tsotsi subcultural response, a response which, in almost every way, defined itself in antagonism to consensus cultural values. In a deliberate attempt to smudge contradictions and diversity, common ideoldgical threads in mainstream Witwatersrand ghetto culture throughout the 1940s and 1950s can be listed as follows: adherence to the law (albeit often reluctantly and with striking exceptions in the cases of pass and beer brewing laws); respect for private property; rejection of violence; acceptance of the work ethic; respect for schooling and education; patriarchal family arrangements; respect for elders; prudent living for the future; adherence to religion whether in the form of christianity, ancestor worship or hybrid faiths. The most common languages spoken were Sotho, Zulu and Xhosa but English and Afrikaans were also spoken fairly widely. Township residents generally wore cheap and sober western-style clothes (Amalaitas and blanket-clad Russians have to be seen as distinctive subcultures in themselves). These common elements of ghetto culture provide a context for an explanation of tsotsi cultural reversal.

The Law, Criminality and Private Property

Open defiance of the law was "natural" to the tsotsi sub-culture. Crime was more than simply a material issue as Tourikis argues(23); it became a central sub-cultural theme during the 1940s and 1950s. "The resorting to crime is a way of attempting to get one's own back against a hostile society in whose functioning one plays no part," commented Johanesburg Native Affairs Department manager W.J.P Carr about tsotsis in a 1957 memorandum.(24) In 1953 Ellen Hellman commented with alarm that the increasing lawlessness of urban youth involved "...a rejection of moral norms, which amounts to a repudiation of the rule of law." In the same memorandum she continued:

> The growing prevalence of an attitude which condones theft from a European and describes it by the vernacular "work" points to the emergence of a tradition of this nature. Certainly the various types of gangs, usually referred to as "tsotsi" gangs, which are becoming conspicuous in the urban african scene, are developing a tradition of criminality and of idealization of gangsters."(25)

Tsotsi crime involved a brazen openness which was not necessarily concerned with maximising criminal efficiency. In one of its many focuses on tsotsi crime, Drum Magazine observed:

> The tsotsi and his fellow-thugs are more familiar to the Johannesburger than the policeman, they parade themselves openly and arrogantly on the streets, dress in their conspicuous 'uniform' and with little fear of the law." (26)

In 1958, Golden City Post described the Co-Operatives gang of Kliptown as a "cluster of teenagers between 15 and 19 [who] have formed their own 'co-operative enterprise' of robbery and assault conducted under the nose of the police."(27) Throughout the 1950s tsotsi gangs were responsible for numerous public sexual assaults and brazen armed robberies in residents' houses.(28)

In some ways, defiance of the law was an area of cultural commonality with the parent ghetto culture, particularly in the defiance of beer brewing and pass laws. When their parents defied the law and the hegemonic status quo, the tsotis would happily cooperate. Tsotsis often assisted in the illegal domestic beer brewing industry, particularly as lookouts. Numerous tsotsis were passless and constantly evading the law.(29) "'Getting by' without a pass is an indication of skill," observed Ellen Hellman. "Going to gaol for beer-brewing is bad luck. Hence going to gaol altogether tends to lose its moral stigma."(30) There also tended to be very little moral censure for tsotsis who robbed from whites. But only criminal subcultures and gangs were prepared to put such activity into practice. Parents also tended

not to question their tsotsi sons on the source of goods and income they would bring into the household. Can Themba, in trying to describe the average struggling township resident, writes:

> ...This is not really you, the criminal, the delinquent tsotsi.
> More like you is the concerned animal who consents to let your children bring home, nights, mysterious bales of stuff about which questions are not asked. Or you, when you accept the purchase of goods at the back-door - at half-price when you know darned well they were not obtained from the legal train.(31)

The attitude of the tsotsi subculture to the law, then, differed from that of its parent culture in two distinct ways. First, of course, most victims of tsotsi criminal activity were ordinary African township residents. In other words tsotsis defied the law where it actually gave protection to the average township resident. Consequently, tsotsis were generally hated and feared. Second, tsotsis displayed an arrogant and courageous open defiance of the law which went well beyond anything in the parent culture. In some areas, breaking the law was natural to the parent culture but lawbreakers generally weighed up risks carefully and never drew attention to themselves. For the tsotsis the Defiance Campaign was no big deal. They had been defying the law for years.(32)

Crime and gangsterism were glorified by tsotsis. Their styles of dressing, speaking and behaviour were heavily influenced by gangster images in movies, books and comics. This will be dealt with in more detail later. What is significant at this point is their admiration for, and idolisation of, gangsterism. Anthony Samson, for instance, describes an outing to a "non-European" cinema during the early 1950s showing the popular Street With No Name. The tsotsis, who represented the major part of the audience, jeered at the FBI and cheered for the arch villain, Stiles. "The scene shifted to the gangsters' hideout. A hush from the audience. Richard Widmark appeared in one corner. A shriek from the house. 'Stiles! Attaboy! Go it, Stiles!'" In one scene, a short gangster kills a night watchman with a knife and a tsotsi in the audience shouted "Kort Boy!" (Kort Boy was a Reef gangster famous for his skills with a knife who ended up serving eighteen years in jail for murder). Finally, "Stiles was shot dead by the FBI. The audience groaned, as the FBI took over."(33) As early as 1940, Lucas Nkosi, a member of the Orlando Boys' Unit, pointed to the idolisation of screen gangsters by local young gang members. He also noted that they idolised real gangsters such as the notorious William Goosen who had escaped from prison. The tsotsis followed Goosen's progress eagerly in the newspapers and pretended to be him in their games.(34) Younger boys hero-worshipped the older and more experienced tsotsis as well as the adult criminals with whom they came into contact.(35) "... Even play groups consisting of youngsters under the age of 12, model themselves on adult criminal gangs ...," observed sociologist C.V. Bothma in 1953.(36) "Criminals and violent types are

treated like Hollywood film stars in the townships," grumbled Captain Rocco deVilliers, an "expert on township gangsterism", in an interview with The Star in 1957.(37)

Tsotsis regarded a jail sentence as a status symbol. Not only was it proof of substantial criminal activity, but it also meant coming into contact with other high-status criminals. P.Q. Vundla, a prominent Advisory Board member, explained this to members of the South African Police Force in 1955. "Many of these boys don't fear to go to gaol, if they have been to gaol, they are deemed to be heroes."(38) Boston Snyman, who eventually became a member of the Msomis in the late 1950s recalls, in his earlier days, being impressed by the words of a big time gangster: "A thug gets his confirmation behind bars, you must go to jail for a genuine offence or a frame up. When you come out from the can you can pronounce yourself a gangster."(39)

The tsotsis had no respect for private property. They considered themselves entitled to anything they could lay their hands on. Can Themba describes the activities of tsotsis on the trains:

> There is little method in the operations of these criminals. Many pickpockets just put their hands into your pocket and take what they want. More likely than not you will not feel anything as you struggle for breath in the crowd. If you do, what matter? They out-brave you and threaten you with violence. The younger pickpockets go down on their knees, cut a hole into your trousers with a razor blade, and then let slide into their hands whatever comes forth.
>
> But the true terror for train users comes from the rough-house thugs who hold people up at the point of a knife or gun, or simply rob and beat up passengers. The fear among passengers is so deep that some people don't even want to admit that they have been robbed. And pay days - Fridays, month-ends, from half-past four in the afternoon - are the devil's birthdays. (40)

There is some evidence that some of the better organised gangs, particularly in Sophiatown, were fairly scrupulous in selecting their victims. They tended, it would seem, to concentrate on white and state targets rather than on residents from their own community.(41) Even for the more scrupulous gangs, however, this became increasingly difficult as security was systematically stepped up in the white areas throughout the 1950s.(42)

Another common tsotsi activity was vandalism. They would often throw stones at houses or other property for no other reason than a minor grudge, or for no reason at all.(43)

Tsotsi gangs were fiercely territorial. Gangs fought each other frequently to retain control of streets or areas.(44) Peter Tourikis explains this in purely material terms: gangs competed to establish criminal monopolies over particular areas.(45)

Although there is some truth in this formulation, it fails to accommodate the subcultural dimension of the issue. Phil Cohen's assertion that "territoriality appears as a magical way of expressing ownership" is more helpful in this respect.(46) African urban youths, experiencing the denial of conventional legal ownership, carved out their exclusive territories according to their own rights of ownership. This was a central concern for tsotsi gangs, from the big time Americans who sought to be "Kings of Sophiatown" down to the insignificant street-corner gangs who fought for "ownership" of their streets as though their lives depended on it.(47) It was as much an issue of prestige and dignity as one of material need. So ownership was important to them, but it was an ownership based on physical strength and cunning rather than on legal codes.

Violence

Violence was very much a way of life for the tsotsis. Most of the smaller, poorer street-corner gangs would confine themselves to inter-gang fist-fights or knife fights and the occasional mugging.(48) But violence could become much more serious than this, particularly amongst the bigger, better equipped gangs. Murders, assaults and rapes carried out by youths were daily occurrences. This is reflected in Johannesburg Juvenile Court statistics. The following table represents cases of murder, assault and rape which appeared before the Juvenile Court between 1949 and 1960.

	Murder	Attempted murder	Assault	Rape and attempted rape
1949	20	-	135	33
1950	34	-	125	57
1951	26	4	126	43
1952	18	5	53	24
1953	25	7	225	98
1954	39	6	264	106
1955	26	13	342	118
1956	8	22	379	32
1957	36	5	323	57
1958	41	10	312	99
1959	40	12	381	71
1960	23	5	228	62

Between 1936 and 1939, before the tsotsi gangs started to predominate, a total of 6 murder, 253 assault and 11 rape cases appeared before the Juvenile Court.(49) Although these figures are not entirely reliable, they do indicate a substantial escalation in youth violence during the late 1940s and 1950s.

During the 1950s the bigger gangs were extremely well armed. The Americans, Berliners and Vultures of Sophiatown were involved in regular gun battles.(50) The Torch Gang, which operated generally in Orlando, roved around "armed with revolvers, crow-bars, knives and clubs".(51) The Spoilers of Alexandra apparently owned an entire warehouse in which they kept their ammunition.(52) In the early 1950s, revolvers could be bought on

the black market for 5 Pounds and quality knives for 3s 6d.(53)

Gang warfare was probably the most common form of violent activity for the tsotsis. Wars regularly broke out over territorial competition, rivalry for women, personal insults, gambling debts. In order to assert their authority or carry out revenge, bigger gangs would often carry out horrific ritual violence. Such as a case in which an 18 year old Orlando youth who was kidnapped by a band of about 30 youths and hacked to death at his home in front of his grandmother.(54) Or another case in which a young man was hacked to death by the Mashalashala Gang of Benoni because he strayed into their territory wearing a red beret and was mistakenly identified as a member of a rival gang.(55) The most startling example of all occurred in the Johannesburg Fort in 1958. After a history of bitter and brutal rivalry for the control of Alexandra, dozens of members of the Spoilers and Msomis were arrested in a huge police swoop. The Spoilers were all but destroyed by the Msomis prior to the crackdown and were eager for revenge. Four awaiting-trial Msomis were placed in a cell full of Spoilers. The four were subjected to a ritualised trial and then kicked to death. The next morning their mutilated and dismembered corpses were found scattered over the floor of the cell.(56)

Although often broadly sympathetic to the demands of African resistance politics, tsotsis, who had a history of violent confrontation with the police, were impatient with the peaceful methods and the intellectualism of the ANC. Peaceful protests and delegations seemed senseless to the tsotsis. Throughout the 1950s tsotsis involved themselves sporadically and spontaneously in ANC campaigns. But they fell under no discipline and used the violent methods with which they were familiar: beating up stayaway breakers, waylaying and assaulting school children during Bantu Education boycotts, violently engaging police who tried to break up mass meetings or raid for beer, attacking work crews and bulldozers during the Sophiatown removals.(57) There is some evidence, however, that tsotsis, and urbanised youths more generally, became more interested in politics, and more coherently politicised, during the late 1950s and early 1960s.(58)

Violent achievements and physical strength were clearly symbols of status within the tsotsi subculture. Male children in the townships grew up with tremendous respect for the knifemen. Special prestige was accorded to killers. A tsotsi interviewed in Drum talks about his attitudes as a ten year old during the late 1940s. "Our heroes were the boys who could steal and stab. The more stabbings they did, the bigger they were. The 'biggest shot' of all was the one who had killed somebody - either with a knife or a gun."(59) Moses Dlamini, in his autobiography, recalls how his 16 year old cousin, Abel, became a hero of "the underworld" after he had personally killed eleven people during gang warfare in Jabavu in 1955.(60) Gang leaders were chosen for their physical prowess and strength and gangs often only admitted a member if he could point to some impressive personal act of

strength or violence.(61)

The work ethic

A Kliptown tsotsi commented in 1951: "I am a tsotsi, it is true. I don't care to work. Working at a regular job does not pay. I can make more money by stealing - at least most of my friends do. That is why they won't work."(62) Tsotsis rejected the idea of steady employment. In fact they were regularly referred to as "won't-works" by exasperated government personnel concerned about high youth unemployment. The Centlivres report of 1958 notes:

> The normal process in a modern society is for the young people to remain at school at least until the legally enjoined school-leaving age, usually 16 years, and then to take up employment. This is not the normal process amongst Africans. There is no compulsory schooling ...
>
> The natural result of these conditions is the existence in the township of a class of native youths who are idle, uneducated, undisciplined, unused to work and disinclined to enter regular employment, and it is, of course, from such a class that the tsotsi gangs are likely to draw their recruits.(63)

The Viljoen report of 1951 and the M.C. Botha report of 1962 both went one step further, arguing that the tsotsi culture actually exacerbated the youth unemployment problem. In analysing the youth unemployment problem of the early 1960s M.C. Botha distinguished between the "bona fide" unemployed and the "ledige", youths who voluntarily avoided finding employment. Not only did the gangs encourage a negative attitude towards work, but they actually provided an alternative support network and attracted youths away from "normal" employment. Youth unemployment and tsotsi culture were seen as mutually reinforcing one another.(64) The state, as well as social welfare institutions concerned with juvenile unemployment and juvenile delinquency, saw it as essential to correct this "unnatural" attitude to work. Diepkloof Reformatory, which was "mainly for Johannesburg's tsotsis", was one corrective institution involved in this task. Its principal in 1956, W.I. Kieser, made this clear: "All these boys are undisciplined and do not believe in labour. We teach them trades, hygiene and first aid, and train them back to normality."(65)

Tsotsis saw regular wage labour as undignified, unprofitable and a denial of freedom. As one tsotsi explained to Dr Ray Phillips of the Native Youth Board: "Why should I accept a job from the Native Youth Board at 25-30 shillings a week when I made 100 Pounds last month by gambling?"(66) In sheer material terms, crime offered tsotsis a higher standard of living and a more exciting lifestyle than wage employment. As Drum observed: "A Tsotsi may earn as much as 5 Pounds a day; how else could he earn such big money? With that he can look after his girlfriends, keep his parents and gamble away the rest." When asked why he became a tsotsi, Jeremiah Majola of Alexandra explained, "I wanted to have

a lot of money to have a good time and give my girls a good time. Sometimes I made 50 Pounds in one day with the gun."(67)

Education was seen in a similar light to steady employment. Only a trickle of African schoolchildren stayed in school beyond primary school. Throughout the 1950s an annual average of about seven thousand African children attended high school on the Witwatersrand. There was also an extremely high truancy rate amongst those who did register at township schools. Education was seen as boring and restrictive. It also very rarely improved chances of employment.(68) Although the majority of tsotsis were semi-literate through sub-grade school attendance or extensive comic book reading, educational achievement held no status at all within the tsotsi subculture.(69) In fact, speaking English could often hamper social acceptance as it was seen as a sign of showing off education. Tsotsis felt that "teachers have the knowledge, but they have the sense."(70) They emphasized being streetwise rather than educated. A youth became a "clever" through knowledge and experience of the street rather than through schooling. Tsotsis were scornful of those who took schooling seriously and enjoyed waylaying and harassing schoolgoers.(71)

Linked to their rejection of employment and education was a pervasive hedonism. Tsotsis did not believe in living for the future; they searched for immediate excitement and danger, immediate gratification. They rejected all "responsible" and "respectable" notions of saving for, and investing in, the future. They aspired to extravagant lifestyles: if they got hold of money, they would spend it - on gambling, alcohol, clothing, women. Spending their days working at jobs or at school seemed senseless when there was an exciting, dangerous life out in the streets.

Being unemployed and out of school was an important symbol of subcultural identification. It was conceivable to hold down a job or go to school and, after hours, adhere to tsotsi style but it was unusual to find an employed or schoolgoing youth who was also a fully-fledged gang member.(72) Apart from the physical absence from gang activity during the day that this entailed, it was difficult to hold down a steady job and retain respect within a tsotsi gang.

Family and generational hierarchy

During the 1940s and 1950s township parents found it extremely difficult to discipline their teenage sons. Whereas girls were usually drawn fairly effectively into household activities, boys tended to be uncontrollable. Working parents were absent during the day, while schools and the labour market absorbed a minority of township teenagers. Most male youths were left with few structures, controls and restraints during the day.(73) During the nights gang life provided a powerful counter-attraction to family life. Although parents often struggled to "normalise" the situation, male youths were largely absent from the nuclear family. For a large portion of them gang life became their most

important collective experience.

Throughout the 1950s, Advisory Board members identified tsotsi crime and juvenile delinquency as a crucial township issue. Apart from youth unemployment, they saw a general breakdown in parental authority and control as probably the most important contributing factor.(74) The Riots Commission of 1958 also observed a " ... noticeable weakening of filial discipline resulting in many cases in a complete breakdown of parental authority."(75)

Tsotsis had no particular respect for adults. Adult township residents were the chief victims of tsotsi criminal activity. This was such a common pattern, in fact, that the "crime problem" in the townships almost took on the characteristics of a generational war, particularly when residents organised civil guard movements to protect themselves from tsotsi pillaging. A 1952 extract from Drum highlights this: "The story is told of a voluntary guard patrolling in Alexandra who was attacked by tsotsis, and had to shoot one of them in defence, only to find that it was his own son. This is a tragic illustration of the rift that gang war has caused in the locations."(76) Tsotsis seemed unperturbed by the age of their victims. Older married women were often sexually assaulted by tsotsis and prominent Advisory Board members were attacked. In one particularly stark example in 1955 a 12 year old boy stabbed a 40 year old man to death after a gambling dispute. The boy was involved with a gang in Alexandra called the "Peacemakers".(77)

The tsotsi subculture, then, subverted the natural order of parental and adult authority. This may perhaps create too stark a picture of generational relations in the townships. Male youths were involved in the tsotsi subculture to varying degrees, almost impossible to quantify. Many retained some respect for, and some commitment to, their kinship network. Many shuttled, through time and space, between the two opposite poles of collective security: the family and the gang. But the hardened tsotsi accepted no hierarchies other than those of internal gang leadership. Nor did he accept any responsibility for, or answerability to, his immediate kin; the gang became his real family.

Style and ritual

Movies, comics, magazines and cheap novels were the key sources of tsotsi imagery and style. For permanently urbanised African youths there was an almost complete absence of alternative imagery. Rural and "traditional" imagery had very little impact on them. Most had lived in the cities all their lives and had lost contact with a rural life-style. Those elements of rural imagery and ritual which did seep through to them via their parents or grandparents were generally rejected in their struggle to assert an urban identity. Traditionalism was seen as naive, old-fashioned and inappropriate to modern urban street life. This set the tsotsis apart starkly from groups such as the Amalaitas who retained strong rural links and drew heavily on traditional imagery and ritual such as circumcision. Because of racial

discrimination and economic deprivation township youths were denied access to fashionable white middle class style and culture. As Anthony Samson puts it: "Gangster films, street-corner gambling, drinking to get drunk, were open to all. Theatres, decent houses, libraries, travel abroad, were for Europeans only."(78) And so they had to draw on imagery which was familiar, affordable, accessible, appropriately urban and exciting. It is not surprising, then, that movies, in the absence of alternatives, became such a powerful source of imagery for township youths during the 1940s and 1950s.

By the late 1930s movies were easily accessible to township youths. The Institute of Race Relations began, even at this stage, to be concerned about the influence of movies on youths, singling out popular shows of the time such as Gay Divorcee, Murder in Trinidad, Road House and Charlie Chan in Paris.(79) In 1940 Lucas Nkosi of the Orlando Boys' Unit, in a survey of Orlando youth gangs, expressed similar concern. Gang members, he observed, would go to movies whenever they had money. Afterwards they would act out the stories for the other members who were unable to afford the entrance fees.(80) Municipal authorities also recognised the problem but, until the mid 1950s, argued that, as long as movies with specifically immoral messages were banned, the popularity of movies amongst township youths need not be discouraged. They preferred to have the youths in cinemas than out in the streets. In 1954 an irate doctor wrote a letter to The Star complaining, "We are helping to feed the fires of crime by our indifference to what is a canker in our society - the showing of crime films to the less educated class of our population." But W.J.P. Carr, the manager of Johannesburg's Non-European Affairs Department, in replying to the letter writer, was not worried. The upholders of law and morality always came out on top in these movies, he felt, and the good, law-abiding people were always the heroes. He expressed confidence that the movies shown in the townships could only have a good influence.(81) Carr's department even employed mobile film units in the West Rand townships, both to help keep youths off the streets and to encourage the right kind of morally sound movies. By 1954 there were 9 cinemas dotted around the townships as well as 4 Non-European cinemas in Johannesburg and 2 in Fordsburg. In addition to this, 3 mobile NEAD film units were in operation which attracted about 30 000 African viewers per week.(82) What Carr and his department failed to understand, of course, was that African youths tended to identify with the baddies rather than the goodies. Even if the baddies lost out in the end, it was the baddies who provided the source of imagery and style. While watching Street with No Name with Can Themba in Sophiatown during the early 1950s, Anthony Samson recalls:

> Stiles wore a long overcoat, sniffed a Benzedrine inhaler and occasionally bit an apple. Beside him slouched his henchman, wearing a belted raincoat with slits at the back.
>
> "When this film first came out," Can whispered, "the sales of Benzedrine rocketed. Everybody munched

apples. All the tsotsis wore those raincoats.(83)

Movies were always influential in informing style in the dominant South African culture as well, but, by modelling themselves on the thugs and gangsters rather than on the goodies and cops, tsotsis inverted conventional symbolism and morality. Their style was clearly symbolic and its message to the hegemonic culture was unambiguous: we reject the law, crime does pay, your enemies are our heroes, we will not live by your rules and norms.

Apart from movies, magazines, comics and cheap books provided a rich source of imagery for the largely semi-literate tsotsis. Zonk and Drum, magazines which targeted a young township audience, ran regular well-illustrated features on American fashion and local music, sport and gang activity. The magazines were widely available and widely read by young people in the townships.(84) Marvell Comics were particularly popular amongst the younger tsotsis, who used to compete over their comic collections. Once they became a bit older, they graduated to paperback thrillers in the James Hadley Chase mould.(85) Books about American gangsters were always popular. One book in particular seemed to catch the imagination of many tsotsis in the 1950s - Willard Motley's Knock on Any Door.(86) An ex-tsotsi recalled that he used to carry a book around with him on the mafia which became his "textbook" for all his "big crimes".(87)

Tsotsi dressing style was distinctive and it was a central element of tsotsi identification. Tsotsis were extremely self-conscious about their clothes. In 1945 a Bantu World reader referred to tsotsis sarcastically as "a group of well dressed gentlemen"(88); another reader called them "gentlemen of leisure".(89) Hugh Masekela, recalling his days as a stylish township youth in the 1950s, commented: "In those days, a man was known and recognised by the label that was attached to his clothes. We used to spend hours cleaning our shoes, and then go to the cinema very early, just to show off."(90) Before attempting to describe tsotsi clothing style, two important observations need to be made at the outset. First, style was not static. Within the broader parameters of tsotsi style details shifted: certain elements of style went through waves of fashionability, usually brought about by a particularly popular movie. For example, tsotsis liked to chew on something to round off stylistic effect but whether it was apples or toothpicks or chewing gum they chewed was influenced by the particular fad of the day.(91) Second, although tsotsis aspired to high style, most were unable to afford it. For the average tsotsi a stylish item of clothing, whether it was a pair of trousers, a hat, a jacket, a smart pair of imported shoes, was a treasured possession which was worn frequently. Tsotsis often managed to pull off an acceptably stylish image with very little; only the big and successful gangsters could afford polish and variety.

There is general agreement amongst my informants that the key to subcultural style lay in imitating American fashion. "Anything American was something to imitate"(92); " ... everything they did

had to be American".(93) The Americans gang of Sophiatown perfected American style and they consequently became a role model for other tsotsis. The most important mendium for communicating fashion was, of course, the cinema. Gangster, cowboy and black American jazz movies were the most important fashion influences.(94)

The central element of clothing style was the tsotsi trousers. The bottoms were extremely narrow, resting either at the ankles or around the shoes. One variation was called "the bottom" which had a normal width most of the way down and tapered sharply to a very narrow bottom.(95) Tsotsis "used to clip the bottoms to make the bottoms narrow".(96) According to ex-tsotsi, Henry Miles, "some people wore their pants so narrow you had to use vaseline on your legs to pull it down".(97) Stan Motjuwadi recalls, however, that the bottoms gradually widened during the late 1950s in accordance with American fashions; "they became less and less zooty" by the end of the decade.(98) If a township male adolescent wanted to identify with the tsotsi subculture he would be under great pressure to at least get hold of a pair of tsotsi trousers. Norris Nkosi tells the story of how, as a young teenager in 1949, he pleaded with his mother to buy him a pair of tsotsis. She refused, arguing that he was too young to wear long pants, let alone identify himself with tsotsi youths. In desperation, he used to steal his brother's pair which he would wear after school. Equipped with his tsotsis, he would join his friends selling things and picking pockets on the trains.(99) Whereas the trousers established identity, there were a cluster of style variations which added to the trousers. The most common of these modelled itself on the American gang henchman. According to Drum, the average tsotsi wore "tight-fitting zoot trousers, wide-brimmed hats, loud shirts and ties."(100) In another description of a tsotsi, "Spike was wearing the tsotsi rig, with very narrow 'sixteen-bottom' trousers, a long floppy coat, a bright scarf tucked into it and a slouch hat."(101) Another variation was the cowboy look: black zoot trousers, black shirt, cowboy hat.(102)

Probably the next most important item on the agenda was the hat. In hatware the style was less precise but generally a broad brimmed hat such as a Stetson or a peak cap were preferred. Tsotsis liked to wear hats low over their eyes. Shoe styles were also diverse. The more stylish gangsters bought expensive imported shoes, usually with pointed toes. For the small-fry tsotsis, simple takkies were popular, worn with turned-up tongues.(103)

Style was also reflected in the choice of personal and gang names. Nicknames were powerfully influenced by the movies so that names such as "Stiles" and "Zorro" were popular. If a boy's real name was Humphrey, he would almost inevitably be called "Bogart", James would be called "Jesse James" and John would be called "Dillinger".(104) Gang names seemed to be selected in order to be as offensive as possible to the dominant culture. Names often reflected an identification with society's "natural" enemies.

Names such as "Gestapo", "Berliners" and "Germans" went beyond the pale in identifying with the Nazis; the "Mau Mau" gang sprouted up at the height of white hysteria about the violent Kenyan rebellion; the "Apaches" made it clear who they backed in the tussle between cowboys and Indians; the "Satan Boys" and "Gas Devils" made it clear where they stood in the tussle between "good" and "evil". The "Benzine Boys", famed for setting fire to their victims after dousing them in benzine, and the "Slagpaal" gang clearly used names with provocative connotations of brutal violence. The "Dead End Kids" boasted their delinquency and lack of upward social mobility.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the tsotsi subculture was its own language, tsotsitaal. The language was an urban hybrid based largely on Afrikaans but with large Xhosa/Zulu and English inputs. Tsotsitaal was made up of roughly 36% Afrikaans, 13% vernacular, 9% English and 42% of ambiguous or unknown origin. The meanings of many of the words were shifted from those of the original language and the syntax was incosistent, generally oscillating between Afrikaans and Xhosa/Zulu syntax.(105) The extensive use of Afrikaans in tsotsitaal reflected the subcultural tendency towards incorporating dominant cultural symbols and then subverting or inflecting them. Tsotsitaal was more than simply a medium for communication; it was an important element of cultural style. It was the "lingua-franca" of township youths. The language reinforced tsotsi identity. South African linguist C. T. Msimang comments:

> There is no doubt ... that tsotsitaal is used as a register. It is abandoned where the tsotsi wants to maintain the distance between himself and members of the out-group; and he will use it to maintain identity and solidarity with members of the in-group. Distance is maintained in order to snub members of the out-group as well as to endorse his attitude towards them.(106)

Different levels of proficiency in the language indicated different levels of urban and subcultural familiarity. A well established tsotsi had to be able to do more than "get by" in tsotsitaal. Subcultural status was attached to speaking the language with flair and dexterity, to familiarity with the latest linguistic nuances and innovations.(107) Tsotsis from Sophiatown and Alexandra apparently looked down upon tsotsis from Orlando because the latter spoke a tsotsitaal which was considered old-fashioned. The Orlando tsotsitaal had a far greater Zulu content. The Sophiatown tsotsis called the Orlando tsotsis "kalkoene" ("turkeys") because they "talked like kalkoene". Nevertheless, the Sophiatown and Orlando versions of the language were mutually intelligible, if only with difficulty.(108) So tsotsis would use tsotsitaal to compete with each other for subcultural status but, at the same time, the language delineated the boundary between the in-group and the out-group.

The language, then, was used by the tsotsis to insulate and

protect themselves in the face of a dominant social order which demanded proficiency in English or Afrikaans to achieve upward social mobility. Mastery of the dominant language is a powerful cultural weapon. Tsotsitaal was, in a sense, another "magical" subcultural response to cultural subordination: the tsotsis developed their own language over which only they achieved mastery.

Dagga-smoking, drinking alcohol in abundance and gambling, although by no means unique to the tsotsis, were further important anti-social rituals which helped to define the subculture. They were rituals which flew in the face of clean-living, cautious, adult middle-class respectability. Youths who could not demonstrate a familiarity with these rituals were considered "square".(109)

Conclusion

In 1962 Absolom Vilakazi observed the tremendous popularity of tsotsi style amongst urban African youth. He explained this phenomenon in the following way:

> The tsotsis have thrived and become attractive to some young people because, quite frankly, they have been culturally exciting! They have a language of their own which is very earthy, racy and something of a secret language, and therefore fascinating to the young. They are tough; they have demonstrated to everybody that "crime does pay"... They are defiant of traditional values and spurn middle-class Christian morality and the whole culture of what they refer to, in Durban, as Ositshuzana, ie: the "Excuse me" people; or those who try to live according to refined social standards.. Besides, the tsotsis have a touch of modernity about them and their methods. While they are quick with a knife, they also can draw and use a gun, and have become quite sophisticated in their methods of operation. In all these things they strike a responsive chord in the young people.(110)

Although "apolitical" and "anti-social", the tsotsi youth subculture on the Witwatersrand represented a challenge to cultural consensus in urban South Africa during the 1940s and 1950s. Despite sharing a common baseline of experiences with the broader parent ghetto culture, the response of permanently urbanised African male youths to political, economic and cultural subordination was distinctive. The tsotsi subculture, through its value system, style and ritual, agressively denied hegemonic consensus. Tsotsi values, such as brazen rejection of the law and glorification of violence, criminality and hedonism, were defined in direct antagonism to the consensus value system. Tsotsi style and ritual often drew on imagery familiar to the consensus culture but inflected and subverted the symbolic structure of those images.

NOTES

(1) See Tourikis, P, "The Political Economy of Alexandra Township: 1905 - 1958", unpublished Honours dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1981 for another attempt to explain tsotsis in broader class terms. He argues that the tsotsis of Alexandra were part of a parasitic lumpenproletariat which survived through pillaging both the petty bourgeoisie and the working class. His argument is economistic and class reductionist. He fails to focus on the youth specific nature of the subculture, nor does he look at cultural resistance or style.
(2) John Clarke, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson and Brian Roberts, "Subcultures, Cultures and Class" in Hall, S. and Jefferson, T. (eds), Resistence Through Rituals: Youth subcultures in post-war Britain, Hutchinson of London 1976, pp9-74.
(3) Cohen, P., "Subcultural conflict and working class community" in Hall,S. , Hobson,D., Lowe,A. and Willis,P. (eds), Culture, Media, Language, Hutchinson 1980; Brake, M., The Sociology of Youth Culture and Youth Subculture, Routledge & Kegan Paul 1980; Humphries, S., Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working Class Childhood and Youth 1889 - 1939, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981; Hebdige,D., Subculture: The meaning of style, Methuen 1984
(4) Williams, R., Marxism and Literature, Oxford University Press 1978, p112.
(5) See Anderson, P., "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci", New Left Review, 100, 1976, pp 43-44.
(6) Cohen, P., "Subcultural conflict and working class community", p82
(7) See Cohen, A.K., Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1956, pp26-36. Cohen's book was pathbreaking in its time. Although he never places subculture in the context of class struggle, he shows a tremendous sensitivity to working class deprivation and a healthy disrespect for the American Dream. He argues that working class youth tend to develop alternative, and generally "negativistic", value and status structures as a response to their exclusion from social privilege.
(8) Dick Hebdige, Subculture: The meaning of style, p18.
(9) Clarke et al, "Subcultures, Cultures and Class", p55. See also Hebdige, Subculture, p85.
(10) Boggs,C., Gramsci's Marxism, Pluto Press 1976, p65.
Tsotsi gangs, particularly the famous Sophiatown ones, have often been romanticised and characterised as "social bandits". Hobsbawm's formulation, however, is entirely inappropriate to the tsotsi subculture. Apart from the fact that Hobsbawm's "social bandits" were almost exclusively rural, they were self-consciously champions of the downtrodden. They self-consciusly took from the rich to give to the poor; they were popular amongst the rural masses and protected the poor and powerless from the victimisation of the authorities. Tsotsi resistance was far more subtle: tsotsis tended to steal from the rich and poor alike to give to themselves; township residents generally feared and despised them. They were apolitical and they never posed a coherent threat to state power. Nevertheless, their values, style and ritual represented a significant challenge to cultural

hegemony. See Hobsbawm, E, Bandits, Delacorte Press 1969.
(11) Mattera's father was, for instance, a property owner. Kort Boy, the famous American gangster, was ambiguously from a petty bourgeois background; his father was a blacksmith and his mother was a shebeen owner. Nevertheless, in a classic case of township class ambiguity, his family of seven occupied a one bedroomed house! Interview, "Kort Boy" (George Mbalweni) in P. Stein and R. Jacobson (eds), Sophiatown Speaks, Junction Avenue Press, 1986. Peggy Bellair's mother was also a fairly successful shebeen owner who managed to put Peggy through school.
(12) Mattera 5/6/88 and 10/7/88 is fond of the term "ghetto" to describe Sophiatown. Two other informants, Babes Mbawu and Ben Ngwenya, also used the term. "The ghetto was like a school," observed Ngwenya who was born in Sophiatown in 1938. Interview, Babes Mbawu and Ben Ngwenya, Johannesburg 20/4/89 and 27/4/89.
(13) See for example Phil Bonner, "The Transvaal Native Congress 1917-1920" in Marks, S. and Rathbone, R. (eds), Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa: African class formation, culture and consciousness 1870-1930, Longman, 1982 and David Goodhew, "'No Easy Walk to Freedom': Political Organisation in the western Areas of Johannesburg between the Two Worl Wars", paper presented to the African Studies Institute Seminar, University of the Witwatersrand, 29 May 1989, pp4-5.
(14) Don Mattera, interview with Tom Lodge, 1979; Mattera 10/7/88; Don Mattera, Memory is the Weapon, Ravan, 1989.
(15) Magubane 7/9/88; Mdlalose 20/4/89; Nhlapho 9/5/89; Moloi 26/3/88; interview, Queeneth Ndaba, Johannesburg 15/9/88.
(16) Moloi 26/3/88.
(17) Bothma MA thesis, p37.; Miles 4/4/89 and 11/4/89.
(18) Cornelius Chiloane, interviewed by Edwin Ritchken, Soweto 16/8/89 and 5/1/90. Chiloane was involved in a small Sophiatown gang in the 1950s whose membership consisted of youths who originated from one particular district of Lebowa.
(19) Moloi 26/3/88; Magubane 7/9/88; see also the discussion on age hierarchy in Bothma, MA thesis, pp30-33.
(20) Magubane 7/9/88; Peggy Bellair 2/6/89; Motjuwadi 22/9/88; Miles 11/4/89; Manana 21/9/88.
See the feature on Alexandra ganhs in GCP 26 July 1959, pp12-15. One extract is of particular pertinence here: "Older men, realising ways in which they could exploit the younger ones, muscled in on this racket ..."
(21) See for example: Phil Bonner, "Family,Crime and Political Consciousness on the East Rand 1939-1955", JSAS, Volume 15, No 1, 1988; Phil Bonner, "'Desirable or Undesirable Sotho Women?' Liquor, prostitution and the migration of Sotho women to the Rand, 1920-1945", paper presented to the African Studies Institute seminar, Johannesburg, 9 May 1988; la Hausse,P, "'Mayihlome!'; Towards an understanding of Amalaita gangs in Durban, c1900-1930", paper presented to the African Studies Institute seminar, 27 April 1987; Matthew Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpville", paper presented to the African Studie Institute seminar, University of the Witwatersrand, September 1986; Eddie Koch, "Doornfontein and its African Working Class 1914-1935, a study of popular culture in Johannesburg", MA thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1983; Jeremy Seekings, "Why was Soweto

NOTES

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(5) See Anderson, P., "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci", New Left Review, 100, 1976, pp 43-44.
(6) Cohen, P., "Subcultural conflict and working class community", p82
(7) See Cohen, A.K., Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1956, pp26-36. Cohen's book was pathbreaking in its time. Although he never places subculture in the context of class struggle, he shows a tremendous sensitivity to working class deprivation and a healthy disrespect for the American Dream. He argues that working class youth tend to develop alternative, and generally "negativistic", value and status structures as a response to their exclusion from social privilege.
(8) Dick Hebdige, Subculture: The meaning of style, p18.
(9) Clarke et al, "Subcultures, Cultures and Class", p55. See also Hebdige, Subculture, p85.
(10) Boggs,C., Gramsci's Marxism, Pluto Press 1976, p65.
Tsotsi gangs, particularly the famous Sophiatown ones, have often been romanticised and characterised as "social bandits". Hobsbawm's formulation, however, is entirely inappropriate to the tsotsi subculture. Apart from the fact that Hobsbawm's "social bandits" were almost exclusively rural, they were self-consciously champions of the downtrodden. They self-consciusly took from the rich to give to the poor; they were popular amongst the rural masses and protected the poor and powerless from the victimisation of the authorities. Tsotsi resistance was far more subtle: tsotsis tended to steal from the rich and poor alike to give to themselves; township residents generally feared and despised them. They were apolitical and they never posed a coherent threat to state power. Nevertheless, their values, style and ritual represented a significant challenge to cultural

hegemony. See Hobsbawm, E, Bandits, Delacorte Press 1969.
(11) Mattera's father was, for instance, a property owner. Kort Boy, the famous American gangster, was ambiguously from a petty bourgeois background; his father was a blacksmith and his mother was a shebeen owner. Nevertheless, in a classic case of township class ambiguity, his family of seven occupied a one bedroomed house! Interview, "Kort Boy" (George Mbalweni) in P. Stein and R. Jacobson (eds), Sophiatown Speaks, Junction Avenue Press, 1986. Peggy Bellair's mother was also a fairly successful shebeen owner who managed to put Peggy through school.
(12) Mattera 5/6/88 and 10/7/88 is fond of the term "ghetto" to describe Sophiatown. Two other informants, Babes Mbawu and Ben Ngwenya, also used the term. "The ghetto was like a school," observed Ngwenya who was born in Sophiatown in 1938. Interview, Babes Mbawu and Ben Ngwenya, Johannesburg 20/4/89 and 27/4/89.
(13) See for example Phil Bonner, "The Transvaal Native Congress 1917-1920" in Marks, S. and Rathbone, R. (eds), Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa: African class formation, culture and consciousness 1870-1930, Longman, 1982 and David Goodhew, "'No Easy Walk to Freedom': Political Organisation in the western Areas of Johannesburg between the Two Worl Wars", paper presented to the African Studies Institute Seminar, University of the Witwatersrand, 29 May 1989, pp4-5.
(14) Don Mattera, interview with Tom Lodge, 1979; Mattera 10/7/88; Don Mattera, Memory is the Weapon, Ravan, 1989.
(15) Magubane 7/9/88; Mdlalose 20/4/89; Nhlapho 9/5/89; Moloi 26/3/88; interview, Queeneth Ndaba, Johannesburg 15/9/88.
(16) Moloi 26/3/88.
(17) Bothma MA thesis, p37.; Miles 4/4/89 and 11/4/89.
(18) Cornelius Chiloane, interviewed by Edwin Ritchken, Soweto 16/8/89 and 5/1/90. Chiloane was involved in a small Sophiatown gang in the 1950s whose membership consisted of youths who originated from one particular district of Lebowa.
(19) Moloi 26/3/88; Magubane 7/9/88; see also the discussion on age hierarchy in Bothma, MA thesis, pp30-33.
(20) Magubane 7/9/88; Peggy Bellair 2/6/89; Motjuwadi 22/9/88; Miles 11/4/89; Manana 21/9/88.
See the feature on Alexandra gangs in GCP 26 July 1959, pp12-15. One extract is of particular pertinence here: "Older men, realising ways in which they could exploit the younger ones, muscled in on this racket ..."
(21) See for example: Phil Bonner, "Family,Crime and Political Consciousness on the East Rand 1939-1955", JSAS, Volume 15, No 1, 1988; Phil Bonner, "'Desirable or Undesirable Sotho Women?' Liquor, prostitution and the migration of Sotho women to the Rand, 1920-1945", paper presented to the African Studies Institute seminar, Johannesburg, 9 May 1988; la Hausse,P, "'Mayihlome!'; Towards an understanding of Amalaita gangs in Durban, c1900-1930", paper presented to the African Studies Institute seminar, 27 April 1987; Matthew Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpville", paper presented to the African Studie Institute seminar, University of the Witwatersrand, September 1986; Eddie Koch, "Doornfontein and its African Working Class 1914-1935, a study of popular culture in Johannesburg", MA thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1983; Jeremy Seekings, "Why was Soweto

Different? Urban development, township politics and the political economy of Soweto, 1977-1984", paper presented to the African Studies Institute seminar, 2 May 1988; Mike Sarakinsky, Alexandra: From "freehold" to "model" township, DSG 1984, Dissertation series No 5; Peter Tourikis, "The Political Economy of Alexandra Township", unpublished Honours dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1981.

(22) These issues are discussed in depth in Chapter One of my MA thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, August 1990.

(23) Tourikis, "The Political Economy of Alexandra Township", pp79-83.

(24) Intermediary Archives Depot, Johannesburg, West Rand Administration Board archive (IAD WRAB), file 351/1, "Some Aspects of Urbanized Native Life in the Larger Cities", memorandum, WJP Carr, 1 November 1957.

(25) Church of the Province Library, University of the Witwatersrand (CPL), Ellen Hellman Papers (EHP), file 51, "The Sociological Background to Urban African Juvenile Delinquency", 16 August 1953, p1 and p8.

(26) Drum, October 1951.

(27) Golden City Post (GCP), 6 July 1958.
Can Themba's short stories and journalism provide a great deal of detail on tsotsi criminal brazenness. See Patel,E, (ed), The World of Can Themba, Ravan Press 1985.

(28) GCP 27 March 1955; GCP 30 December 1962; Drum May 1953.

(29) PQ Vundla, a prominent Advisory Board member in the 1950s, actually identified influx control as a major cause of tsotsiism. IAD WRAB, 351/1, minutes of conference between the Witwatersrand Deputy Commissioner of the SAP, Area Officers, Members of the Non-European Affairs Committee and Advisory Board members, 14 December 1955. See IAD WRAB, 351/1, extract of minutes from Jabavu Advisory Board meeting, 20 February 1956. See also Dingake, M., My Fight Against Apartheid, Kliptown Books 1987, pp29-30.

(30) CPSA 1419 EHP, File 51, memorandum: "Bantu Youth in Our Cities", 26 April 1951, p15.

(31) Patel,E. (ed), The World of Can Themba, p124. Complaints about parental compliance are a prominent theme in minutes from Advisory Board meetings, IAD WRAB, 351/1. This issue also came up in interviews with Godfrey Moloi 26/3/88 and Don Mattera 5/6/88. See also Dlamini,M Robben Island: Hell Hole, Spokesman 1984, pp89-99.

(32) Mattera 5/6/88. Many tsotsis, it seems, actually participated in the campaign, particularly in Sophiatown. This is corroborated in an interview with Ntatho Motlana, Johannesburg, 2 October 1986.

(33) Samson,A, Drum, Collins 1956, pp101-102.

(34) IAD WRAB, 351/3, "The Nsibanyoni Gang", memorandum written by Lucas Nkosi, received by NEAD in April 1940.

(35) Moloi 26/3/88; Nkosi 25/9/88; Miles 11/4/89.

(36) CPL, EHP, file 51, CV Botha(sic), "How Tsotsis are Made", Industrial Review of Africa, February 1953, quoted in "The Sociological Background to Urban African Juvenile Delinquency", memorandum by Ellen Hellman, 16 August 1953.

(37) The Star, 21 January 1957.

(38) IAD WRAB, 351/1, Extract from the minutes of a conference between the Witwatersrand Deputy Commissioner of SAP, Area Officers, Members of the Non-Europeaan Affairs Committee and Advisory Board members, 14 December 1955.

(39)GCP, 13 November 1960.

(40) Patel,E (ed), The World of Can Themba, "Terror in the Trains", p112.

(41) Motlana 2/10/86; Mattera 5/6/88; Motjuwadi 22/9/88; Magubane 7/9/88.

(42) Mattera 5/6/88.

(43) See, for example, IAD WRAB, 351/3, letter from Superintendant, Orlando West No 2 (AT Johnson) to Senior Superintendant, Orlando, 1 July 1957.

(44) Territorial fights were highlighted by virtually all my informants. There are also numerous references to gangfights in Drum, GCP and BW.

(45) Tourikis, "The Political Economy of Alexandra Township", pp79-93.

(46) Phil Cohen, "Subcultural conflict and working class community", p86.

(47) This was a common theme throughout most of my interviews.

(48) Moloi 26/3/88; Motjuwadi 29/9/88; Modisane, Blame Me on History, pp67-68. See Chapter Two for an attempt to disaggregate the different types of tsotsi gangs.

(49) IAD WRAB, 351/2, Juvenile Court statistics 1949-1960. (No figures available for the 1940s). It is impossible to estimate, of course, how many incidents of these crimes never even reached the courts.

(50) Mattera 26/3/88; Peggy Bellair 2/6/89.

(51) Drum, April 1955. See also GCP, 8 May 1955.

(52) GCP, 26 July 1959. (53) Drum, November 1951.

(54) GCP, 7 September 1958. (55) GCP, 24 January 1960.

(56) GCP, 23 August 1959.

(57) Interview, Godfrey Pitje, Johannesburg, 23 September 1986; Motlana 2/9/86; Moloi 26/3/88; Mattera 5/6/88. See also Bonner,P, "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness" and Glaser,C, "Students, Tsotsis and the Congress Youth League", pp84-91. This issue is explored in more detail in Chapter Five.

(58) Moloi 26/3/88; Mattera 5/6/88; Nkosi 25/9/88; Mbawu and Ngwenya 27/4/89. This issue is explored in more depth in Chapter Five.

(59) Drum, November 1951.

(60) Dlamini, M, Robben Island: Hell Hole, pp89-90.

(61) Moloi 26/3/88. (62) Drum, November 1951.

(63) Report of the Riots Commission, A van de Sandt Centlivres, 1958, paragraphs 97 and 99.

(64) Interdepartmental Committee on Native Juvenile Unemployment, SP Viljoen, 1951, pp6-7; Verslag van die Interdepartementele Komitee insake ledige en nie-werkende Bantoe in stedelike gebiede, M.C. Botha, 1962.

(65) Rand Daily Mail, 27 November 1956.

(66) IAD WRAB, 285/7, extract from minutes of a meeting between NEAD and Native Youth Board deputation, 28 September 1950.

(67) Drum, November 1951. For a string of references to the tsotsi "non-work ethic" see BW Readers' Forum, April-June 1945.

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(68) See Glaser,C, "Students, Tsotsis and the Congress Youth League", pp68-69 and Verslag van die Komitee insake ledige en nie-werkende Bantoe in stedelike gebiede, introductory section. See also the section on schooling in Chapter One.
(69) Moloi 26/3/88 (70) Drum, November 1951.
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(72) Godfrey Moloi (Otto Town Gang), Peggy Bellair (Americans) and Norris Nkosi (Spoilers) all described themselves as unusual tsotsi gangsters in that they all attended school while being active gang members. The fact that they all completed their schooling probably goes some way in explaining their relative success and prominence in later life. Although fully-fledged gang members, they tended to be cerebral enough to keep out of more serious danger. As Nkosi wryly commented: "We used to push the illiterate ones in front of us with the guns." They survived their violent gang years and received the benefits of both education and a wide range of old gang connections. Mdlalose, Magubane and Nhlapho all had strict parents who kept them at school until matric but, although they adhered to many elements of tsotsi style, they were never gangsters.
(73) See Glaser,C., "Students, Tsotsis and the Congress Youth League", pp67-69 and Bonner,P., "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness", pp394-409.
(74) IAD WRAB 351/1, extracts from Advisory Board meetings throughout 1950s.
(75) Report of the Riots Commission, 1958, paragraph 72.
(76) Drum, May 1958.
(77) GCP, 31 July 1955. For an account of the community response to the tsotsis, see Glaser,C, "Students, Tsotsis and the Congress Youth League", pp74-79.
(78) Samson,A, Drum, p99.
(79) CPSA SAIRR B23, memorandum on Native juvenile delinquency, 1938.
(80) IAD WRAB 351/3, "A preliminary survey of juvenile gangs in Orlando" and "The Nsibanyoni Gang", memoranda by Lucas Nkosi, February 1940 and April 1940.
(81) The Star 15 January 1954. See also Dlamini, Robben Island, p88.
(82) IAD WRAB 301/1, NEAD Cinema Branch, cinema show returns, March 1954.
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(84) Miles 4/4/89. Interestingly, Miles comments that other African township fashion, beyond South Africa, was well represented in Zonk and Drum. See Erwin Manoim, "The Black Press in South Africa 1945-1953", MA thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1983, pp62-94.
(85) Moloi 26/3/88; Miles 11/4/89.
(86) Samson,A., Drum, p100; Dlamini, Robben Island: Hell Hole, pp89-90.
(87) GCP, 13 November 1960.
(88) BW 16 June 1945, letter from Sgt. Rameetse.
(89) BW 12 May 1945, letter from Daniel Ntaopane of Johannesburg.

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(102) See description of Abel in Dlamini, M., Robben Island: Hell Hole, pp89-90.
(103) The description of clothing style is a composite picture drawn from a number of interviews. See also Bothma, MA thesis, pp46-47, for a thorough description of tsotsi clothing style in Pretoria around 1950.
(104) Moloi 26/3/88; Nkosi 25/9/88.
(105) See B.V. Khumalo, "Sources and Structures of Tsotsitaal", unpublished Honours dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, April 1986, p11 These figures are based on a contemporary study. However, it seems as though tsotsitaal has not shifted drastically amongst those who still speak it.
(106) Msimang, "Impact of Zulu on Tsotsitaal", South African Journal of African Languages, 7, 3, July 1987, p84.
(107) Nkosi 25/9/88; Motjuwadi 22/9/88; Mdlalose 20/4/89.
(108) Motjuwadi 22/9/88. Although the language has undergone many changes since the 1950s, a more Zulu based form of tsotsitaal is still discernable in Orlando. A language close to the old tsotsitaal is still spoken in townships such as Meadowlands which housed displaced Sophiatown residents. Peggy Bellair identified the Orlando tsotsitaal as being part and parcel of Orlando's general backwardness in style: "They were always behind [Sophiatown and Alexandra] in style; they were still drinking sorghum beer when everyone was drinking beer in Sophiatown."
(109) In Drum November 1951 a tsotsi recalled how as a 14 or 15 year old mugger "Always we had something to drink or smoked dagga to give us a big heart." See also BW 2 March 1940, p16, in which a connection is drawn between dagga, alcohol and juvenile delinquency; BW 17 August 1946, letter from W. B. Mkhasibe; BW 7 April 1945, letter from J.D.N. (quoted in full earlier in the thesis); BW 28 April 1945, letter from Mr Pooe of Sophiatown; BW 14 August 1954, p1 article on Germiston's Fast Elevens gang; CPSA AD 843 SAIRR B23, memorandum on Native Juvenile Delinquency, 1938; IAD WRAB 351/3, "A preliminary survey of juvenile gangs in Orlando", February 1940 and the "Nsibanyoni Gang", April 1940, both by Lucas Nkosi of the Orlando Boys' Unit; Samson Drum, p99; Bothma, MA thesis, pp47-49; Miles 4/4/89 and 11/4/89. Miles points out, interestingly, that the Spoilers of Alexandra made a great deal of their money through illegal liquor and dagga sales. For gambling specifically, see Drum October 1951; Drum November 1952; GCP 31 July 1955; Moloi 26/3/88; Mdlalose 20/4/89; Mbawu and Ngwenya 20/4/89 and 27/4/89. It is clear that the running of gambling "schools" was a profitable part of the operations of many of the bigger gangs.
(110) Absolom Vilakazi, Zulu Transformations, University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg 1962, p78.

(68) See Glaser,C, "Students, Tsotsis and the Congress Youth League", pp68-69 and Verslag van die Komitee insake ledige en nie-werkende Bantoe in stedelike gebiede, introductory section. See also the section on schooling in Chapter One.
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(107) Nkosi 25/9/88; Motjuwadi 22/9/88; Mdlalose 20/4/89.
(108) Motjuwadi 22/9/88. Although the language has undergone many changes since the 1950s, a more Zulu based form of tsotsitaal is still discernable in Orlando. A language close to the old tsotsitaal is still spoken in townships such as Meadowlands which housed displaced Sophiatown residents. Peggy Bellair identified the Orlando tsotsitaal as being part and parcel of Orlando's general backwardness in style: "They were always behind [Sophiatown and Alexandra] in style; they were still drinking sorghum beer when everyone was drinking beer in Sophiatown."
(109) In Drum November 1951 a tsotsi recalled how as a 14 or 15 year old mugger "Always we had something to drink or smoked dagga to give us a big heart." See also BW 2 March 1940, p16, in which a connection is drawn between dagga, alcohol and juvenile delinquency; BW 17 August 1946, letter from W. B. Mkhasibe; BW 7 April 1945, letter from J.D.N. (quoted in full earlier in the thesis); BW 28 April 1945, letter from Mr Poos of Sophiatown; BW 14 August 1954, p1 article on Germiston's Fast Elevens gang; CPSA AD 843 SAIRR B23, memorandum on Native Juvenile Delinquency, 1938; IAD WRAB 351/3, "A preliminary survey of juvenile gangs in Orlando", February 1940 and the "Nsibanyoni Gang", April 1940, both by Lucas Nkosi of the Orlando Boys' Unit; Samson Drum, p99; Bothma, MA thesis, pp47-49; Miles 4/4/89 and 11/4/89. Miles points out, interestingly, that the Spoilers of Alexandra made a great deal of their money through illegal liquor and dagga sales. For gambling specifically, see Drum October 1951; Drum November 1952; GCP 31 July 1955; Moloi 26/3/88; Mdlalose 20/4/89; Mbawu and Ngwenya 20/4/89 and 27/4/89. It is clear that the running of gambling "schools" was a profitable part of the operations of many of the bigger gangs.
(110) Absolom Vilakazi, Zulu Transformations, University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg 1962, p78.