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THE MAKING OF CLASS

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Prior to 1948 the Congress Youth League (CYL) consciously kept its official membership small. It hoped to radicalise the ANC through internal pressure group politics. Around 1948, a definite shift occurred in CYL thinking. The leadership of the CYL began to realise that they needed more signed up members in order to become a more effective internal pressure group. The CYL needed a large bloc of voters at the ANC's annual national conferences at which ANC policy was determined. Thus the CYL commenced a vigorous recruitment drive in 1948 . (1) A series of new CYl branches were established as part of an attempt to push through the Programme of Action at the 1949 Bloemfontein Congress . (2) From 1948 onwards, then, the CYL redefined itself as a mass youth movement. Once the CYL effectively seized control of the ANC in 1949 and many of its leaders took up leadership positions in the senior body, the organisation lost coherence. The CYL's role as a pressure group became redundant. The CYL continued to operate more as a youth recruitment wing of the ANC than as a distinctive organisation. Although the CYL lost its distinctiveness within the ANC, it continued to prioritize recruitment and it continued to emphasize branch level organistion. In fact, the CYL tried to assert its distinctiveness precisely through becoming the most dynamic organising and recruiting section of the ANC. (3)

Most informed observers of the Youth League today recognise that the organisation operated within a fairly narrow social framework, that it was not particularly successful in establishing a genuine mass base amongst the youth. (4) My paper reinforces this impression. The phenomenon has never been adequately explained by

historians. Some Marxists, as a kind of reflex response, argue that the Youth League was essentially a petty bourgeoise organisation representing the interests, and sensitive to the grievances, of the African elite. The CYL could therefore only establish a support base amongst the African petty bourgeoisie. This explanation has some broad descriptive utility but it fails to answer at least two questions. First, how do we overcome the age-old problem of finding a cut-off point between the petty bourgeoisie and the working class? This becomes an especially thorny problem in this particular geographical and historical context, since the African petty bourgeoisie and African working class tended to experience broadly similar standards of living in the Rand locations. Second, how do we explain the CYL's following amongst at least some sections of the working class? In order to provide an answer to these questions, I have found it necessary to go beyond class analysis, to make a detailed study of the personal and institutional networks in which the CYL operated.

Class analysis does not really provide an explanation of the divisions which existed among the urban African youth on the Rand in the late 40s and the 50s. I argue that the African youth were divided into two distinct worlds. On the one hand, there was the Christian-literate constituency which was generally school-going. On the other hand, there was the semi-literate, youth gang constituency which generally rejected schooling. The latter constituency was substantially larger than the former. The edges of these categories were often blurred. Many youths passed from one world into the other, while some managed to live in both

simultaneously. But the worlds were, on the whole, clearly distinguishable from one another and crossed class lines. The CYL, I argue, because of its institutional connections and intellectualism, operated almost entirely within the Christian-literate, school-going world.

The CYL leadership was drawn from the elite of African urban society. Youth Leaguers recognised the need for mass mobilisation and militant, extra-constitutional politics in the struggle against a racist political order. The CYL also made frequent use of traditional African symbols. However, Youth Leaguers, like the senior ANC leadership, accepted western values almost entirely. Gerhart emphasises this aspect of the national democratic movement in the 1950s.

> Neither the elite's new-found community of interest with lower class Africans nor the resentment of Afrikaner cruelty altered a fundamental psychological feature of the African predicament ... all standards of achievement, status, and worth in South Africa were standards imposed or inherited from the dominant society of whites ... for almost any African who had given up traditional ways in favour of a modern life-style, self-esteem was inextricably bound up with the successful acquisition of white culture - in every aspect from material possessions and occupational skills through forms of etiquette and leisure pastimes. Much or all of the prestige accorded to well educated or wealthy Africans by their communities was recognition of their success in becoming 'like whites'. (5)

It is not surprising, therefore, that the CYL failed to regard the youth gangs, which detached themselves completely from western values, as a potential political constituency. Although individual tsotsis were occasionally approached by the CYL, Youth Leaguers

generally regarded youth gangs as beyond the pale.

In the first section of this paper I will briefly examine the CYL's established organisational networks during the late 1940s and 50s. In the second section I will move to a more grassroots perspective in attempting to create a picture of the African youth constituency on the Rand in the 1940s and 50s. Finally, I will assess the extent to which the CYL, as the wing of the national liberation movement most concerned with African youth, penetrated the African youth constituency organisationally.

I

High school students were the Youth League's key constituency. (6) Young educated Africans looking forward to widening their stake in a future South Africa provided an obvious recruiting ground for the CYL.

Many of the original Youth Leaguers first became politicised as school students. Lembede, Mda, Mbata, William Nkomo and Raboroko were all prominent in the Transvaal Student Association (TSA) prior to the formation of the CYL. (7) "So we could say that products of the students organisations became the nucleus for organisations like the Youth League . . ." (8) The TSA was not an overtly political body in the 30s and 40s. It was more of a "social" organisation than a "political" one. (9) Nevertheless, a great deal of political discussion took place within the TSA and it is likely that the political ideas of Lembede, Mda and their

colleagues were formulated in this grouping. The Youth Leaguers must have been particularly familiar with the mood and internal workings of student associations and schools. It was an environment in which they felt comfortable. Moreover, they understood that students were highly receptive to politicisation. The CYL used this familiar network to reproduce itself: most of the 'second generation' CYL activists who operated in the 50s were influenced by, and incorporated into, the CYL while attending school.

Students on the Rand, and particularly in Orlando, were heavily influenced by the Youth League. The CYL staged numerous meetings on the Rand during the 1940s which were well attended by students. (10) Godfrey Pitje, leader of the CYL in 1949 and 1950, recalls the high level of politicisation amongst school children when he taught at Orlando High in 1945.

> One of the things which struck me was the advancement of the average student politically compared to us on the staff ... I didn't realise it then, but I know now, that it was because they were under the influence of the Youth League. They were attending meetings by the likes of Lembede, A.P. Mda, Oliver Tambo, Mandela, Sisulu ... (11)

Es'kia Mphahlele's recollection of his teaching on the Rand in the 40s confirms this impression of Pitje's. When Mphahlele was teaching in the 40s a number of senior students "were very much interested in the Youth League and were talking about it in class". (12) He recalls that one senior student got up in class to announce the death of Anton Lembede in 1947. Lembede was highly praised and there was great interest in the classroom. (13)

Teachers formed an important component of the CYL in the Transvaal. This is not to suggest that most of the teachers on the Rand were Youth Leaguers or even Youth League sympathisers. In fact, teachers were a largely a-political constituency. Nevertheless, a number of prominent Leaguers were teachers at one stage or another. Tambo and Pitje were teachers before they became lawyers, Sobukwe, Mothopeng and Mphahlele were all teachers on the Rand during the 50s. These teachers used their profession as a platform for politicising their students, despite their vulnerability as employees of the Transvaal Education Department.

Teachers with strong Youth League connections such as Sobukwe, Tambo and Pitje were very influential in their classrooms. (14) Sobukwe, in 1949, invited Ntatho Motlana, who was an active CYL organiser at the time, to come and speak to his students at his school in Standerton. Sobukwe took many risks to politicise his students and he became "a tremendous influence in his area". (15) "We did things then which teachers could never get away with today", comments Pitje. (16) During his brief teaching spell on the Rand in 1950, Pitje made an effort to "revive the spirit of African culture" in his classroom. He would instil in his students a love of the "traditional ways of doing things". He would tell them about a proud African history and call them by their traditional African names rather than their Christian names. Students perceived Pitje as different from the other teachers and they became "very receptive" to his kind of teaching. Pitje rejected subservience to "Western ways". He recalls that instead

of praying in the traditional Christian way, he would praise African historical leaders. At assembly prayers, Pitje would put his fist in the air and pray to "The God of Chaka, the God of Sekhukhune". Students were initially surprised by this behaviour but, ultimately, accepted it warmly. (17)

When Duma Nokwe and Kathrada returned from their visit to China, Pitje organised for his senior pupils to go and speak to Nokwe at a meeting where "they spoke freely about Mao Tse Tung". Pitje was also able to introduce ANC slogans to the school such as "Mayibuye!" and "Africa to the Africans!". Pitje refused to be obsequious towards white officials. He treated them as equals, to the great delight of his students. Pitje recalls:

> ... when a white inspector came to my school, instead of cringing like the average principle, the average teacher ... I [would act] as naturally as I could ... And the students loved this, they hero-worshipped us for doing this kind of thing ... Mothopeng was hero-worshipped at Orlando High. (18)

The CYL often used teachers to penetrate the schools. It would "find sympathy with one or two members of the staff and in that way build [its] base". (19) Teachers were generally a-political in the 40s and 50s but there was usually a small core of politicised, CYL-sympathetic teachers at every school on the Rand. At Mphahlele's school, Orlando High, four teachers out of a staff of 35 were politicised, two of which belonged to the Youth League. (20) At other schools on the Witwatersrand, there was also "always a small minority of teachers who were politically vocal and politically conscious and talked politics in the staffroom". But

the small group of politicised teachers were highly influential amongst the students. (21) Thus, teachers were able to expose students to a new ideology and popularize organisations such as the CYL and ANC. Through school students the CYL was also able to have some wider impact on the rest of the community. "The students", comments Pitje, "... were well placed in the community to sow the seeds of this new political solution [African Nationalism]". (22)

Although the teacher-pupil interaction was important, the CYL did most of its organising amongst school students outside of the school environment. School authorities were consistently hostile to any form of political penetration. Students, teachers and outsiders involved in politics could be victimised or removed with ease. "Political techers" had to tread very cautiously. (23) Student Representative Councils were non-existant on the Rand in the 40s and 50s. (24)

For Motlana, student associations provided the most useful avenue for making contact with school students. Because of the hostility of the school environment, Motlana would do most of his organising through student associations during the holidays. According to Motlana this was the most common method of organising for Youth League activists. (25) Motlana's "beat" was on the East Rand, stretching from Germiston to Nigel. He would go around forming little pockets of CYL supporters and then try to get them to establish an autonomous branch which could then expand itself and spread the programme and ideology of the CYL. 1950 - 1952, according to Motlana, was a period of great activity for Youth

League branch level activists. Once a core group of around ten new activists had been established they were considered large enough to set up a new branch. This would involve electing their own secretary and treasurer and acting autonomously from other branches. (26)

Another method of spreading CYL influence in the schools was through pamphleteering. This was safer than personal organising as pamphlets could be left around the schools anonymously. In May 1948 a series of letters were written to Umteteli Wa Bantu around the issue of pamphleteering and politicizing in the schools. One letter writer, H.M. Nthaka, a teacher from Sharpeville, criticized those who complained about political pamphleteering at Arican schools. Nthaka argued that it was a completely acceptable practice since children were constantly exposed to state propaganda at the schools. (27) Other more respectable parents complained about the political influences on their children in what ought to have been an a-political institution.

The CYL, then, had several ways of influencing school students and establishing new branches amongst them. Individual politicized teachers were influential in the classroom, hundreds of students were attracted to the mass meetings conducted by high profile CYL leaders; most importantly, branches were set up through links with student associations.

The only coherent constituency of the Youth League was school students. Apart from schools, the CYL's only significant area of

operation was Fort Hare University. The Youth League established, at best, personalised, ad hoc relations with church groups, professional associations and local community movements. The CYL was unadventurous and unimaginative in building links with potential constituencies. It organised within the section of society it knew best, the section from which the CYL leadership itself emerged. During the 1950s, the CYL failed to explore new avenues of potential mobilisation amongst the youth. Instead, it spent most of its energy on popularising ANC campaigns. To the extent that it did organise youth, it continued to operate almost entirely amongst school students.

II

High school students represented by no means the majority of urban African youths on the Rand. (By "youths, I refer to those aged roughly between 14 and 21). Most students dropped out of school at an early age, while thousands never attended school at all. (29) Schooling was not compulsory in the 1940s and 1950s, nor was it affordable for the vast majority of urban African families. (30) Schooling was a luxury. Nevertheless, amongst the Christianised elements, schooling was "virtually compulsory". (31) Most Christian parents, whether petty bourgeois or working class, revered western-style education and sent their children to school at all costs. Numerous non-Christian parents also prioritised education. But parents did not always have sufficient control over their children to ensure their attendance at school. (32) Schooling, especially amongst the non-Christian elements, was far

from an accepted way of life for African youths. Even those youths who did undergo a substantial amount of schooling found it extremely difficult to find employment afterwards. A huge section of the unemployed and non-schoolgoing youths drifted into youth gangs. 'By the early 1950s the culture of youth gangs was one of the strongest currents running through the locations'. (33)

The Roots of Tsotsi Culture

Three factors contributed to the prevalence of youth gangs on the Rand : low levels of school attendance amongst urban youth, massive unemployment and the instability of family life. All three factors require some elaboration.

In the year 1949 only 6533 African children attended secondary school in Pretoria and on the Rand. (34) I have no comparative figures for the 1950s. However, it is likely that this figure remained fairly stable throughout the decade. The total union secondary school attendance figure in 1949 was 46 314 (35) By 1960 the union total had actually decreased slightly to 45 598 (36). Unless Pretoria and Rand school attendance patterns were drastically different from those of the rest of the Union, it is safe to assume that African secondary school attendance on the Rand and in Pretoria remained below 7000 throughout the 1950s. Schoolgoers, then, represented an extremely small proportion of the African urban population aged between 14 and 20. Attendance at junior and primary schools was much greater. Roughly 10% of African scholars were high school students. (37) School attendance dropped off rapidly in each progressive year of schooling. On the

Rand and in Pretoria in 1949 there were 18 478 Sub A pupils, 10 899 Sub B pupils, down to 3 770 Standard V pupils. There were only 820 Standard VII pupils and 63 matriculants. (38)

There were three basic reasons for low school attendance and early school leaving. First, schooling was not compulsory and there were far too few schools to accommodate even those children who did want to attend school. (39) Second, the quality of education was low. Children rejected inferior, unstimulating schooling. The de Villiers Louw Commission of 1950 recognised this. The standard of schooling was so bad, the commission complained, that children preferred to join youth gangs. (40) Moreover, schooling was impractical. A school education did not necessarily improve a school-leaver's employment opportunities. The de Villiers Louw Commission recognised this too. The commission recommended that schooling should provide skills more immediately necessary to the economy. Children would then be employable once they left school and they would recognise the value of attending school. (41) Third, most urban African families could not afford to send their children to school. Children were pressurized from an early age into becoming economically active. Parents often preferred to have their children contributing to the family income rather than wasting their time at school. Thus "children were either rejecting schooling as useless, or were compelled by economic necessity to find work". (42)

A Native Youth Board Investigation in 1950 estimated "conservatively" that the number of unemployed youths of employable

age (14-20 years) in the Johannesburg area was over 20 000. This apparently amounted to almost 80% of Johannesburg's African juvenile population in 1950. (43) In a thesis written in 1952, W.J. Kieser, a Principal of Diepkloof Reformatory in the 1950s, computed that there were "about 120 000 Native children of school-going age idling away their days in the streets or standing aimlessly about the locations of the City and the Reef". (44)

Probably the most important reason for urban youth unemployment was the competition urban youths faced from migrants on the job market. Employers on the Rand, despite influx control legislation, preferred to employ migrants rather than local youths. Migrants tended to be more acquiescent, "respectful" and reliable than their urban counterparts. Furthermore, they were prepared to accept lower wages. Employers of both industrial and domestic labour tended to feel this way. (45) In an official letter to the Johannesburg Regional Employment Commissioner, W.J.P. Carr, Johannesburg's Manager of Native Affairs, wrote in 1955:

> Native juveniles who are urbanised, are often unreliable, work-shy and selective in their choice of a job - many prefer to exist by gambling and other nefarious means, and make little or no contribution to the maintenance of their families. ... Employers because of these facts, are unwilling to employ native juveniles. (46)

In another letter in 1956, Carr reiterated that urban African youths "tend to be unreliable, work-shy, aggressive and unco-operative when offered employment". (47) There was clearly some truth in these allegations but the unemployment problem was exacerbated by these very impressions of the employers. Employers

were usually prejudiced towards urban youths and unwilling to give them a chance. (48) Employers often by-passed local labour bureaux and employed directly through contacts in the countryside. In Vereeniging, for instance, industrialists built up a relationship with groups of migrants from a particular rural district and employed freely from this pool. (49) Throughout the 1940s and early 1950s municipal authorities throughout the PWV generally turned a blind eye to these breaches of influx control in order to avoid discouraging local industry. (50) Domestic employers, like industrialists, preferred to employ rural workseekers, thus restricting the chief avenue of employment open to female urban youths. (51) Urban youths found it virtually impossible to penetrate the industrial and domestic labour market in any significant way. The greater the influx of rural work-seekers, the smaller was the potential job market for urban youths.

There were two other practical considerations for employers. First, urban youths tended to have less stamina than their rural counterparts. There was a high level of malnutrition in the African locations which physically weakened children and juveniles. Furthermore, they had very little experience of hard physical work. (52) Second, the Wage Board fixed wage levels for juveniles. Industrialists might have been more amenable to employing urban youths if they could have paid them wages below the levels fixed by the Wage Board. Since wages were fixed, employers were determined to find the most productive possible workers. (53)

The attitude of urban youths towards employment was influenced by

youth gang culture. Tsotsi culture rejected discipline, hard work and "respectable" employment. Moreover, youth gangs provided an alternative means of survival for urban youths. The need to find employment was therefore less urgent. (54) Unemployment and youth gang culture mutually reinforced one another. Unemployment was a far more conceivable option for urban youths with the existence of youth gangs. Simultaneously, unemployment swelled the ranks of the tsotsi gangs. The Viljoen Report of 1951 noted a direct causal link between unemployment and the prevalence of tsotsi gangs. "Juveniles out of employment develop spontaneously into Tsotsis in order to find an outlet for their energies as well as a means of earning a livelihood by illegal means". (55) The phenomenon of early school leaving also swelled the ranks of youth gangs. Not only did it add pressure to the unemployment problem but it ensured that young children came into daily contact with "undesirable types". Moreover, children were more susceptible to tsotsi influences when they were no longer subjected to the disciplinary effects of the school environment. (56)

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s urban African families were tremendously unstable. Several factors contributed to this. First, African workers were generally unskilled which ensured a high job turnover. Workers were constantly on the move, looking for new or better-paid jobs. Second, the migrant labour system and the implementation of pass laws often broke up family units. Third, there was a disproportionately large population of males in relation to females.

Relationships, then, were often casual and children rarely experienced a stable family environment. The rate of illegitimacy was extremely high throughout the Rand. The Viljoen Report expressed concern about the effects of illegitimacy on children:

> It would seem that the majority of Native children born in the urban areas are illegitimate, a potent force undermining parental control and weakening the disciplinary forces which are so necessary to the maintenance of a stable society. (57)

Illegitimacy itself, however, was not necessarily the problem. Officially consecrated marriages were often as unstable as casual unions. Conversely, informal unions occasionally led to fairly stable families. (58) Technical legitimacy was less important than family stability in so far as it effected children. Location children, whether legitimate or illegitimate, were largely free from parental controls. Parents, even if they retained a commitment to their children, were usually at work all day. The Viljoen Report pointed out that there was also an absence of tribal youth control mechanisms which both kept youth "in their place" and imbued them with a sense of social responsibility. (59) Tsotsi culture was boosted by the lack of parental attendance and guidance. As Bonner puts it: "For a significant proportion of [urban youth] the normal socialising and disciplinary agencies were either atrophied or absent ... Into this moral void stepped the gangs". (60)

Tsotsi Culture

By the early 1950s, African locations on the Rand were riddled with tsotsi gangs which earned a livelihood through criminal activities.

They emerged during the 1940s in the old free-hold townships of Sophiatown, Newclare and Alexandra. The phenomenon rapidly spread to other townships. During the 1950s practically every African township on the Rand was terrorised by local tsotsi gangs. (61) There were several large and famous gangs such as the Americans of Sophiatown, the Berliners of Newclare, the Spoilers of Alexandra and the Torch Gang of Orlando. But most of the gangs were small splinter gangs. In Orlando, there were apparently small "peer group" gangs on practically every street corner. (62) In Alexandra alone there were six major gangs with a combined membership of over 500 youths, as well as numerous small gangs. (63) Most gangs were locally based but at least two, The Spoilers and the Americans, had "branches" in other townships. "The Spoilers", observed Freed in 1958, "are a widespread gang with branches in locations like Pimville, George Goch and Vrededorp. The branches come together when there is a serious threat from another gang". (64) A group called the Young Americans emerged in Alexandra which had strong connections with the Sophiatown Americans. The Sophiatown Americans often sent carloads of people to Alexandra to assist the Young Americans when they were in "tricky spots". (65) Some of the bigger gangs had differentiated age "regiments" which carried out specific functions. (66) Members of gangs had a stong sense of identity. In all the gangs there tended to be "an awareness of leadership, a strong man, a man who gave the orders ..." (67) Youths had to prove their loyalty before becoming full members of gangs. They were first drawn into the gangs' patronage networks and gradually initiated. The de Villiers Louw Commission showed an awareness of this:

> The 'tsotsi' organisation has found a fertile field in the urban areas. Youths are initiated in stages to become eventually members of criminal gangs who rob and steal for a living under the guidance of an experienced leader. (68)

The Viljoen Report of 1951 explained the term "tsotsi" as follows:

> Tsotsis are gangs of Native juveniles, the members of which are predominantly unemployed and are characterised by the fact that they wear the same distinctive clothing, make use of the same secret language, have strong group consciousness, and live largely by illegal means. (69)

Tsotsi gangs "developed a distinct counter-culture". (70) They rejected schooling, parental authority and "western civilized values". Mr M. Thlakula, the principle of an African high school in Springs, described the average tsotsi gang in his area:

> The group consists of boys ranging from 15 years to 20 and more, and their chief characteristic is their refusal to work for a living. Even in their own homes they refuse to take part in any ordinary family activities except eating.
> In order to get pocket money they gamble and pick the pockets of their own people by night and those of European shoppers during the busy hours of the day. From their class come the future criminals. (71)

The gangs, then, developed their own distinctive leisure time activities, social norms, hierarchies, language and means of subsistance.

Gang culture was influenced by cowboy and gangster films. Tsotsis spent a great deal of their time loitering around their local cinemas. They often fought other gangs to establish territorial rights over cinemas. Movie images deeply influenced their style

and behaviour. (72)

Tsotsis were distinctly anti-social. They rejected all forms of authority and parental control. The de Villiers Louw Commission grumbled that "they thrive on disorderliness and are famed creators of disorder". (73) In 1956, W.J.P. Carr commented: "... tsotsi gangs ... flout authority and frustrate the efforts of parents and advisory board members in their attempts to rehabilitate the youths". (74) But the tsotsis did not threaten the authorities alone. By the late 1940s tsotsis preyed on their own communities. (75) According to Mphahlele, "they really threatened the whole fabric of society, wherever they were, wherever they lived ... At night time people always wanted to be in their houses before dark". (76) They molested people in the streets and mugged people in trains and trams throughout the Rand. They showed little concern whether their victims were whites or Africans, rich or poor. Freed created a hair-raising picture of rapes, murders and robberies carried out by tsotsis in African locations. (77) Motlana confirms that the tsotsis formed an "underprivileged under class which really preyed on their own people". (78) Gangs also preyed on each other. Inter gang warfare was common. They fought and competed amongst each other over women and "territory". Gambling often sparked off inter gang violence. (79) Most frequently, they fought over crime monopolies. For instance, they would fight for exclusive rights to rob from a certain section of domestic servants or visitors who would enter the locations on the weekends. (80)

It is possible that some gangs were more scrupulous about their

victims than others. Motlana, for instance, has rather fond memories of the Americans. Motlana, who lived in Sophiatown from 1949 until the mid 1950s, recalls that the Americans "never robbed from blacks, they always robbed whites and for that reason they became very well respected in Sophiatown". The Americans did not consider themselves to be criminals, they simply "liberated goods". (81) This view is largely borne out by the 1954 Drum focus on the Americans. Apart from inter gang violence, their activities seemed to be directed at white-owned or state-owned property. (82) But, if this is true, the Americans were very much the exception. Motlana draws a sharp distinction between the Americans and other "criminal elements". He himself warns against romanticizing tsotsis. (83)

Community and State Responses to Tsotsi Culture

From around the middle of the 1940s, conservative, literate older generation Africans became increasingly aware of, and concerned about, the problem of juvenile delinquency. This is reflected in the columns of Umteteli Wa Bantu. Umteteli, though an African-run newspaper, was financed by the Chamber of Mines. Its staff and readership represented, in the eyes of the white establishment, the most respectable elements of African society. These Africans were highly literate, politically conservative and deeply imbued with Christian values. Between 1945 and 1948 a steady stream of articles, editorials and letters appeared in Umteteli focussing on the question of juvenile delinquency. Contributors were occasionally sympathetic towards delinquents, blaming social conditions rather than the youths themselves. (84)

An editorial in 1945 was completely unconciliatory:

> To put it bluntly, despite the efforts of parents, ministers of religion, teachers and welfare organisations there is growing up at an alarming rate a population of criminal loafers who are not only a menace to the community, both African and European, but constitute a tragic waste of human ability and manpower.

The editorial went on to praise a proposal of the Johannesburg City Council to place 'idle' delinquents into regimented units which would carry out various municipal services.

> Briefly the schemes envisage the collection of youths into semi-military units - one might with truth compare them with the groups of young men which existed when the tribal organisation was at its peak. Once in these units they would be disciplined, properly fed, educated and trained for useful work. (85)

The educated conservative Christian elements of urban African society were not alone in their concern about juvenile delinquency. Crime was a major issue in the locations throughout the 1940s and 1950s. From the mid 1940s onwards tsotsis were identified as the most prevalent and dangerous criminals. The Orlando advisory board, which consulted fairly widely on a local level, identified crime as an important township issue. Crime was discussed widely in advisory board meetings and public platforms from around 1945 until the late 50s. (86) In October 1955 a special meeting between the Non-European Affairs department and the Joint Native Advisory Board of the Rand area was called specifically to discuss the persistent crime problem in African locations. (87)

Local civil guards were often set up by township residents to

combat tsotsi crime. In Orlando West in 1947 a local citizens' patrol was established, consisting of about 70 volunteers. The police refused to give these civil patrols official recognition. (88) In the early 50s, a civilian guard was established in Sophiatown, which temporarily wiped out tsotsi crime. (89) In 1955 several advisory board members from throughout the Rand claimed that the police were unable to control crime. Only during periods of organised civil guards, they claimed, had location crime been under control. (90) Civilian guards generally dissolved quickly. Guard duty was dangerous and arduous : civilian guards could not survive for long periods without official support and assistance. The state never encouraged civilian guards because it feared that it would not be able to control them. (91)

Township residents were prepared to co-operate with the authorities in order to combat location crime. In December 1947 thousands of residents from Pimville, Sophiatown and Orlando flocked to a meeting with the Deputy Commissioner of Police to discuss the issue of crime. Residents and the authorities agreed to co-operate in order to wipe out street crime. (92)

Tsotsi crime, then, was a major township issue. It caused divisions in African society, which hampered the efforts of township residents to present a united front against the state during crucial political and subsistence struggles in the 1940s and 1950s. Tsotsi culture was so pervasive amongst urban African youth that local initiatives at crime prevention often took the form of generational conflict. (93)

By the early 1950s the state, both local and central, became increasingly anxious about the youth problem on the Rand. It recognised that welfare organisations were inadequate to cope with the problem. Large scale state intervention was needed.

The de Villiers Louw Commission of 1950, which was appointed to investigate acts of African violence in Krugersdorp, Newclare, Randfontein and Newlands, identified youth gangs as major catalysts of violence in all these locations. (94) In 1951, the Inter-departmental Committee on Native Juvenile Unemployment was established. This committee was aimed at investigating the extent of, and the reasons for, juvenile unemployment on the Rand and in Pretoria. The committee established that there were direct links between juvenile unemployment and "tsotsism". (95) The central state apparently identified African juvenile unemployment, which led to "tsotsism", as politically threatening. Following the Viljoen Report, the central state showed tremendous interest in finding employment for African youths on the Rand. It attempted to provide the Johannesburg municipal government with active assistance in this regard. In February 1953 The Director of Native Labour and representatives from the Central Labour Bureau met with local state officials to discuss the issue. Central government officials called for greater co-ordination between local and central state. (96) The central state was eager to handle the problem in a forceful way. It offered assistance to local labour bureaux wherever possible. In May 1953 the Director of Native Labour sent a letter to the Johannesburg Native Commissioner

offering central state assistance:

> Hoewel die indiensplasing van jond (sic) stedelike Naturelle in die eerste plek die funksie van plaaslike aarbeidsburo's is, versoek die Departement distriks amptenare om plaaslike besture in alle moontlike opsigte te help, ten einde te verseker dat die groot vraagstuk van stedelike jeugwerklooshooid op kragdadidge (sic) wyse aangepak word. (97)

The central government was convinced that the tsotsi problem could best be combatted through overcoming African juvenile unemployment. H.S.J. Van Wyk, the Secretary of Native Affairs, in a letter to the Johannesburg Director of Native Affairs in 1954, said explicitly that "die indiensplasing van jeugdige Naturelle [is] een van die belangrikste stappe om tsotsiisme te bestry ...". In the same letter he went on to argue that most young men were eager to enter the job market "Derhalwe was werkverskaffing nog altyd as die eerste en belangrikste middel ter bestyding van die tsotsi-vraagstuk beskou". (98) In the same year Dr P. van Rensburg, of the Native Affairs Department, Pretoria, told The Star that "juvenile unemployment had become a big social problem and this idleness led to tsotsism". (99)

At the 1953 meeting between local and central government labour officials, the state decided to embark on a three-pronged strategy, based largely on the recommendations of the Viljoen Report, to combat juvenile unemployment on the Rand. First,

> ... it was the intention of the Minister of Labour to grant to those industries employing juveniles exemption from the various wage instruments to allow of (sic) the payment of a lower wage than that applicable to adults. (100)

It was hoped that more local juveniles would be employed if Wage Board instruments were removed. Second, the Department of Labour committed itself to exploring avenues for juvenie employment in commerce and industry "... and to endeavour to persuade commerce and industry to give preference in filling such vacancies to location youths in preference to youths from the rural areas or Native Territories". (101) Finally, the central government intended to place the allocation of jobs on the Rand more firmly under Central Labour Bureau control. All workseekers had to be officially registered at the local labour bureaux which, in turn, had to supply the Central Labour Bureau with regular reports on job registration and job placement. This fitted into the Central Labour Bureau's plan to screen out illegal migrant workseekers and encourage the employment of urban juveniles. (102)

In mid 1953, the Johannesburg Department of Native Affairs launched a juvenile employment drive. Initially, they had some success. Between September 1953 and April 1954, 17 987 African juveniles (16 to 21 years of age) were registered as unemployed. 15 197 found employment. (103) The official surplus was only 2 790, but of course thousands of youths managed to avoid registraion. (104) The figures for 1955 showed a marked increase in the official surplus. Between February and October 1955, 38 695 urban juveniles were officially registered as workseekers. 23 396 were placed in employment. A balance of 15 299 failed to find employment. (105) These figures probably indicate a tightening up of registration procedures between April 1954 and February 1955, rather than a

deterioration in juvenile employment over this period. In fact, the number of job placements was significantly higher during 1955. Nevertheless, the Secretary of Native Affairs, Van Rensburg, was angry and perplexed about the 1955 juvenile unemployment figures. He demanded an explanation and more details from the Johannesburg Registration Officer. (106)

It seems likely that the state's need to curb the tsotsi gangs contributed to the general tightening up of influx control in the early 1950s. Youth gangs seriously hampered the state's ability to control the townships. Moreover, the authorities strongly suspected that youth gangs could become dangerous political tools of the liberation movement. (107) Throughout the 1940s, even under National Party leadership after 1948, the state never seriously challenged industrialists in the PWV area who employed workers from the rural areas. More accurately, local government turned a blind eye to those employment practices. The central state lacked the resources to intervene directly. Municipal governments in the PWV came under pressure from the Department of Native Affairs to tighten up on influx control but were generally able to resist this pressure. When tsotsi gangs started to present a serious control problem in the townships in the early 1950s, municipal governments started to clamp down on the influx of rural workseekers. In Johannesburg, the central state also took firmer control over the municipal Council's influx control practices. The state encouraged local industrialists to absorb the available pool of local juvenile labour. (108) It hoped that this would curb the growth of tsotsi gangs. Tsotsis, it seems, were a big enough issue to influence

influx control strategies in the 1950s.

III

Tsotsis and The Congress Youth League

"Youth gangs", comments Bonner, "were street-wise, anti-social and suspicious, but they represented a potentially powerful political resource for any aspiring political leader". (109) According to Mphahlele and Motlana, the political potential of these street gangs was minimal. "Basically they were out for themselves ... They had to learn how to survive and make a living and also to create a power structure of some kind in the crime world". The gangs had little interest in politics. (110)

The authorities, however, were convinced that tsotsis were mobilized politically. The de Villiers Louw Commission provided evidence of youth gang involvement in political activities. During the Newlands tram boycott of August-September 1949, for instance, "tramway officials reported ... that Native youths were stoning all tram cars". Youths apparently assaulted several Newlands residents who attempted to use the trams. (111) In October 1949, riots broke out in Krugersdorp in response to police liquor raids and the extension of passes to women. Here, too, the Commission was convinced of youth gang involvement:

> The clearest evidence was placed before the Commission that organized gangs of youths took a leading part in acts of violence during the riots. They acted in concert and achieved definite results ... No evidence was adduced as to whether these youths had leaders who instructed them but evidence

> generally seemed to point to tsotsi gangs - gangs of youths who propogate lawlessness and disorder. (103)

The Commission then went on, inevitably, to attribute these acts of violence to communist instigation. Communists "clandestinely and in places of vantage urged irresponsible youths and scholars to acts of violence". (113)

There is some evidence that youths were involved in similar kinds of political intimidatory activities throughout the 1950s. (114) During the 1950 May Day Stayaway, for instance, youths carried out reprisals against boycott breakers and, "standing on the roofs of the Orlando shelters, youths pelted passing trains with stones". (115) Clearly, then, tsotsis did involve themselves in political activities. But could they be politically mobilised? Bonner comments:

> Would-be mobilisers had to strike a responsive chord in the collective consciousness of the gangs, and this was not necessarily easily accomplished by the intelligentsia leading most of the political groups. The most effective mobilisers were predictably those who were schooled in street culture themselves. (116)

The Congress Youth League saw itself as a mass youth movement and, on an official level, expressed interest in linking up with every type of youth organisation. In its 1944 Manifesto the CYL stated that it would be "a co-ordinating agency for all youthful forces employed in rousing popular political consciousness and fighting oppression ...". It committed itself "to win over and persuade other Youth organizations to come over to the A.N.C.Y.L." (117) In

an official document published in June 1954, the CYL reiterated its commitment to establish contact with as many youth organisations as possible.

> Where such bodies already exist it is our task to co-operate with, strengthen and give guidance to such bodies. Branches should keep personal and active contact with all established Youth Organisations in their locations. (118)

To what extent did the CYL carry out this commitment? Were tsotsi gangs even recognized as "Youth Organisations"?

Bonner provides the best evidence to date of co-operation between the CYL and youth gangs. (119) His evidence is based on the oral testimony of a certain "AB". AB was involved in youth gangs throughout the 1940s and early 1950s. AB was an exceptional tsotsi in that he took education seriously. He studied at night school and in 1946 he was employed by a Benoni attorney. He became a widely respected youth gang leader on the East Rand, largely as a result of his leading role in anti-Indian violence. In the early 1950s AB was apparently approached by a prominent ANC leader, who recognised AB's leadership qualities and drew him into the local CYL branch. He soon moved into a leadership position in the Benoni CYL. (120) AB was in a unique position of having contacts in both the youth underworld and the educated political elite.

AB was able to convince several Benoni gangs of the importance of political involvement, and proceeded to draw them into the ANC.

> AB ... brought his gangs firmly within the orbit of the ANC and they provided the shock troops for much

> of the rest of the decade. Operating under the name of Thaka Enyane (Young Black Soldiers) they were mobilised into most of the ANC's later campaigns. Between 1953 and 1955 the ANC in Benoni became rejuvenated. (121)

AB's gangs were heavily involved in the 1954 Bantu Education boycott in Benoni. In April 1954, they were active in preventing children from attending school. The Bantu Education boycott was particularly successful in Benoni. "AB, the Youth League and the youth gangs were at the centre of its organisation". (122) AB was eventually deported but youth gangs continued to operate effectively within the ANC in Benoni until 1960.

Despite this evidence of CYL-youth gang co-operation in Benoni, the CYL never made any formal contact with youth gangs. (123) While Motlana was secretary of the Youth League, from late 1949 until 1952, no official approaches were made to the gangs. "No attempt was made to get at them and ... redirect their ways. In those days we just regarded them as criminals". (124) In fact, the issue was never openly discussed at Youth League meetings or placed on meeting agendas. (125) Mphahlele and Motlana, however, were aware of occasional informal individualised contact between the CYL and gangs. (126) Pitje also acknowledged that contact may well have been made at the branch level "without his realizing it". (127) Motlana knew of incidents in which CYL members approached individual tsotsis and attempted to "change their ways". (128) Mphahlele recalls that indviduals were occasionally informally criticized within the ANC and CYL for "meddling with tsotsis" in the early 1950s. Most ANC members recoiled from the idea "because

[tsotsis] couldn't be controlled ...". (129)

In 1952, some young unemployed youths, often with tsotsi connections, did get involved in the Defiance Campaign. (130) The CYL made some localized attempts to link up to youth gangs during the Defiance Campaign. "There was an attempt to recruit them". Branch leadership spoke to gang leaders but, although a few individuals were recruited, success was "minimal". Whatever contacts were made during the Defiance Campaign were not sustained. They seemed to "peter out". (131)

According to Mphahlele and Motlana, the ANC's most sustained attempt to politicize gangs occurred during the 1954 Sophiatown removals. CYL activists went out to woo these gangs consciously. Branch level leaders certainly saw some potential in mobilising these gangs against the removals. Robert Resha, a member of the CYL executive, spoke to several Sophiatown gang leaders at the time. There was a certain amount of co-operation between the CYL and gangs during the removals but the alliance was a transient one. The gangs were never really politicised, they were "a whole lot of undisciplined youth" who recognised a temporary convergence of interests between themselves and the Youth League. (132)

Prior to 1954 Youth League activists in Sophiatown actually participated in the establishment of a local civil guard aimed at combatting tsotsi activity. Crime was a major concern of older generation township residents in the early 1950s. Motlana and Resha helped to organise the civil guard, which was led by a man

named Mathebe. Vigilantes patrolled the streets regularly. Crime was temporarily removed from the Sophiatown streets. (133) Interestingly, then, Youth League activists saw crime as an important local issue. Clearly, they abandoned their youth constituency in Sophiatown. Instead of trying to redirect local tsotsis into political, more socially orientated, activities, Motlana and Resha joined forces with the older generation residents in their attempt to crush tsotsis. Tsotsis were not considered as potential political allies in Sophiatown until the 1954 removals. Although the CYL recognised that the social environment was responsible for crime in the locations, the most coherent stand it took on the crime issue was to complain that the South African Police were not taking strong enough action against tsotsis. (134) Pitje, Motlana and Mphahlele all confirm that tsotsis often involved themselves informally in ANC campaigns. During the West Native Township, Sophiatown and Martindale tram boycotts, for instance, tsotsis "could be trusted to board a tram and beat up those who were on the tram and in that way help to make the tram boycotts more effective". (135) According to Motlana, elements of unemployed youths would often form the "storm troopers" of boycott campaigns and stayaways. (136) But they all stress that tsotsi involvement was spontaneous. Tsotsis obviously identified closely with certain campaign issues and took their own initiatives to enforce adherence to boycotts. The Youth League never consciously attempted to organise tsotsis as "storm troopers".

The general failure to politicise youth gangs can be attributed both to the anti-social nature of tsotsi culture and to the

inability and unwillingness of the CYL intelligentsia to organise youth gangs. The CYL operated in a different cultural framework from that of the youth gangs. Tsotsis were identified as anti-social, a-political, aggressive outsiders. AB was an exceptional Youth League leader. Becaue he had grown up as a tsotsi, he was able "to strike a responsive chord in the collective consciousness of the gangs". AB's story certainly demonstrates the political potential of youth gangs in the 1950s. Their sporadic and spontaneous involvement in political campaigns suggests an awareness of, and an interest in, political issues. Gangs had to be mobilised and redirected sensitively. AB showed that it was possible. The main body of the CYL, however, preferred to concentrate its activities amongst school students, a youth constituency which was much smaller than those youths who were situated broadly within the tsotsi cultural framework.

Conclusion

The CYL appealed to a relatively small constituency. They made little headway amongst the uneducated and semi-literate sections of the urban African population. Congress Mbata, one of the founding members of the CYL, acknowledged this.

> ... looking back at it now of course we inevitably quite unconsciously concentrated on people with education and the tone and perhaps content of our manifesto - one thinks now it couldn't have meant much to the masses at the time. It was good to speak of Africa for the Africans but the man in the street would say well yes, Africa for the Africans, so what? And we didn't have the answer to that 'so

what?' (137)

The CYL made an impact on a limited section of 'the younger people'. Motlana concedes that the CYL's appeal was largely confined to well-read students. The CYL's political ideology 'was high-falutin, high class stuff, intellectual stuff. Very attractive to young students like ourselves but it probably didn't seep through to the ordinary workers'. Motlana, assessing the CYL's impact amongst semi-literate and unemployed youths, comments:

> ... the movement, I think one can say honestly, did not reach out to the ordinary young people who left school, who did not receive any education at all, who did not read the Rand Daily Mail ... (138)

Apart from AB's individual success story in Benoni, the Rand youth gangs remained largely isolated from African Nationalist politics during the 1940s and 1950s. It is probable that the Communist Party made some attempts to mobilise the gangs politically, but more research needs to be done in this area. (139) The youth gangs were not entirely a-political. It is clear that they had at least some political potential. A co-ordinated and culturally sensitive attempt was required by political movements to utilise this potential.

Today, township youths are extraordinarily politicised and militant. Not only are they politicised but they have tended to align themselves closely with national political movements. In fact, it is safe to say that youths are the key political actors in contemporary South African politics. Youth congresses have emerged

throughout the country which draw on support from youths across the economic and educational spectrum. The scenario, then, is very different from that of the 1940s and 1950s. Why is this? What has happened during the last two or three decades to bring about such a radical change in urban African youth culture?

One possible explanation lies in the massive growth of Bantu Education. In 1960 about 46 000 Africans attended secondary school across the country. By 1970 this figure had risen to about 122 000 and by 1980, a startling 577 000 Africans attended secondary school. In 1984, there were just over one million African high school students, nationwide. (140) Bantu Education had two important effects. First, schooling became much more available to African youths. Second, African schooling was brought under tighter state control. The quantitative expansion of schooling was not matched by a qualitative improvement in educational standards. African schooling became widely discredited amongst students. Under Bantu Education two distinct urban youth cultures were drawn together in common defiance of the political order. Tsotsi culture was marginalised in the 1960s as a result of more accessible schooling as well as a massive state clampdown on Rand youth gangs in the late 1950s and early 1960s. (141) Tsotsi culture became more or less absorbed into the schools. In the 1970s the potential job market for school leavers contracted, thus compounding the growing frustration of the school-going population.

The style of African youth politics today displays characteristics of both the Youth League tradition and 1950s tsotsi culture. The

CYL tradition infused modern youth politics with a national movement and national programme orientation. Tsotsi culture, it seems, has helped to infuse youth politics with an anti-establishment aggression which was virtually absent in 1950s liberation politics.

103. Intermediary Archives Depot, Johannesburg, WRAB Archives, file 401/25/1, "The Youth Problem 1952-1961", Monthly Reports from Registering Officer, City of Johannesburg, on Juvenile Unemployment. These figures are computed from the monthly statistics.

104. W.J.P. Carr, himself, admits to this in a letter written in October 1957.
Intermediary Archives Depot, Johannesburg, WRAB Archives, file 401/25/1, "The Youth Problem 1952-1961", Letter from W.J.P. Carr Manager to the Native Commissioner, Johannesburg, 17 October 1956.

105. Intermediary Archives Depot, Johannesburg, WRAB Archives, file 401/25/1, "The Youth Problem 1952-1961", Letter from W.J.P. Carr, Manager to The Regional Employment Commissioner, 22 December 1955.

106. Intermediary Archives Depot, Johannesburg, WRAB Archives, file 401/25/1, "The Youth Problem 1952-1961", Letter from Van Rensburg, Secretary of Native Affairs, to The Registration Officer, Johannesburg 24 November 1955.

107. See the de Villiers Louw Report, UG 47/1950.

108. See Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville", p.8. Chaskalson describes a similar process in Vereeniging.
"... as youth unemployment increased steadily over the decade, the Council started to reassess the stance it had taken between the Native Affairs Department and local employers. The rise in unemployment had seen a proliferation in the operations of youth gangs, and when this threat to the Council's control over the townships was greatly aggravated in 1957 by an increased Russians' presence in Vereeniging, the Council started to clamp down on influx control".

The control problem in Vereeniging was caused by a combination of tsotsi and Russian activities. Influx control could combat both threats simultaneously. On the one hand, it would ensure that local labour was absorbed and thus alleviate the tsotsi problem. On the other hand, influx control would curb the expansion of the Russians whose members were all Basotho migrants.

109. Bonner, "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness", p.21.

110. Interview, E. Mphahlele.

111. UG 47/1950, p.3.

112. Ibid, paragraph 86.

113. Ibid, paragraph 172.

114. See Interviews with Pitje, Mphahlele and Motlana. This did not alter their observations that youth gangs were essentially "a-political".

115. French, "James Mpanza and the Sofasonke Party", p.205.

116. Bonner, "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness", p.21.

117. Carter and Karis Collection, Church of the Province Library, Wits University, Reel 2B, "CYL Manifesto", March 1944.

118. Treason Trial Collection, Church of the Province Library, Wits University, Trial Exhibits, file Ea 3, "Programme for the Building of a Mass Youth League", June 1954.

119. Bonner, "Family, Crime and Polttical Consciousness", pp.22-29.

120. ibid, pp.22-27.

121. ibid, p.27.

122. ibid, p.28.

123. Interviews with Pitje, Mphahlele and Motlana.

124. Interview, N. Motlana.

125. Interview, E. Mphahlele.

126. Interviews with Mphahlele and Motlana.

127. Interview, G. Pitje.

128. Interview, N. Motlana.

129. Interview, E. Mphahlele.

130. Interview, N. Motlana.

131. Interview, E. Mphahlele.

132. Interview, E. Mphahlele.

133. Interview, N. Motlana.

134. Interview, N. Motlana.

135. Interview, G. Pitje.

136. Interview, N. Motlana.

137. Interview, Congress Mbata.

138. Interview, N. Motlana.

from Rand Daily Mail, 16 January 1956.

72. Bonner, "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness", pp.18-19.

73. UG 47/1950, paragraph 88.

74. Intermediary Archives Depot, Johannesburg, WRAB Archives, file 401/25/1, "The Youth Problem, 1952-1961", Letter from W.J.P. Carr, Manager to the Native Affairs Commissioner, Johannesburg, 17 October 1956.

75. Bonner, "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness", pp.19-20.

76. Interview, E. Mphahlele.

77. Freed, "The Problem of Crime", pp.156-205. Freed's writing does come across as somewhat hysterical. He does not really attempt to provide a textured analysis of township life. Nevertheless, the details on gang violence do appear to be authentic.

78. Interview, N. Motlana.

79. Bonner, "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness", pp.18-19.

80. Freed, "The Problem of Crime", p.157.

81. Interview, N. Motlana.

82. Drum, September 1954, pp.19-22.

83. Interview, N. Motlana.

84. See Umteteli Wa Bantu, letters column, 14 July 1945, 4 May 1946, 22 June 1946, 22 May 1948.

85. ibid, 11 August 1945, editorial.

86. ibid, 21 April 1945, p.4. The issue of crime arises intermittantly in Orlando advisory board politics. See French, "James Mpanza and the Sofasonke Party".

87. Intermediary Archives Depot, Johannesburg, WRAB archives file 401/1/1, "Advisory boards - joint advisory boards 1953-1957". Special Meeting of the Non-European Affairs Department and Housing Committee with Joint Native Advisory Board, Friday, 14 October 1955.

88. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 29 November 1947, p.3.

89. Interview, N. Motlana.

90. Intermediary Archives Depot, Johannesburg, WRAB Archives, file 401/1/1 "Advisory boards - joint advisory boards 1953-1957", Special Meeting of the Non-European Affairs Department and

Housing Committee with Joint Advisory Board, Friday 14 October 1955.

91. Interview, N. Motlana.

92. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 6 December 1947.

93. Tsotsis also exascerbated divisions and tensions between the permanent urban population and migrants. The Basotho migrant gangs, "The Russians" or Ama Rashea, emerged largely as a defensive response to tsotsi victimisation of Basotho migrants. Tsotsis frequently robbed and assaulted migrants who tended to save more money than permanent urban residents. Once the Russians had established themselves on the Rand, conflict between Russians and tsotsis became common. See Freed's account of gang warfare in Newclare in "The Problem of Crime", pp.159-166. Tsotsis and Russians also competed for, and clashed over, women. See Bonner, "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness", p.19.

94. UG 47/1950. Youth gang involvement is mentioned on practically every page of the report.

95. Inter-departmental Committee on Native Juvenile Unemployment, pp.7-10. See previous references to this commission in my discussion on unemployment.

96. Intermediary Archives Depot, Johannesburg, WRAB Archives, file 401/25/1, "The Youth Problem 1952-1961", Letter from Acting Deputy Manager to the Acting Manager, Johannesburg Department of Native Affairs, 19 February 1953. This letter contained a report on the meeting held earlier that month.

97. Intermediary Archives Depot, Johannesburg, WRAB Archives, file 401/25/1, "The Youth Problem 1952-1961", Letter from Director of Native Labour to the Johannesburg Native Commissioner, 4 May 1953.

98. Intermediary Archives Depot, Johannesburg, WRAB Archives, file 401/25/1, "The Youth Problem 1952-1961", Letter from H.S.J. Van Wyk, Secretary of Native Affairs to the Director of Native Labour, Johannesburg, 1 February 1954.

99. Intermediary Archives Depot, Johannesburg, WRAB Archives, file 401/25/1, "The Youth Problem 1952-1961", clipping from The Star dated 10 February 1954.

100. Intermediary Archives Depot, Johannesburg, WRAB Archives, file 401/25/1, "The Youth Problem 152-1961", Letter from Acting Deputy Manager to the Acting Manager, Johannesburg Department of Native Affairs.

101. ibid.

102. ibid.

139. The de Villiers Louw Commission, UG 47/1950, would provide a good starting point for further research in this area.

140. Bundy, "Street Sociology and Pavement Politics", p.9 (These figures are rounded off).

141. Bonner describes the police clampdown on youth gangs in Benoni during the early 1960s, Bonner, "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness", p.29.

NOTES

1. Interview, Godfrey Pitje, Johannesburg, 23 September 1986.

2. See Giffard, C., "'The House of Youth Has Struck' : The African National Congress Youth League and the struggle for a mass base, 1943-1952". Honours dissertation, UCT, 1984, p.48.

3. See Glaser, C., "Students, Tsotsis and the Congress Youth League 1944-1955", Hons Dissertation, Wits, 1986 for a far more thorough account of this process.

4. By September 1955 the Transvaal region of the CYL had only 2125 signed up members. Treason Trial Collection, Church of the Province Library, Wits University, Treason Trial Exhibits, File Ea 3, Circular, Secretary of the Transvaal Youth League to members (signed by Y. Putini), 23 September 1955.

5. Gerhart, G.M., Black Politics in South Africa, University of California Press, 1978, p.11.

6. Ntatho Motlana, for instance, as a highly active branch organiser and CYL secretary in the early 50s, operated almost exclusively amongst high school students.

7. Interview, William Nkomo (interviewed by Tom Karis) Pretoria, April 1964, Carter and Karis Collection, Reel 13A.

8. Interview, Congress Mbata, 19 February 1964 (G. M. Carter), Carterr and Karis Collection, Ree l 12A.

9. Interview, W. Nkomo, Pretoria, April 1964 (T. Karis), Carter and Karis Collection.

10. Interview, G. Pitje; Hyslop, J, "The Orlando Teachers Struggle Against Bantu Education (1951-3), and the Subsequent Development of the Politics of the African Teaching Profession in the Transvaal", Unpublished paper, 1986, p.12.

11. Interview, G. Pitje.

12. Interview, E. Mphahlele, Johannesburg, 29 September 1986.

13. ibid.

14. Interview, N. Motlana, Johannesburg, 2 October 1986.

15. ibid.

16. Interview, G. Pitje.

17. ibid., Pitje's use of African symbolism does not necessarily imply a departure from western culture. He was, like most of this CYL colleagues, a high westernised individual. (See the

Conclusion chapter of this dissertation). It should also be noted that Pitje was often identified as belonging to this Black Consciousness wing of the ANC which consistently emphasized the use of traditional African symbolism and imagery.

18. ibid. Mothopeng, recently elected teacher of the PAC, was active in the CYL in the late 40s and early 50s.

19. ibid.

20. Interview, E. Mphahlele.

21. ibid.

22. Interview, G. Pitje.

23. Interviews, C. Mbata and N. Motlana.

24. Interview, E. Mphahlele.

25. Interview, N. Motlana.

26. ibid.

27. Umteteli wa Bantu, 29 May 1948.

28. See Glaser, C., "Students, Tsotsis and the CYL" for a more rigorous examination of the CYL's organisational networks.

29. See the report of the Inter-departmental Committee on Native Juvenile employment, 1951.

30. The subsistance struggles of urban Africans have been well documented. Wages were usually insufficient to cover the costs of bare essentials such as rent, food, clothing and transport. See, for instance, Koch's MA Thesis, "Doornfontein and its African Working Class" and French's MA Thesis, "James Mpanza and the Sofasonke Party". For teachers' wages, see Hyslop, "The Orlando Teachers Struggle".

31. Interview, G. Pitje.
By "Christianised" I do not necessarily mean that they were practising Christians. Rather, I refer to those elements of society which accepted Christian values.

32. See Bonner, "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness".

33. Bonner, "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness", p.13.

34. Inter-departmental Committee on Native Juvenile Unemployment. This figure is computed from a table headed "Number of Bantu Children in each Class in the Union and on the Rand and in Pretoria". (Secondary school refers to Standard VI to Standard X), p.8.

35. ibid.

36. Bundy, C., "Street Sociology and Pavement Politics : some aspects of student/youth Consciousness during the 1985 schools crisis in Greater Cape Town". Unpublished paper presented at a conference on "Culture and Consciousness in Southern Africa", University of Manchester, 23-26 September 1986. This figure is taken from a table "The Expansion of African Education since 1960", p.9.

37. Inter-departmental Committee on Native Juvenile Unemployment, p.8.

38. ibid., p.8.

39. As early as 1944 this problem was recognised in an article on the front page of Umteteli Wa Bantu, 11 March 1944. A new Anglican Mission school was opened in Orlando with a capacity of 495. Hundreds of children apparently had to be turned away. In this article the newspaper complained that schooling was hopelessly inadequate on the Rand. In the early 50s the Eiselen Report reiterated the shortage of schools for Africans throughout the country.

40. Report of the Commission Appointed to Enquire into Acts of Violence Committed by Natives at Krugersdorp, Newlands, Randfontein and Newclare, chaired by J de Villiers Louw, 1950. UG 47/1950, paragraph 189.

41. UG 47/1950, paragraph 190.

42. Bonner, "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness", pp 15.

43. Inter-departmental Committee on Native Juvenile Unemployment.

44. Kieser, W.W.J., "Native Juvenile Delinquency", M. Ed. Thesis, University of Potchefstroom, 1952, quoted in Freed, "The Problem of Crime".

45. Inter-departmental Committee on Native Juvenile Unemployment; Bonner, "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness"; Chaskalson, M. "The Road to Sharpeville", unpublished paper for African Studies Institute Seminar, September 1986.

46. Intermediary Archives Depot, Johannesburg, WRAB archives, file 401/25/1, "The youth problem, 1952-1961". Letter from W.J.P. Carr, Manager to The Regional Employment Commissioner, 22 December 1955.

47. Intermediary Archives Depot, Johannesburg, WRAB archives, file 401/25/1, "The youth problem, 1952-1961". Letter from W.J.P. Carr, Manager to the Native Affairs Commissioner of Johannesburg, 17 October 1956.

48. Bonner, "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness", pp. 12-13.

49. Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville", p.7.

50. ibid.

51. Inter-departmental Committee on Native Juvenile Employment. According to this commission, unemployment amongst female youths was "probably worse" than amongst male youths.

52. Bonner, "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness", pp.12-13.

53. ibid, pp.12-13.

54. Inter-departmental Committee on Native Juvenile Unemployment.

55. ibid, p.7.

56. ibid.

57. ibid, p.6.

58. Bonner, "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness", pp.5-8.

59. Inter-departmental Committee on Native Juvenile Unemployment, pp.5-6.

60. Bonner, "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness", p.16.

61. See Freed, "The Problem of Crime", pp.156-206. Freed provides a detailed and systematic account of the gangs in about a dozen Rand locations.

62. Interview, E. Mphahlele.

63. Freed, "The Problem of Crime", pp.157-158.

64. ibid, p.156.

65. ibid, p.156-157.

66. Bonner, "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness", pp.17-18.

67. Interview, E. Mphahlele.

68. UG 47/1950, paragraph 192.

69. Inter-departmental Committee on Native Juvenile Unemployment, p.7 (footnote).

70. Bonner, "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness", p.19.

71. Intermediary Archives Depot, Johannesburg, WRAB archives, file 401/25/1, "The youth problem, 1952-1961", clippng of article