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Black Politics in Kroonstad: Political Mobilisation, Protests, Local Government, and Generational Struggles, 1976 – 1995

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

at the University of the Witwatersrand

Johannesburg, South Africa

2012

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ABSTRACT

The thesis examines political mobilization and protests in Kroonstad's black townships, in the northern Free State Province, South Africa, from 1976 to 1995. It attempts to explain the reason(s) why these townships lagged behind when it came to mobilizing and protesting. It also explores the various entry points employed by some of the residents of these townships to politics; and how they in turn assisted in mobilizing other residents. Furthermore, it shows that local community politics in these townships did not follow the common pattern as in other townships and because of this the residents reacted differently. It demonstrates that until the early 1980s political restraint in these areas existed because of the influential role of the "respectables" or elders in politics. From the mid-1980s the situation changed after students and young people assumed leadership role in local politics. This caused generational tensions, particularly between teachers and students. Furthermore, the thesis examines the divisions between the progressive' activists in the townships, leading to the formation of the Maokeng Democratic Crisis Committee and Activists' Forum, and political violence between the Three Million Gang and the "community", which disrupted the momentum of political mobilization and protests. Finally, the thesis explores the tensions between the provincial leadership of the ANC, supported by the national leadership, and the local branch of the South African National Civic Organisation, which cost the ANC in the first democratic local government elections.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Tshepo Cyril Moloi

---------- day of ----------, 2012

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all the residents – past and present – of Kroonstad.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the assistance, support, encouragement, constructive criticism and intellectual guidance of numerous individuals. First, I would particularly like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor and mentor, Prof. Phil Bonner, who patiently and unselfishly provided me with intellectual guidance in the course of my field work, and later in the writing phase of the thesis.

Second, I would like thank Prof. Noor Nieftagodien for his continuous encouragement. His insightful understanding of the 'local' politics changed my narrow view. I am deeply grateful to Profs. Nieftagodien, Bonner, Clive Glaser, Sekibakiba Peter Lekgoathi, Dr. Muche Musemwa and Dr. Maanda Mulaudzi for their intuitive comments at the seminars organized under the 'Local Histories and Present Realities' program. Thanks also to Dr Sifiso Mxolisi Ndlovu and Prof. Linda Chisholm for their significant contribution, particularly to chapter three, which part of it was published in the *Southern African Historical Journal, Volume 63, Number 1, March 2011.*

Thanks to all the staff and post-graduate students in the 'Local Histories and Present Realities' program for their support and encouragement. First, Pulane Dithlake, and later Gugulethu Nyathikazi and Zahn Gowar, administrators in the program did a splendid work in assisting me through the course of research and writing up. I also appreciate the encouragement of other members of the University of the Witwatersrand's community, especially Drs Windsor Leroke, Shireen Ally, Julian Brown, Tim Gibbs, and Arianna Lissoni.

I am deeply indebted to Ntate Mpopetsi Jonas Dhlamini and Ntate Michael "Baba" Jordan for their interest in my study and unfailing support. Ntate Dhlamini, in particular, greatly assisted me in identifying and making contacts with potential interviewees. My thanks are also due to my friend Dr. Chitja Twala, whose support never flagged.

I am most thankful to the financial support from the National Research Foundation Chair in History, the Ford Foundation and the Faculty of Humanities. I am grateful to the staff of the Wits University Libraries, and Historical and Literary Papers, particularly Michelle Pickover, Gabriele Mohale and Zofia Sulej for their help in all my enquiries. I am deeply indebted to the South

African Democracy Education Trust (SADET) for allowing me to use their interviews. Thanks also to Dr. Twala for allowing me to use some of his interviews. The late Pule "Yster" Moino, Dhlamini, Dr. Anthony Bouwer, I thank you for unselfishingly making available your reading materials on Kroonstad. Tshegofatso Leeuw, Plantinah Dire and Molefe Mahautsa helped with transcribing and translating the interviews; and Esmeralda Dicks and Malebone Rapoo did a splendid job in translating some of the Afrikaans materials to English. Without your assistance this thesis would not have come to completion.

I take this opportunity to thank my family, especially my parents, Stoffel and Edith, for their understanding and unwavering support under trying times. To my brothers, Thabo, Tebogo and Kagiso, thank you for your constant enquiries about the progress of the thesis. My special thanks are also due to Asania Aphane and our daughter Thato. To Asania, thank you for your unflinching support. You have shown me that nothing is impossible in life!

Finally, I owe a great deal of gratitude to the residents of Kroonstad, who this study is about. Their patience, openness, friendship and trust spurred me on. I owe particular thanks to Ntate Tsiu Vincent Matsepe; Ntate Motaung, Ntate Kotze at the Moqhaka Municipality Archives, and Ntate V.M. Duma, the Municipal Manager, for granting me permission to use the municipality's archives. I am particularly grateful to Ntate Motaung for his relentless assistance in accessing these archives. A great deal of gratitude is owing to all my interviewees. Without your support and cooperation this work would not have been possible. Thank you very much.

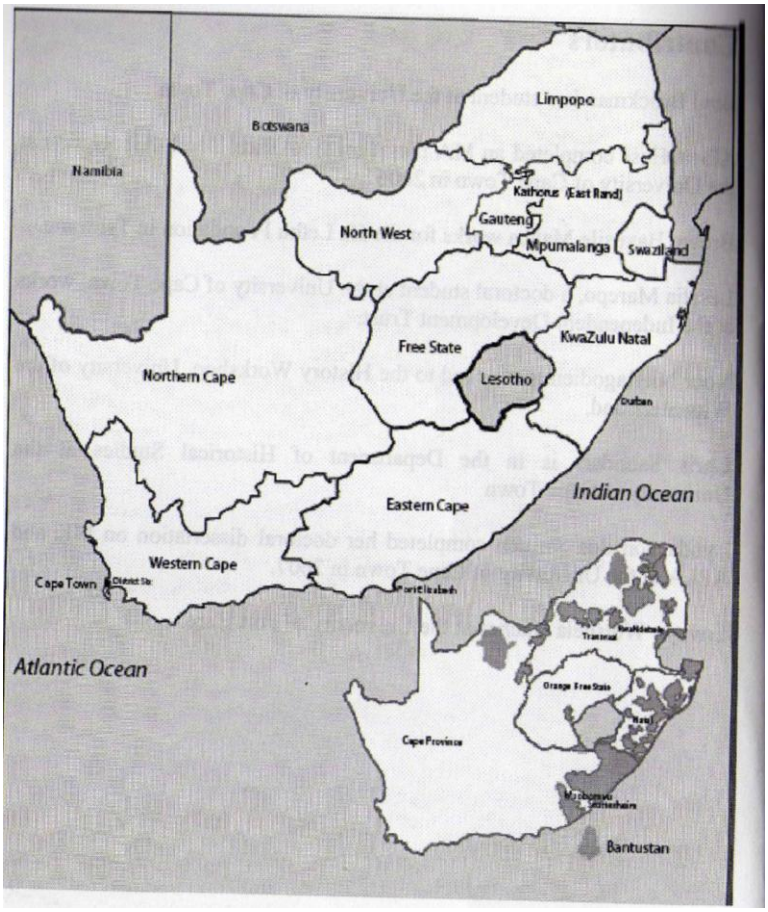
Abbreviations and Acronyms used

AAC	All-African Convention
AF	Activists' Forum
ANC	African National Congress
ACC	Anti-Crime Campaign
AF	Activist Forum
AECI	African Explosion Chemical Industries
AYCO	Alexandra Youth Congress
APLA	Azanian People's Liberation Army
APO	African People's Organisation
ASA	African Student Association
ASUSA	African Student Union of South Africa
AWB	Afrikanerweerstanbeweeging
AZASO	Azanian Student Organisation
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BEYCO	Bekkersdal Youth Congress
BC	Black Consciousness
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BLA	Black Local Authority
BPC	Black People's Convention
CASE	Community Agency for Social Enquiry
CAST	Civic Association of the Southern Transvaal
CCM	City Council of Maokeng
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COSAS	Congress of the South African Students
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPF	Community Police Forum
CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa
DBE	Department of Bantu Education
FEDSAW	Federation of South African Women
FEDTRAW	Federation of Transvaal Women
FSPA	Free State Provincial Archives
GNU	Government of National Unity
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council

HUCA	Huhudi Civic Association
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
ICU	Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union
JC	Junior Certificate
JMB	Joint Matriculation Board
KROONSO	Kroonstad Student Organisation
KTC	Kroonstad Town Council
LGCC	Local Government Co-ordinating Committee
LGNF	Local Government Negotiating Forum
LGTA	Local Government Transitional Act
MCA	Maokeng Civic Association
MASAC	Maokeng Student Art Club
MADRA	Maokeng Drama Association
MAYCO	Maokeng Youth Congress
MDCC	Maokeng Democratic Crisis Committee
MDM	Mass Democratic Movement
MEC	Member of the Executive Committee
MMC	Maokeng Military Command
NAB	Native Advisory Board
NAC	Native Affairs Commissioner
NAD	Native Affairs Department
NEC	National Executive Committee
NEHAWU	National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union
NEUM	Non-European Unity Movement
NUAB	Native Urban Areas Bill
NUSAS	National Union of South African Students
OFSATA	Orange Free State African Teachers Association
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PEBCO	Port Elizabeth Civic Organisation
PWV	Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging
PUTCO	Public Utility Transport Corporation

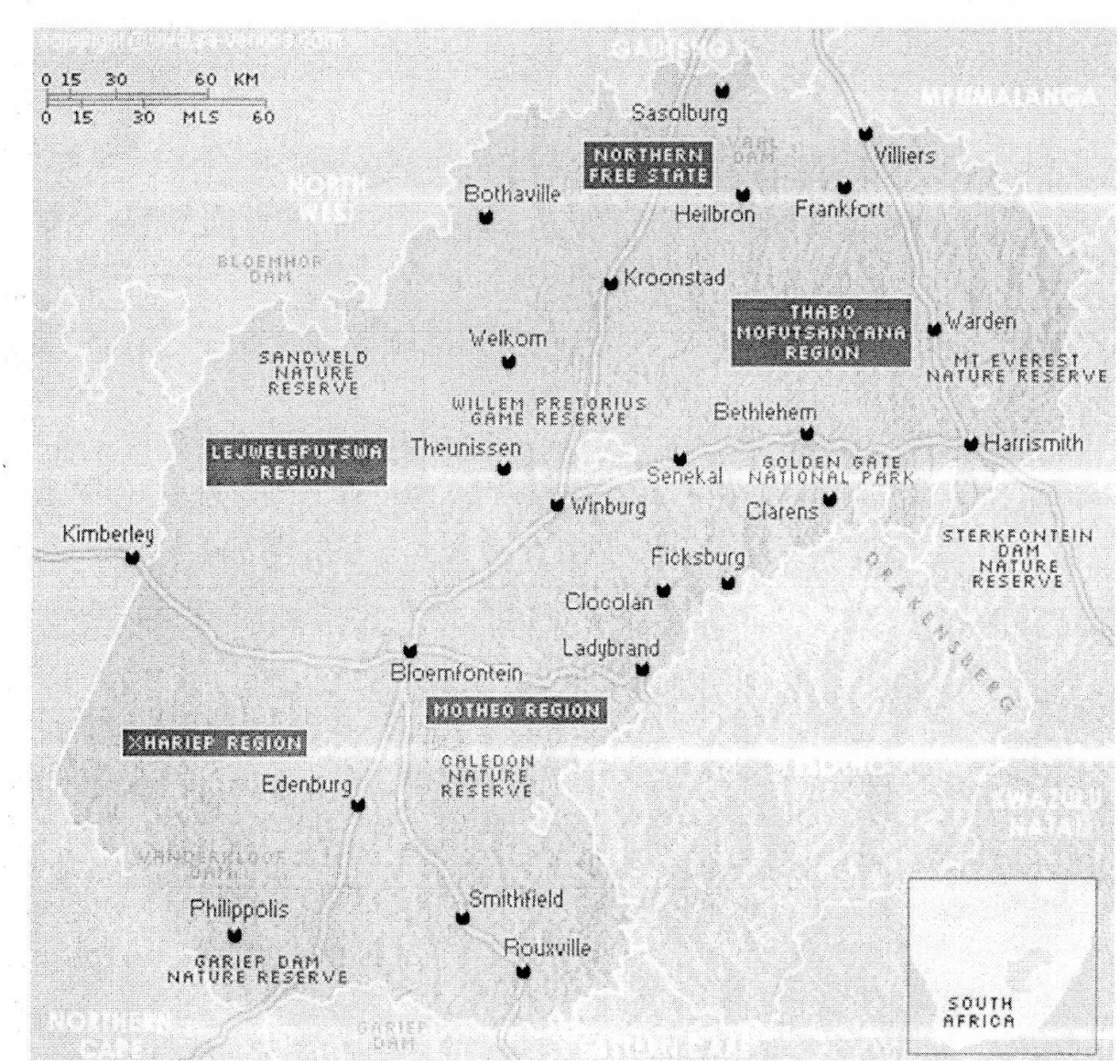
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RSC	Regional Services Council
SAP	South African Police
SACCWU	South African Catering and Commercial Workers' Union
SB	Special Branch
SCA	Soweto Civic Association
SCA	Seeisoville Civic Association
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SADET	South African Democracy Education Trust
SAMWU	South African Municipal Workers' Union
SANNC	South African National Native Congress
SANCO	South African National Civic Organisation
SAPA	South African Press Association
SAYCO	South African Youth Congress
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SDU	Self Defense Unit
SRC	Student Representative Council
SOYA	Society of Young Africans
TCM	Town Council of Maokeng
TMG	Three Million Gang
TLC	Transitional Local Council
TMK	*Tien Mane Kraag*
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UCT	University of Cape town
UNISA	University of South Africa
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WCA	Wesselton Civic Association

MAPS



Map 1: South Africa

(Source: From Apartheid to Democracy: Localities and Liberation, 2007)



Map 2: Regions of the Free State Province

(source: http:www.sa-venues.com/maps/freestate_relief.htm)



Map 3: Kroonstad (*Source: http://www.sa-venues.com/maps/freestate/kroonstad.php)*

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The primary aim of this thesis is to attempt to investigate black[1]politics in Kroonstad, in the northern Free State Province, South Africa. To achieve this, it will examine two related issues: political mobilisation and protests (or collective action). For the purpose of manageability, the thesis will focus on Kroonstad's black townships: Maokeng and Brentpark. However, more attention will be on Maokeng, seeing that it is where political mobilisation and protests were predominant. The thesis will try to illustrate that the "community"[2] of Maokeng in particular, like many other "communities" in different townships in South Africa, participated in political mobilisation and protests, albeit lagging behind, especially in the 1980s.[3]

The thesis will address the reason(s) the "community" of Maokeng, and to a lesser extent of Brentpark, mobilised and protested, and second, how it mobilised and protested. And, perhaps most importantly, who within these communities mobilised (or were mobilised) and protested. On the surface responses to these questions may seem obvious. For example, Jeremy Seekings, in his D. Phil thesis, argues that communities residing in some parts of the then Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vaal (P.W.V.) areas in the late 1970s and early 1980s mobilised and protested against rent increases.[4] Similarly, Kehla Shubane notes that civic associations which started emerging in various townships in the late 1970s mobilised increasing numbers of people in

[1] For the purpose of this study the term 'Black' will include both members of the African and Coloured communities. During the period under review the Indian community was not present in Kroonstad.

[2] The term 'community' is referenced in this thesis as a whole in quotations to show that the 'community' of Kroonstad's black townships was not homogenous. It differed in terms of political ideology, class, and even generation. It was for this reason that a certain section of the 'community', for example the elderly and especially women, at a particular political period such as the early 1980s supported the Town Council of Maokeng led by Caswell Koekoe, whereas the younger generation, particularly the politically conscientised opposed the this Council. Towards the end of the 1980s and early 1990s a section amongst the elderly had changed its position and opposed the Council under Koekoe. In contrast, during the same period some within the generation that initially opposed Koekoe and his Council had altered their attitude and were then accepting that the 'community' could benefit from Koekoe's experience in building the 'new' South Africa.

[3] Maokeng Township was not peculiar in this regard. There were other townships which were quiescent. For example, in 1984 whilst there was escalating protest and confrontation elsewhere in the P.W.V. region Kagiso and Mohlakeng in the West Rand were such townships, and Soweto to a lesser extent. In Kagiso and Mohlakeng there were no rent increases or … township-wide civic grievances to focus discontent on township councillors. In Soweto, on the other hand, rents were subsidized and incomes were comparatively higher. See Seekings, J. 'Quiescence and the Transition to Confrontation: South African Townships, 1978-1984' (University of Oxford, Nuffield College, D. Phil, 1990), pp.253-4. The thesis will demonstrate that the "community" of Maokeng lagged behind particularly in the 1980s because there were no rent increases and similar civic grievances raised in other parts of the country, but most importantly it will contend that it was because of the role played by the charismatic mayor of the township and its council.

[4] Seekings 'Quiescence'

opposition to the introduction of Black Local Authorities (BLA's).[5] In Maokeng, as will be seen below, the situation was different and therefore grievances raised in other townships to mobilise the residents were never raised, at least until 1989.

The argument advanced in this thesis is that in Maokeng, in particular, unlike other townships, political mobilisation and protests by the "community" were not necessarily directed against the local council but rather took national form at least until 1989. In other words, members of the "community" of Maokeng who actively participated in political mobilisation and protest in the period 1985-1988 strongly believed that their main objective in the struggle for liberation was to dismantle the apartheid state. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, in the period from 1977 to the late-1980s the community's grievances against, first, the Community Council were channelled through the opposition party within the council[6], and then later during the BLA, the Town Councillors mediated on behalf of the members of the community. Because of this the Town Council of Maokeng (TCM) enjoyed support within the "community", especially amongst the adult residents. In turn, this made it difficult for local activists to mobilise against the Council. Seekings, writing about the Community Councils in the mid-1970s, correctly notes that because of this "... then residents did not become hostile to the councils per se, remaining largely indifferent and sometimes even supportive".[7] In Maokeng, interestingly this accommodative behaviour by the residents prevailed even during the early years of the township's council under the BLA.

The second reason is that between 1984 (the year of transition from quiescence to generalised confrontation in many townships[8]) and 1989 in Maokeng there was no concerted effort by the "community" to force the TCM to resign because it did not meet its needs; that is, it did not provide the necessary services, and/or because it constantly increased rent and service charges – the common complaints against Town and Village Councils elsewhere. On the contrary, the TCM, or at least its chairman, Caswell Koekoe, enjoyed some considerable support from a certain section of the "community". However, this does not imply that the TCM and its councillors were embraced by all. Political activists, particularly those who supported the United Democratic Front (UDF) were hostile to the Council, but were unsuccessful in forcing it to dissolve.

Towards the end of the 1980s, adult political activists, student and youth organisations protested against the TCM (then renamed the City Council of Maokeng) and, indeed, called for its dissolution. This shift in attitude should be understood within the national political events taking

[5] Shubane, K. 'Black local authorities: a contraption of control' in *Apartheid City in Transition* (eds.) Mark Swilling Richard Humphries, and Kehla Shubane (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1991)
[6] See *Post, 19 August 1980*
[7] Seekings 'Quiescence', p.110
[8] Ibid., Abstract

place at the time. In February 1988 the government banned the UDF, its key affiliates and other organisations [and placed] new restrictions on the Front's leaders.[9] The UDF responded by formalising its alliance with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) into a Mass Democratic Movement (MDM). The MDM opposed the BLA's local government elections which were held in October 1988, but also organised the defiance campaign "... of civil disobedience to challenge segregated, government-controlled facilities such as hospitals and schools".[10] Political activists across the country took up the MDM's call and opposed all the structures linked to the government. It was on the basis of national politics as espoused by the MDM and the then banned African National Congress (ANC) that political activists in Maokeng called for the resignation of the councillors and the dissolution of the City Council of Maokeng (CCM).

And thirdly, when the "community" of Maokeng began to mobilise and staged mass protests it was after the ANC's January 8th 1985 Statement made by Oliver Tambo, then president of the ANC, to make the country 'ungovernable', "by which" Gregory Ruiters writes, "the ANC meant using revolutionary violence against the regime and driving out the BLA and councillors from the townships ..."[11] The "community", especially the 'radical' section, took this statement seriously and used every method available to destroy and oppose anything and anyone seen to be obstructing the fight for liberation. Because of this, the thesis contends that black politics in Maokeng were largely influenced by national political events rather than local. Of course, as will be shown in the course of the thesis, in the mid-1980s local councillors and their properties were attacked and damaged. But this was because these were the immediate representatives of the central government; by destroying them, some sections within the community thought they would bring the central government to "its knees". The attack on the councillors' properties was not related to lack of service delivery or rent and service charge increases.

And the final reason the local political activists in Maokeng did not focus their energies on the TCM was because the mass detention of political activists during the national state of emergency, the deployment of experienced political activists to regional or national structures, and the split within the Charterist-aligned structure into two factions disrupted political mobilisation and protests in the township.[12] Moreover, the situation was worsened at the beginning of the 1990s by the emergence of the Three Million Gang, which terrorised the

[9] Seekings, J. *The UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa 1983-1991* (Claremont, David Philip Publishers, 2000), p.228

[10] Lodge, T. and Nasson, B. *All, Here, and Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s* (Claremont, David Philip Publishers, 1991), p.110

[11] Ruiters 'South African Liberation Politics: A case of collective action and leadership in Katorus, 1980-1989 '(University of the Witwatersrand, M.A. Dissertation, 1995) , p.99

[12] Charterist-aligned organisations were all those organisations which supported the Freedom Charter, adopted by the ANC and its allies in June 1955 at Kliptown. See Lodge, T. *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1983), pp.71-4

"community". More attention and efforts were spent fighting this gang and mass political mobilisation suffered.

The introduction of young people to politics was perceived by most adults in different townships across the country as the source of generational tensions between them and the younger generation. For example, in Lingelihle Township, Cradock, in the Eastern Cape, one resident lamented": "I think after 1976 that's when it started because I used to remember whenever I see a young boy doing anything wrong as his elder you stop him doing that thing and he listens. Thereafter ... you discover politics have changed our children".[13] Because of the mass political mobilisation and protests in Maokeng from 1985, generational struggle (or tension) became another significant element in the politics of Maokeng. As in many townships, the removal of leadership through detention and constant harassment by the police produced a leadership vacuum, which was closed by the inexperienced and politically naive leaders who made bad judgments and called for controversial campaigns. This inevitably caused generational struggle in the township, particularly with the adult generation which opposed this leadership. However, in Maokeng generational struggle was particularly evident in schools when students disrespected and clashed with their teachers. But, unlike in other townships, the struggle between the adult generation and the younger generation in Maokeng did not cause a backlash by teachers (or adults), which in some areas resulted in adults forming vigilante groups, aimed at "disciplining" the younger generation.[14]

This chapter is divided into four sections: A case for Maokeng, Literature Review, Methodology and Research Processes, and Chapter outline

1.1 A Case for Maokeng

Several factors motivate the choice of Maokeng Township as a case study. Firstly, a survey of the existing literature on Maokeng does not go beyond 1976,[15] and has largely ignored the history of the township. What consideration has been given by Antjie Krog,[16] Jeremy Seekings,[17]

[13] Tetelman, M.S. 'We Can: Black Politics in Cradock, South Africa, 1948-85', (Evanston, Illinois, Ph. D thesis, Northwestern University, 1997), p.143

[14] In Thabong, Welkom, in Jan 1986 parents/adults forced pupils back to school. See Haysom, N. *Mabangalala: The Rise of Rightwing Vigilantes in South Africa. Occasional Paper, No.10, Centre for Applied Legal Studies,* (*Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand, 1986),* p.23

[15] Serfontein, D. *Keurskrif Vir Kroonstad: 'N Kroniek Van Die Ontstaan, Groei En Vooruitsigte Van 'N Vrystaatse Plattelandse Dorp* (Johannesburg, Persko-Boekdrukkery, 1990); JSM *The History of Black Education in Maokeng, Kroonstad* (Pretoria, HSRC, 1997); Kay, P. SND de N. *Notre Dame: Under the Southern Cross* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1984); Ntantala, P. *A Life's Mosaic: The Autobiography of Phyllis Ntantala* (University of the Western Cape Mayibuye History Series No.6, Mayibuye Centre: Bellville. David Phillip, Cape Town, 1992); Bradford, H. *A Taste of Freedom: The ICU in Rural South Africa, 1924-1930* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987)

[16] Krog, A. *A Change of Tongue* (Johannesburg, Random House, 2003); Krog, A. *Begging to be Black* (Cape Town, Random House Struik, 2009)

Matthew Chaskalson and Jeremy Seekings,[18] and finally Chitja Twala and Jeremy Seekings, in their recent chapter in the South African Democracy Education Trust's (SADET's) volume four,[19] is only an allusion, and little attention has been paid to the township's political history.

Secondly, Maokeng has a distinctive feature of consisting of a relatively permanent African population. A survey conducted by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) into housing issues in Maokeng found that 68% out of a stratified sample of 293 respondents "had lived in Maokeng all their lives."[20] Although the survey targeted a very small number of respondents, taking into account that the Transitional Local Council for the greater Kroonstad, Department of Community Services in 1996 placed the population of Maokeng at 99 585[21], it nevertheless demonstrates that the township has had a stable community. This contrasted with some of the African townships like in the East Rand, which had a mass population of migrants. Despite this stability, the "community" of Maokeng was divided, although not along the "insider and outsider" dichotomy, but along political approach. And this proved to be problematic when it came to mobilizing and protesting (this will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five).

Thirdly, ethnic divisions prevalent in other African townships were not present in Maokeng. The township is inhabited mainly by the Southern SeSotho-speaking group. There were other ethnic groupings like AmaXhosa and AmaZulu, which once settled in Maokeng, especially in the township's early days. These settled in the old locations. The majority of these had come to Kroonstad in search of employment opportunities and ended up living in Maokeng. After their employment contracts had expired, or after they had been retrenched, or for other various reasons, many left Maokeng. For example, Archibald Campbell Jordan and his wife, Phyllis Ntantala, who had come to Maokeng from the Eastern Cape Province to teach, left in the mid-1940s to pursue their teaching careers in Cape Town.[22] However, those who opted to remain were assimilated into the Basotho culture. This also applied to the Coloured people who refused to relocate to Brentpark, either because they resisted or they were in inter-racial marriages,

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[17] Seekings, J. 'Political Mobilisation in Tumahole, 1984-1985', in *Africa Perspective: Agrarian Struggle in South Africa – The Debate Continue, Vol.1, Nos. 7 & 8, 1989*

[18] Chaskalson, M. and Seekings, J. 'The Awakening: Desparation and Defiance', in Mark Bennett and Deborah Quin (Research Co-ordinators) *Political Conflict in South Africa: Data Trends, 1984-88* (An Indicator South Africa Issue Focus, December 1988)

[19] Twala, C. and Seekings, J. 'Activist networks and Political Protest in the Free State, 1983-1990', in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, VOL. 4,* 1980-1990, South African Education Democracy Trust (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2010)

[20] 'Bringing houses to Maokeng': A community-based Approach. Research Report for CASE and Maokeng Community Development Trust (MCDT) by Samuels Tanya et al. of CASE, July 1996, p.3; also see, Life History Interviews conducted by T.C. Challa and A.H. Mosoeu of the Free State Provincial Archives for the Department of Sport, Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Library and Archives Directorate, Tsewelopelo Library, Maokeng, 15 June 2005. These interviews reveal that a significant number of people interviewed had arrived in Maokeng in the 1940s.

[21] Bringing houses to Maokeng',p.5.

[22] Ntantala, P. *A Life's Mosaic*

following the forced removals of the 1950s. Most significantly, when political violence erupted in the township at the beginning of the 1990s this was not ethnically-driven as was the case in places like Alexandra Township,[23] Kathorus[24] and Soweto[25]. The 'system' was, therefore, unable to use ethnic divisions to foster political violence in the township, but it promoted it through the Three Million Gang (discussed in detail in chapter six).

The fourth reason for examining Maokeng is that because of the key role education played in the development of the township, community matters had always been led (or influenced) by the "respectables" or the learned elders, at least until in the late 1970s.[26] This helps explain the constraint on mass political mobilization, especially violent protests which only became the norm from the mid-1980s in the township – because students and youth were in the forefront. These "respectables" believed in resolving the issues through dialogue – which involved few people. There is evidence illustrating that on numerous occasions the latter preferred to negotiate with the authorities. During the height of political struggle in the mid-1980s, local clergies and the 'learned' or teachers, involved in political struggle in Maokeng, continued the trend. However, during this period the balance of power (or influence) was heavily tilted in favour of the radicals, who used confrontational methods.

Fifthly, the political culture in the township has always been diverse, dating back to the 1940s. The numerous political organizations which existed in the township at different periods included the African National Congress (ANC), the Non-European Unity Movement's youth wing, SOYA (Society of Young Africans),[27] Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), and the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO). The degree of their support and influence varied. Notwithstanding, in the early 1970s the BCM was very influential, at least until the late 1970s when it was banned in 1977. Some of the proponents of the BC philosophy continued their involvement in the struggle for liberation but had shifted their political affiliation to the 'Charterist' camp.[28] In the mid-1980s the different political approaches adopted by the historically-BC aligned activists and those who from the onset followed the 'Charterist' line caused tension within the 'Charterist' structure, leading to a split between the Maokeng Democratic Crisis Committee ('radicals') and the Activists' Forum ('moderates').

[23] Bonner, P. and Nieftagodien, N. *Alexandra: A History* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2008), Chapter Fourteen

[24] Bonner, P. and Nieftagodien, N. *Kathorus: A History* (Cape Town, Maskew Miller Longman, 2001), pp.134-147

[25] Ka Xeketwana, B.M. 'The Relation between hostels and the political violence on the Reef from July 1990 to December 1993' (University of the Witwatersrand, MA Thesis, 1995)

[26] Maokeng was one of the few main centres of education in the Orange Free State, dating back to the late 1930s. In 1941 it was one of the two townships in the region to offer matric classes. See, Ntantala, *A Life's Mosaic,* p.84

[27] Sometimes SOYA is called the Sons of Young Africa, see, for example, Bonner, P. And Nieftagodien, N. *Alexandra: A History,* (Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand Press, 2008), p.145

[28] 'Charterists' were activists who adhered to the Freedom Charter adopted by the Congress Movement, led by the ANC, in 1955 in Kliptown. These believed in inclusive and non-racial politics

And finally, Kroonstad town unlike other towns, particularly in the East Rand and the Reef in general, has never been a mass industrial area, agglomerated by diverse "manufacturing clusters: metal industry, chemicals and food".[29] Although Twala and Seekings note that "both population and industry are concentrated in the north-west corner, which includes the goldfields around Welkom as well as Sasolburg, Parys and Kroonstad"[30], comparatively, Kroonstad had far fewer industries, particularly manufacturing industries, than the other towns in the north-west corner of the Orange Free State (O.F.S.). Its economy is largely based on service industries. In the 1970s, for example, although a considerable number of people worked for the railways (in the mid-1980s the railways had ceased operating in Kroonstad), and the Milling Company, a significant number of people were employed by the state as police officers, prison warders, teachers, with some working for the municipality and small stores in the area. For this reason the town did not experience active trade unionism until the mid-1980s – which even then they operated under stringent conditions. As will be seen in the thesis that trade unionism was introduced in Kroonstad in the early 1980s by Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the ANC's military wing, cadres who had been infiltrated back into the country.

The more industrialized towns in the northern O.F.S. such as Sasolburg, because of Sasol's oil-from-coal refineries had a mass concentration of workers in a single factory or plant. Despite the company's preference of employing migrants[31], trade unions were able to organize and wage strike actions against the company. In early 1983 members of the South African Chemical Workers' Union (SACWU) in Sasolburg went on strike in support of their colleagues whose employment was summarily terminated by the management of the African Explosives and Chemical Industries (AECI).[32] These workers were relieved of their duties after they had demanded the removal of an acting supervisor. When management refused to accede to their demand, the workers embarked in a series of work stoppages until they were dismissed.[33] In July of the same year, 251 workers, also members of SACWU, downed tools, refusing to work fearing for their safety. This was after a gas blowout had killed two workers.[34] This never touched Kroonstad until 1985.

Before the chapter shifts its focus to literature review, it is important to note that the case study of Kroonstad's black locations it is a significant contribution to trying to understand black

[29] Ruiters 'South African Liberation Politics', p.72

[30] Twala, C. and Seekings, J. 'Activist networks and political protest in the Free State, 1983-1990', in SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, *Volume 4* (1980–1990) (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2010), p.767

[31] Nti Masisi, who in 1964 was working for Synthetic Rubber Company as a clerk, responsible, among others, to travel across the country identifying potential employees and collecting their call cards, remembers that Sasol employed mainly people from outside Sasolburg because "they (white managers) used to say that people from Sasolburg were lazy". See interview with Nti Masisi by Gift Poli, for the Free State ANC Centenary Project, 2011; But the main reason for employing migrants was probably to encourage disunity amongst the workers

[32] *Sowetan,* 3 February 1983

[33] Ibid.

[34] *The Citizen,* 7 July 1983

people's experiences and responses to apartheid from a local perspective. This is in view of the fact that black people's histories, not only in Kroonstad but in general, have been previously neglected. Noor Nieftagodien argues

> the publication of popular local histories was typically undertaken by municipalities to celebrate the histories and development of white towns. In the latter genre of local (urban) history, as was the custom in official histories in general, black people appeared as only peripheral actors and were often completely excised from these racially biased versions of the past[35]

Through this local study, emphasizing 'history from below' and "foregrounding the lived experiences and struggles of 'ordinary people', an attempt has been made to give attention to "local leaders of popular movements, teachers, home-owners, former gangsters, and young people, who "… invariably would appear as no more than footnotes in conventional narratives".[36]

1.2 Literature Review

Although there is sizeable literature focusing specifically on Kroonstad and Maokeng, as already noted above, this literature however does not transcend the 1976 period. There are a few exceptions, of course. The few books that solely focus on the histories of Kroonstad and (and to a lesser extent) Maokeng one is the massive 645-page book written by Dot Serfontein (Antjie Krog's mother) about the history of Kroonstad from 1854 to 1953. In 1985 the City Council of Kroonstad requested Serfontein to write a book to celebrate Kroonstad's 99 years of existence. This book provides useful information about the establishment of Kroonstad, the shaping of the town and the role of the (white) city council. However, it specifically deals with the history of the whites and the town.[37]Apart from alluding to few incidents like the role played by the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU's) and the boycotts against increased rates and service charges led by some of the leading figures in the ICU such as Keable 'Mote, this book is absolutely silent on political activism in the black townships.

Paul Rich's article on Maokeng deals with the role of the Joint Council of European and Native, Native Advisory Boards, and the earlier period of political mobilization and organization in Kroonstad. Interestingly, he demonstrates the changing role of the Advisory Board in Kroonstad: how in 1934 it begun to press for minimum wages for local African workers, as opposed to being

[35] Nieftagodien, N. 'The Past of 'The Local' in History Workshop's Local History', in *African Studies, 69, 1, April 2010,* p.41
[36] Ibid., p.42
[37] Serfontein *Keurskrif*

a timid and pro-segregationist organization.[38] This article is an invaluable contribution in understanding black leadership in Kroonstad before the 1970s, particularly amongst the elite group.

Notre Dame by Patricia Kay, as well as Phyllis Ntantala's *A Life's Mosaic* has each dedicated a chapter to the history of Kroonstad. Kay's chapter focuses on the important role played by the Roman Catholic Church in introducing education in the black township in 1907. Apart from this, the chapter does not provide any significant information. Ntantala's chapter, on the other hand, sheds light on the daily living conditions of the residents in Maokeng in the late 1930s and 1940s (Ntantala arrived in Maokeng in 1937 to take up a teaching post at Bantu High School), the types of work people did, the presence of the ICU and ANC in Maokeng, and on economic development of the area. Just like Jonah Steele Moeng Setiloane, Ntantala reconstructs the brief history of Maokeng from memory of lived experiences. Ntantala's chapter is useful because it deals specifically with ordinary peoples' everyday life's experiences, showing the everyday socio-economic struggles people endured. She also, briefly, demonstrates the role played by teachers in teacher-associations and in politics in Maokeng.[39] In this thesis I draw from this chapter to compare the community's grievances in the 1930s/40s and those in the early 1990s. This helps to articulate the intensity of violent protests in the latter period.

JSM Setiloane's *The Black History of Education in Maokeng* provides a first-hand account about the history of education in Maokeng. Setiloane attended school at Bantu High in the 1930s (the school was renamed Bodibeng High in 1967), and in 1962 was employed as the principal in the same school. He also draws heavily on the school's logbooks and other primary materials, like the principal's reports. In this book Setiloane demonstrates how education evolved in Maokeng, from church schools to Bantu education. He further shows the significant role education played in Kroonstad within the black community. For instance, he notes that in the 1960s the degree of illiteracy among the people had decreased tremendously and this made it possible for many people to find employment in the prison department, police force and in the municipal office.[40] Moreover, he provides a brief account of the socio-economic and political life in Maokeng, especially from the 1930s to the 1970s. In conclusion, he mentions, in passing, the negative impact of the intermittent student unrests had in the school from the mid-70s.[41]

The thesis draws heavily from this book, especially the educational background. Although the book is both a personal and communal eulogy of the significant role education played in developing the township and its inhabitants it, nevertheless, also implicitly supports the argument

[38] Rich, P. 'Managing Black Leadership: The Joint Councils, Urban Trading and Political Conflict in the OFS, 1925-42', in Phil Bonner, Isabel Hofmeyr, Deborah James and Tom Lodge (eds.) *Holding Their Ground: Class, Locality and Culture in the 19th Century and 20th Century South Africa* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1989), pp. 186-87

[39] Kay *Notre Dame;* Ntantala *A Life's Mosaic*

[40] Setiloane *A History of Black Education,* pp.137-8

[41] Ibid.

that Maokeng prior to 1976 did not experience violent protests, because politics were led by the elderly and the "respectables". Among the notable "respectables" actively involved in politics in Maokeng in the 1930s were Reginald Cingo, Joe Kokozela (second principal of Bantu High, then called Bantu United School in 1928), and Reverend Z.R. Mahabane (President-General of the ANC in 1924-27 and 1937-40).[42] In the 1950s SOYA dominated politics in the township, followed by the elderly women like Majoro Matseki, who led the women's march against the pass laws.[43]

In *A Change of Tongue,* Antjie Krog deals with certain important political events which took place in Kroonstad, especially from the mid-80s to the early 1990s. Like Setiloane and Ntantala, she also writes from a personal experience. Writing about Kroonstad in the post-independence period, Krog demonstrates the conservative nature and the unwillingness of the many Afrikaners living in town to accept the political changes in the country. Furthermore, she recalls the "first and only truly inclusive" march organized from the Coloured area (Brentpark) to the centre of town to say: "this is our town too and we demand equal rights here."[44] Although, this march was ruthlessly suppressed by the police, Krog, asserts that it bridged the gap between the residents of Maokeng and those of Brentpark. This event sheds light on the uneasy relationship between the two communities. Although there were a handful of activists from Brentpark, notably amongst these were Dennis Bloem and Isaac "Sakkie" Oliphant, the majority of the residents of Brentpark avoided becoming involved in the struggle for liberation. This was evident when an attempt to mobilize and organize the residents of Brentpark to join the UDF in 1983 failed.

Krog's recently published book *Begging to be Black,* an extended edition of *Account of a Murder*, tells a story of the murder of the leader of the Three Million Gang in 1992. Even though the book is about this murder and Krog's account about how she was drawn into it, it provides glimpses of politics in Maokeng in the mid-1980s. For example, she alludes to the competing political factions, the AF and MDCC, in the township and relates how these divided the "community".[45] From the oral interviews I conducted in Maokeng it is clear that the "community" was divided between the two factions and that this had serious political ramifications. These books are helpful because they also shed light on the uneasy relationship between the communities of Maokeng and Brentpark.

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[42] See Rich, P. 'Managing Black Leadership: The Joint Councils, Urban Trading and Political Conflict in the OFS, 1925-1942', in Phil Bonner, Isabel Hofmeyr, Deborah James and Tom Lodge (eds.) *Holding Their Ground: Class, Locality and Culture in the 19th Century and 20th Century South Africa* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1989), p.187; Bradford, H. *A Taste of Freedom: The ICU in Rural South Africa, 1924-1930* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987), p.69

[43] Setiloane *The History,* p.139

[44] Krog, A. *A Change of Tongue* (Johannesburg, Random House, 2003), p.113

[45] Krog *Begging to be Black,* p.172; for an in-depth account of the murder of Ramodikoe George "Diwiti" Ramasimong, the leader of the Three Million gang, see also Krog, A. *Account of a Murder* (Johannesburg, Heinemann, 1995)

Chitja Twala and Jeremy Seekings' work focus on the construction and activities of networks of activists in the Orange Free State (OFS) in the 1980s. They contend that these networks "contributed to the unfolding pattern of political organization and protest in the diverse towns of the OFS".[46] Twala and Seekings also demonstrate the important role played by the veterans of struggle like Winnie Mandela (Madikizela), who in 1977 was banished to Brandfort, in the OFS, and 'Commandant' Caleb Motshabi, who had joined the ANC in 1949 and in 1961 became the OFS commander of MK (Umkhonto we Sizwe, or the Spear of the Nation), ANC's military wing, in "educating" the younger generation in the OFS politically.[47] This helps explain why political mobilization and organization was easy to achieve in the early 1980s in other parts of the OFS such as Bloemfontein. Although, the Kroonstad's black locations lacked veterans of the struggle to take up this role, Twala and Seekings show that some of the young people in Maokeng, in particular, were conscientised by what they witnessed in townships like Sebokeng, in the Vaal Triangle, and Duduza, in the East Rand.[48] Most significantly, the authors also discuss, in detail, the numerous unsuccessful attempts by the UDF leadership to build organizations in the OFS.[49] This, they note also affected Kroonstad. They write "… An ad hoc UDF committee was formed on 31 August 1985 … comprised essentially Dennis Bloem (chairperson) and "Bizzah" Makhathe … met several times, but made no real progress towards a permanent structure".[50] Although, Twala and Seekings' work does not provide a detailed account about black politics in Kroonstad, it, however, sheds light on the difficulties activists experienced in organizing in Kroonstad. Furthermore, they allude to the split between activists in Maokeng, which not only disrupted political mobilization in the township but also divided the "community".

Finally, having dealt with the literature on Maokeng and Kroonstad, the chapter will now turn to review literature on political mobilization and protests, and generational struggles.

Literature on political mobilization and protests in South Africa is relatively abundant. Most of the literature on this issue focuses on youth politics. However, this should not be construed to mean that there were no adult-led politics (or organizations). Civic and council politics were very much part of black politics in townships. These will be briefly discussed below. First, let us focus on the literature on youth politics. Shaun Johnson's work provides an interesting review of the emergence of the "youth component of resistance".[51] He traces the development of youth politics from the late 1960s, with the formation of the South African Student Organization (SASO) to the eruption of youth revolts in the 1980s. This work is a valuable contribution in

[46] Twala and Seekings 'Activist networks', p.767
[47] Ibid., p.770
[48] Ibid., p.774
[49] Ibid., pp.777-8
[50] Ibid., p.793
[51] Johnson, 'Soldiers of Luthuli', in S. Johnson (ed.) *No Turning Back* (Bloomington: Indiana press. 1989) pp.94-143

providing the historical background to the emergence of youth organizations and their role in the politics of resistance.

In similar vein, Seekings in his book *Heroes or Villains* provides an illuminating account of the emergence of youth organizations in the country from the mid-1970s. He also discusses their activities in detail. His work is helpful in differentiating between the youth who were involved in the struggle in the 1970s and those involved in the struggle in the 1980s. He illustrates that in the 1970s it was young people or students (and not the youth) who were in the forefront of the struggle because of their specific focus on school politics. Then in the 1980s youth took the lead because of their involvement in the broader politics. The thesis draws from both Johnson and Seekings' studies to show how youth organizations were established in Maokeng, and their activities.

Kumi Naidoo and Ari Sitas' work focus on the politics of youth resistance in Durban.[52] Sitas' work looks at the 'making of the comrades movement' and Naidoo deals with 'major difficulties encountered by youth organizations and activists' [in trying to organize themselves into a united youth organization]. The two scholars provide similar views about the factors which drew the youth (in Durban) to the struggle for liberation: mainly defending the "community" against Inkatha and KwaZulu Police (which were aligned to Inkatha). Both refute the argument that youth movements (or comrades) emerged because of the social indicators such as "black unemployment and anomic behaviour". They, instead, contend that youth induction into the politics of resistance was influenced by various factors. This point is of particular interest because when researching youth activists in Maokeng it became clear that many of them received their first political lessons not in youth organizations but from youth groups in church and at home, for example. This was particularly the case in the Roman Catholic Church. Naidoo, in his study, further provides an illuminating account about the socio-cultural and political differences between the Indian and Coloured and African youth. He asserts that these differences were the main reasons why the youth in Durban could not organize themselves into a united youth movement.

However, in both scholars' work there are silences about the life histories of the youth, which would have enabled the studies to throw light on the socio-economic factors that encouraged the youth to join the struggle. What is valuable about these scholars' work is that they provide a valuable account about the emergence of youth organizations; the different characteristics of youth organizations; and the internal functioning of youth organizations.

Monique Marks' work has made a valuable contribution towards the illumination of the socio-economic and political factors which prompted youth to become involved in the politics of

[52] Naidoo, 'The politics of youth'; Sitas, 'The making of the comrades'

resistance. In her study of youth politics she focuses on a particular youth organization in a specific area – Diepkloof, in Soweto in the 1980s and early 1990s. In her paper titled 'Youth and Political Violence' she provides an interesting analysis of the factors that contributed to the youths' involvement in immoral activities (for example, gangs). She attributes this to moral degeneration, because of lack of moral authority. She grounded her work on the Durkheimian theory of anomie. For her, this could only be curbed with the "formation of youth organizations led by mature and respected leadership".[53] This work throws light on the important role played by youth organizations and mature and disciplined leadership in the struggle for liberation. She notes that the latter were instrumental in leading and guiding youths' involvement in the struggle in a constructive manner and in instilling discipline in them. In Maokeng, as will be shown in the thesis, the leadership of youth organization was mainly made up of students, with few non-going school youth. The leadership tried to maintain discipline amongst its members and non-members. However, as more young people joined the ranks of the youth organization, and some of the leadership went into detention while others operated underground, problems of ill-discipline arose. The situation became worse when some of the ill-disciplined youth joined the Three Million Gang. Marks' paper aids in an analysis of youth leadership in the struggle.

Again, in her paper titled 'We are fighting for the liberation of our people…' Marks illustrates how the youth involved in the struggle justified their use of political violence. She notes they did this by stating that they were "responding to the ANC's call to take up the armed struggle as a strategy for change"; and that "bloodshed [was] necessary for liberation". She concludes that the "key to understanding the willingness of the (Diepkloof) youths' participation in political violence is their identity as 'comrades' whose role was to protect the community from physical and moral threat".[54] This paper is critical when looking at the role of youth organization in Maokeng during the fight with the Three Million Gang (TMG). Like the youth in Diepkloof, youth in Maokeng also perceived themselves as the protectors of the community. Youth activists formed themselves into defense units and led the 'war' against the TMG.

Although Marks' work focuses solely on the youth organization in Diepkloof, it sheds light in the understanding why youth in South Africa in the 1980s and 1990s engaged in political violence, and how they interpreted their involvement in it. This is particularly helpful when analyzing the youth's involvement in politics in Maokeng, moreover because they lagged behind.

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[53] Marks, M. 'Youth and Political Violence: The problem of anomie and the role of youth organizations', *Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation* (CSRV), University of the Witwatersrand , Seminar 5, 30 July 1992. http://www.csvr.org.za/pubslist/pubspolt.htm

[54] Marks, M. 'We are fighting for the liberation of our people: Justifications of violence by activist youth in Diepkloof, Soweto', Seminar 3, 1995, http://www.csvr.org.za/pubslist/pubspolt.htm; See also Sitas, 'The making of the comrades'

In another paper titled 'Onward Marching Comrades', Marks provides an invaluable account of the youths' response to the changing nature of politics in the 1990s precipitated by the unbanning of the liberation movements, particularly the ANC. She argues that the 1990s saw the role of the youth organizations in the struggle becoming unclear. This was because, she contends, this period ushered in the politics of negotiations, which resulted in the ANC assuming a leading role in the transition period. This left the youth confused and uncertain about their role. Reflecting on this view, Ashwell Zwane, a member of the Alexandra Youth Congress (AYCO), cited by Marks asked "What is the role of the youth now? Even the ANC has not defined a role for us …"[55] In Maokeng the youth's role was further complicated by their involvement in the fight against the Three Million Gang. This limited the youth's active participation in the negotiations for the Transitional Local Council (TLC), for example.

Charles Carter's Ph.D. thesis on the political role of the Alexandra Youth Congress (AYCO) in the struggle for liberation is a valuable contribution to the understanding of the character of a youth organization determined to "construct its uniform identity".[56] He argues that AYCO in trying to achieve this became dominant and coercive. He also explores the socio-economic factors that caused most of the youth in Alexandra Township to become involved in the struggle. At some point in his work, Carter reveals the link between members of AYCO and the ANC's underground operatives, particularly the Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), or MK operatives, in the 1980s. And he shows that this link exposed the youth activists often to their own significant harm. He cites Vincent Tshabalala as example. Tshabalala was recruited by Sam Ndaba, an Askari, to leave the country and join MK in exile. When Tshabalala returned to the country he was killed in a shootout with the police. Ndaba was suspected to have sold-out Tshabalala.[57] However, there is otherwise a silence about these MK operatives, even though one acknowledges that during the period in which Carter undertook this research it could have been difficult to locate such operatives – for security reasons, a shortcoming which Carter acknowledges.[58] Nevertheless, Carter's work sheds light on underground political work, and links between the exiled ANC and the youth organizations operating inside the country. In contrast, evidence to suggest the presence of underground political work and/or links with MK in Maokeng and Brentpark in the 1980s is non-existent.

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[55] Marks, M. "Onward Marching Comrades: The Career of the Charterist Movement in Diepkloof, Soweto", Paper presented at the History Workshop Conference at the University of the Witwatersrand, July 1995. http://www.csvr.org.za/pubslist/pubspolt.htm; also see Marks, *Young Warriors,* pp.73-74

[56] Carter, 'Comrades and Community', pp. 87-138

[57] In apartheid South Africa, Askari was the term given to guerrillas who were captured by the South African army and "turned" or converted into spies or soldiers for the apartheid regime. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Askari

[58] Carter, 'Comrades Community', pp.128-130

School-going young people have also played an important role in the struggle. Regrettably there are no comprehensive studies on secondary and high school student politics, especially in the 1980s, except for Tshediso Matona's honours essay on the Congress of South African Students (COSAS).[59] The role of students and their organizations such as COSAS, and the Azanian Student Movement (AZASM), BC-aligned, have in many instances been lumped with youth politics.[60] Although these studies and others make notable contributions in the study of student politics, there is still room for further research. By contrast, studies on student politics in the 1970s are abundant. Some of these studies focus on the establishment of student organizations following the 1960s severe repression of African politics. For example, Nozipho J. Diseko's work on the South African Student Movement (SASM) illustrates the role the BC-aligned student formation played in conscientizing school-going students, especially in Soweto in the early 1970s. Among the notable members of SASM, Tsietsi Mashinini, Tebello Motapanyane, David Kutumela, and Sibongile Mkhabela (formerly Mthembu), were in the forefront of the student uprisings in 1976.[61]

Similarly, Sifiso Mxolisi Ndlovu provides an illuminating account of the role of students, especially leading to the uprisings in 1976. For Ndlovu, who in 1976 was a Form 2 student in Soweto, students in junior standards (Standard 5 to Form 2)[62] were the major force in the cause of the revolts, because they were directly affected by the Department of Bantu Education's (DBE) directive for the compulsory use of Afrikaans in half of the subjects.[63] He asserts that students in senior standards were not affected by the government's directive. Drawing from personal experience, he notes that his former school Phefeni Junior Secondary was the first to primary and junior secondary school in Soweto to boycott classes protesting the use of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction.[64] He argues "I do not remember any liberation movement, such as the BCM or the South African Student Movement (SASM) contributing to our daily meetings

[59] Matona, T. 'Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985 (University of Cape Town, Honours, 1992); For a detailed account on student politics in the 1990s see Moloi, T. 'Student Politics in the 1990s', in SADET *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 6,* 1990–1996 (Forthcoming)

[60] See for example, Carter 'Comrades and Community'; Marks *Young Warriors: Youth Politics, Identity and Violence in South Africa* (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 2001); Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus: A History* (Cape Town, Maskew Miller Longman, 2001)

[61] Diseko, N. 'The Origins and Development of the South African Students' Movement (SASM): 1968-1976', *Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 18, No.1, March 1991*; also see the interview with Enos Ngutshane by Tshepo a for the Hector Pietersen Memorial and Museum Project, Woodmead, 28 June 2005, pp.86-92; Mkhabela, S. Open Earth Open and Black Roses: Remembering 16 June 1976 (Johannesburg, Skotaville Press, 2001)

[62] In today's terminology Standard 5 is Grade 7 and Form 2 Grade 9

[63] When the DBE introduced Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in black schools it intended to implement it in phases, starting from the lower level up to matric level. Thus it was first implemented from Standard 5 up to Form 2. These were Higher Primary and Junior Secondary levels, respectively. Students at senior secondary (i.e. Form 3) and High school (i.e. Forms 4 and 5) were not affected by the Afrikaans directive.

[64] S. Ndlovu *The Soweto Uprisings: Counter-memories of June 1976* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1998), 3-7

and discussions".[65] Furthermore, to support his argument Ndlovu, in a chapter in the second volume of *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, observes that SASM took a decision at its conference in Roodepoort (West of Johannesburg) to support schools affected by the Afrikaans directive well after his school had been on a go-slow before the official class boycott on 17 May 1976.[66]

Sekibakiba Lekgoathi, focusing on rural areas in the former northern Transvaal (today's Limpopo Province), emphasizes the role of the urban students who were studying in schools in Lebowa as the driving force behind the uprising in that area. According to him "… the most pivotal role in the disturbances at Matladi Secondary School in Zebediela was played by urban students – mostly boarders, particularly those from the townships around Pretoria".[67]Other authors whose work looks at the role of students in the uprisings include Alan Brooks and Jeremy Brickhill[68]; Baruch Hirson[69]; and John Kane-Berman[70], for example.

In spite of the valuable contribution that these scholars have made in the study of student uprisings in 1976, they however downplay the role of the teachers, particularly the BC-influenced teachers, in the uprisings. The thesis will demonstrate that the appointment of the younger and BC-influenced teachers to the teaching staff of Bodibeng High School in the early 1970s opened space for some of these teachers to introduce students at the school to the BC philosophy and ideas. This caused behavioural change of some of the students and in August 1976 the latter took to the streets in solidarity with their counterparts in Soweto.[71]

Generational struggles

Mamphela Ramphele, writing about the effect of politics on generational relations, noted

> Once children were thrust 'onto the frontline', it became difficult to sustain traditional social relations between adults and children, and this had serious implications for family life. Children became used to power and control, and

[65] *Ibid*.,p.7

[66] S.M. Ndlovu 'The Soweto Uprising', in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa:* Vol. 2 (1970-1980) (Pretoria, UNISA Press for the South African Democracy Education Trust, 2006), p. 339; In the same volume, also see N. Nieftagodien's account of students' role in the 1976 uprisings in Alexandra Township, pp.351-9 and Nieftagodien and Moloi, T. study of Thembisa's student uprisings, pp.359-68

[67] Lekgoathi cited in Moloi, T. 'Bodibeng High School: Black Consciousness Philosophy and Students Demonstration, 1940s-1976', in *South African Historical Journal, Vol.63, No.1, March 2011,* p.104

[68] A. Brooks and J. Brickhill *Whirlwind before the storm: The origins and development of the uprising in Soweto and the rest of South Africa from June to December 1976* (London, International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1980)

[69] B. Hirson *Year of Fire, Year of Ash: The Soweto Revolt: Roots of a revolution?* (London, Zed Press, 1979)

[70] J. Kane-Berman *Soweto: Black Revolt, White Reaction* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1978); also see C. Glaser, 'We must infiltrate the tsotsis: School Politics and Youth Gangs in Soweto, 1968-1976', *Journal of Southern African Studies, 24, 2* (*1998*)

[71] Moloi 'Bodibeng'

> refused to yield to the authority of adults whom they despised – their parents and teachers. Conflict became inevitable[72]

Numerous studies on generational struggle (or some elements related to it) have already been undertaken.[73] This study builds on such studies. But it has also attempted to demonstrate that, unlike in other areas, in Maokeng generational struggle was concentrated in schools (and not in homes or the township in general). This, the thesis contends, it was because young people, particularly high and secondary school students were thrust into the forefront of the struggle from the mid-1980s (there was no civic structure until 1990/91). This caused young people to undermine the authority of adults, in this case the teachers.

Various scholars have emphasised different factors as the main cause of generational struggle in black townships. These range from dysfunctional families, unemployment, and mass education, to the dearth of traditional forms of control previously used by adults. However, they downplay the impact politics had on young people. True, there are some scholars who allude to this but their focus is on the impact this has had on the relations between adults and the youth in townships broadly. The intention of this thesis is to illustrate the effect of youth/student politics on the relations between students and teachers at Bodibeng High – once a model school in the Orange Free State.

Different definitions have been provided for generation. First, though, Clive Glaser notes that "generation as an analytical tool emerged in the discipline of social anthropology rather than history. Social anthropologists have shown that generational hierarchy is a key concept in understanding the power structure of 'pre-capitalist' societies". Furthermore, according to him, social anthropologists pointed out that "age hierarchies were based on elders controlling the

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[72] Ramphele, M. Social Disintegration in the Black Community: Implications for Social Transformation, in David Everatt and Elinor Sisulu (eds) *Black Youth in Crisis: Facing the Future* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1992), p.17

[73] Bonner, P. "Family, Crime and Consciousness on the East Rand, 1939-1955" *Journal of Southern Studies.* Volume 14,Numebr 3, 1998; Bonner, P. and Nieftagodien, N. *Kathorus: A History.* Maskew Miller and Longman, Johannesburg, 2001; Marks, M. *Young Warriors: Youth Politics and Violence in South Africa.* Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 2001; Carter, C. "Comrades and Community: Politics and Construction of Hegemony in Alexandra Township, 1984-1987". PhD Thesis, Mansfield College, University of Oxford, 1991; Bozzoli, *Theatres of Struggles and the End of Apartheid* (Wits University Press, 2004); Carton, B. *Blood from your children: Colonial Origins of generational conflict in South Africa.* University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 2000; Naidoo, K. "The politics of youth resistance in the 1980s: The dilemmas of a differentiated Durban" *Journal of Southern Studies.* Volume 18, Number 1, March 1991; Sitas, A. "The making of the 'comrades' movement in Natal, 1985-1991" *Journal of Southern African Studies.* Volume 18, Number 3, September 1992; Straker, G. *Faces in the revolution: The psychological effects of violence on township youth in South Africa,* David Phillip, Cape Town, 1992; Mokwena 'Living on the wrong side of the law'; Glaser, C. 'Anti-Social bandits: Juvenile delinquency and the Tsotsi youth gang sub-culture on the Witwatersrand, 1935-1960 (University of the Witwatersrand, M.A. thesis, 1990); Glaser, C. 'We must infiltrate the tsotsis: Schools Politics and Youth Gangs in Soweto, 1968-1976' *Journal of Southern African Studies, Volume 24, Number 2, June 1998*

system of bride-wealth and, by extension, the point of marriage and labour reproduction".[74] However, this power structure changed over a period of time as the country 'modernised' and young people began to be absorbed into a capitalist system, which gave them a sense of independence.[75]

In defining generation, Karl Mannheim introduced the concept of generational unit. "Generational units", he notes, "share an identity of responses and views about events".[76] Furthermore, he argues "by grappling with a distinct set of social and historical problems they develop an awareness and common identity – generational consciousness, analogous to class consciousness and national consciousness".[77] And Belinda Bozzoli, drawing from Abrams, sees generation as a 'sociological generation' rather than a biological one. According to her this is "that span of time within which identity is assembled on the basis of an unchanged system of meanings and possibilities".[78]

For convenience, in analyzing generational struggle in Maokeng, the thesis argues that the younger generation was made up of youth – politically active youth. This category included young people still at school (particularly high and secondary schools). Seekings, in his work on 'youth politics', contends that "the category youth in South Africa is a political rather than a sociological or demographic construction". "Being young", he continues, "is generally seen as necessary but not sufficient condition for inclusion in the youth; young people must also be involved in political activity to count as youth".[79] And the older generation, on the other hand, contends the thesis that it comprised of teachers.[80]

Now the chapter will briefly summarise some of the factors perceived as the main cause of generational struggles.

Dysfunctional family life

Philip Bonner's work based in an urban setting of Benoni, an East Rand township, between 1939 to 1955 deals with various socio-economic and political factors that led to generational conflict, but clearly shows how dysfunctional family life contributed more to this. He notes that the changing patterns of migrancy saw single women flocking into the urban areas without any

[74] Glaser "Anti-Social Bandits, p.4
[75] For a detailed account about this change in Natal, see Carton, B. *Blood from your children: Colonial Origins of generational conflict in South Africa* (University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 2000), Introduction.
[76] O'Donnell, M. *Age and Generation* (London, Tavistock Publication, 1985), pp.2-3
[77] See Bundy, C. 'Street Sociology and Pavement Politics: Aspects of Youth and Student Resistance in Cape Town, 1985, *Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol.13, No.3, April 1987,* p.305
[78] Ibid.
[79] Seekings *Heroes or Villains?* p XI
[80] It is important to note that in the mid-1980s some of the teachers from universities and colleges were politically active, particularly in the National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA). This thesis is not particularly concerned about this category of teachers but its focus is on the older and 'conservative' teachers.

support, financially or otherwise, and that some of these women found themselves forced to engage in formally illicit activities in order to survive like running shebeens. Moreover, others, because of precarious living conditions in the urban areas, found themselves in "loose family units" with "unattached men". There are two reasons for this. First, single women needed men for protection and accommodation. Second, for these women "unattached men" were a source of financial support. This resulted in an increasing number of illegitimate children, who, in most cases, were brought up under unstable family units. Because of this, and grinding poverty and lack of privacy (because of the shortage of housing), young people found solace in the streets, where they associated themselves with hardened criminals, learned survival methods in the streets, and ended up engaging in criminal activities.

Unemployment (and crime)

Unemployment inexorably pushed the younger generation into gangsterism. It also contributed its fair share to the problem of generational struggles in the urban setting. Lack of skills and the employers' preference of rural youth over urban youth pushed the latter into the world of crime.[81] Furthermore, the failure by school-leavers to secure jobs also did not help. It is important to note that this problem was not only experienced in the 1960s and 1970s, but was also prevalent in the 1980s. Steve Mokwena relates a story of a school-leaver who saw crime as his only way out of poverty:

> Gavin Sello, 25 years old, was a matric student in 1986. He did not write his exams in 1986. The following year he went to school and failed his matric because of the sporadic disruption of classes. He made a third attempt in 1988 but gave up. He has been without work since the day he left school. He hopes that one day he will meet someone who will offer him a job. If not, he confesses, the only remaining avenue is crime.[82]

The younger generations' wayward ways or anti-social activities caused tensions between them and the older generation. In the 1970s the older generation in trying to quell gangsterism and criminal activities formed themselves into *makgotla* (traditional courts) where delinquent youths were severely dealt with – *sjambokked.*[83] According to Glaser, some of the notable figures in Soweto who led *makgotla* were Mrs Sinah Madipere Makume, usually known as "Madipere" from Meadowlands Zone 1, and Sigfried Manthata from Naledi.[84] Seekings, in his D. Phil thesis, demonstrating mechanisms adopted by the community councillors (solely made up of adults) in

[81] Bonner, 'Family and Crime, pp.400-408; Glaser, C. *Bo-Tsotsi: the Youth Gangs of Soweto, 1935-76* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000)
[82] Mokwena, Black Youth, p.34
[83] See Brooks and Brickhill, *Whirlwind,* p288; Moloi, "Youth Politics", pp.54-57; Bozzoli, *Theatres of struggle,* pp.153-154
[84] Glaser, *Bo-Tsotsi,* p.148

Soweto in the 1970s in settling family and communal disputes, particularly regarding disrespectful or delinquent youth, formed themselves into *makgotla.* Regarding the role of *makgotla,* one councillor had this to say

> I believe naughty children should be sjambokked. So if children under eighteen are brought to us for disciplining, we sit as a *lekgotla* ... If the kid is found guilty, we let the parents lash him in front of us so the kid cannot fight back …[85]

Similarly, in other areas such as Cradock, in the Eastern Cape, generational struggle was caused by juvenile delinquency. Adults, who felt that their authority was being threatened by juvenile delinquents, "exercised their authority by using physical force".[86] Adults, mainly men, concluded that young men who committed crime and threatened their authority were uncircumcised boys. So, for them to eradicate criminal activities in the location and to retain their authority "… in 1975, with the municipality's approval, staged a ritualized beating of uncircumcised boys".[87] The beatings lasted for two months, causing all the uncircumcised young males to flee the location to the mountains. Although, this assuaged the insecurities of the older men temporarily, it nevertheless demonstrated that collection action taken by adults against the younger generation could yield results.

Adults used various forms of traditional methods to control young people. In addition to indigenous practices like circumcision school and physical forms of punishment, adults in Cradock, for example, also used youth clubs. Tetelman writes "from the early 1930s many older black elites and Canon J.A. Calata, an Anglican Clergyman, were deeply concerned over what they perceived as pervasive generational conflict in Cradock's so-called "Old Location". "To control this", he continues, "they formed a rich variety of youth clubs fashioned on British lines". "These organizations", he notes, "included scouting movements for boys and girls, church choirs, drama groups, and active school sporting teams".[88]

In Maokeng such apolitical youth clubs existed in the 1960s – and were able to keep young people in check. But the 1970s and 1980s saw the development of youth clubs intended to politicize young people. For instance, in the early 1970s Tsiu Vincent Matsepe and Pule Mokuane were instrumental in the establishment of the Maokeng Student Art Club (MASAC), a

[85] Ibid.
[86] Tetelman 'We Can', p.134
[87] Ibid.
[88] Tetelman, S. Michael 'In search of discipline: Generational control, political protest and everyday violence in Cradock, South Africa, 1984-1985' in Mario I. Aguilar (ed) *The Politics of Age and Gerontocracy in Africa* (Africa Worlds Press, Inc., Eretria, 1998) pp. 179-180

Black Consciousness orientated club, to conscientise students from Bodibeng High School,[89] and in the 1980s the Maokeng Drama Association (MADRA) was formed for the same purpose. Seele Sekonyela, who from the mid-1980s became actively involved in student and youth politics in Maokeng, recalls that in the early 1980s he participated in a musical play 'Abortion' written by Mphotlhe. The play, according him highlighted sexual abuse at school against female students by male teachers. After this play, the group was formally constituted and MADRA was launched. MADRA performed politically-inclined plays. Sekonyela remembers

> Yes, 'Abortion'. And it was a musical play, which we played with people like Mr. Mphotlhe, who is currently in London working as a nurse, and people like Advocate Tshogela Malakwane, who is in now in the [Free State] Legislature. It was about sexual harassment encountered by female students at the hands of their male teachers. It was about what we were experiencing in our schools then. When it (the play) started it was performed by pupils and the youth club. Those who were fully committed were chosen to carry on with the show. And we then came up with the name MADRA. We performed in schools and halls. After performing one used to feel that at least I've sent the message across. Tsietsi wrote another play titled *'Bayakhala'* ('They Are Crying'), which was about the plight of the parents whose children had skipped the country and no one knew what had happened to them. It was specifically based on Mbuyisa Makhubu's story, the boy who carried Hector Petersen. Because nobody knew what had happened to him[90]

Some of the young people who were politicized in this club collided with their teachers at school, because they felt that the teachers were 'sell-outs'.

Mass education

The National Party (NP) government's decision to establish mass education in the form of Bantu Education in 1955 as a response to the urban crisis[91] had devastating consequences not only for the government but also for generational relations in the urban areas. The government's rigidly limited financial support for Bantu Education could not match the increasing number of African pupils' enrolment in schools.[92] Bonner and Nieftagodien note "a massive 500% increase in the number of African pupils between 1970 and 1974".[93] Similarly Hyslop points out that "by 1971

[89] Interview with Tsiu Vincent Matsepe by Tshepo Moloi, for the 'Local Histories and Present Realities' Programme (hereafter LHPR), Welkom, 15 April 2008; Interview with Pule Mokuane by Tshepo Moloi, for the LHPR, Constantia, Maokeng, 18 April 2008. Interviews (all with Tshepo Moloi unless otherwise stated on first reference)
[90] Interview with Seele Sekonyela (LHPR), Constantia, Maokeng, 20 May 2009
[91] See, Hyslop, J. State Education Policy and the Social Reproduction of the Urban African Working Class: the case of the Southern Transvaal 1955-1976, in *Journal of Southern African Studies,* Vol. 14, Number 3, April 1988, pp. 448-453
[92] Ibid, pp.446-453
[93] Bonner and Nieftagodien, *Kathorus,* p.68

there were only twenty schools for Africans in urban areas that went up to Matric level, and only seventy-four that went up to Junior Certificate level". "It was estimated", he writes "that this represented only one high school for every 80 000 urban African families".[94] This inevitably caused overcrowding in schools, which made it more difficult for the teachers to teach, or even control the pupils. This situation was further exacerbated by the fact that most of the teachers, particularly in the 1980s with the development of teacher training colleges, were poorly trained and this caused teaching standards to drop and failure rates to increase.[95] Furthermore, there was a dearth of educational facilities in schools such as science laboratories. It was against this backdrop that dissatisfaction amongst the African pupils developed. Because of these conditions, on the one hand, and with the political influence of the rising Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), on the other hand, schools were, first, turned into a hub of political debates, and later, a space where pupils were politically conscientized and mobilized. This resulted in pupils, believing that their parents were too scared to confront the government, taking to the streets to challenge the educational policy, initially in 1976,[96] but largely in the 1980s. The conditions prevailing in school thrust students to the position of decision making and authority – and the older generation trailed behind. Teachers at Bodibeng High felt that some of the activities (and decisions taken) by some of the students were regressive and obstructive and when they attempted to punish the students the latter retaliated. This caused serious tensions between the teachers and students in Maokeng.

Political mobilization

Following the 1976 student uprisings, young people, together with some adults, in the 1980s mobilized around a variety of socio-economic and political issues ranging from rent, bus and consumer and school boycotts, to local authorities, to protesting against the presence of the army in the townships. Political mobilization raised the issue of leadership. In 1976 and in the earlier part of the 1980s young people's resistance was led by experienced leaders. These were people who had been influenced by the BCM politics. Some were active members of the South African Student Movement (SASM), whereas, others were regular attendants in the clandestine political classes which were run in the townships.

Following the government's brutal clampdown, firstly, on the student uprisings in 1976 and, secondly, student protests in the mid-1980s, many of the leaders were arrested or detained for

[94] Hyslop, State Education Policy, p.460

[95] In the early 1960s, African teachers with university degrees dropped by almost fifteen percent, and by 1978 some eighty-five percent of African teachers were deemed under-qualified. See Tetelman 'We Can', 129; the situation worsened when some of the highly qualified African teachers left the profession for better paying jobs in the private sector

[96] See Brooks and Brickhill, *Whirlwind;* Glaser, C. We must infiltrate the Tsotsis': School Politics and Youth Gangs in Soweto, 1968-1976, *Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol.24, No.2, June 1998;* Moloi, 'Youth Politics', chapter three

long periods, especially during the national state of emergency. Others decided to flee the country into exile. This created a leadership vacuum and, thus, opened space for the less-politicised elements amongst the younger generation to assume leadership positions. As Monique Marks illustrates that the state's repressive measures in quelling political violence and the detentions of experienced and respected leadership caused significant problems in the township. She observes

> Core youth leadership could guide the youth because they were so in touch with the issues of the day. As activists, their entire existence was dedicated to the liberation movement. They were concerned that the comrade youth should set an example as truly 'patriotic' citizens so that the liberation movement would be seen as a preferable alternative. Within the community, they made every effort to form positive and constructive relationships with community members. They commanded respect

But, she continues:

> When leaders went into hiding or were detained, new and less experienced activists assumed leadership roles. This often led to misguided campaigns, diminished control over membership and a decrease in support from the community[97]

Because of the leadership vacuum, the rank and file members of youth organizations assumed the responsibility of calling for campaigns like stayaways and consumer boycotts without rigorous debate and consultation with community members. When the rank and file felt their call for campaigns were not heeded they resorted to force to implement them.[98] Marks points out that in 1987 a 'pass one, pass all' campaign was taken up when the majority of key leadership was in detention'. "This campaign", she writes, "was viewed as problematic by teachers and parents. They did not believe that students had an automatic right to be condoned to a higher standard in school".[99] In Maokeng, as will be shown in the thesis, following the detention of student leaders, students who assumed leadership disrupted schooling and some frequented the recently established taverns to drink liquor during learning hours. This created tensions between teachers and students at Bodibeng High.

The consumer boycott campaign also caused strained relations between the younger generation and the older generation. There is evidence of young people forcing adults to drink cooking oil

[97] Marks, *Young Warriors,* p.61
[98] See, for example, Bozzoli, *Theatres of struggle,* pp.131-136
[99] Marks, *Young Warriors,* p.61

and destroying their groceries bought in boycotted shops. Recalling the consumer boycott, an Alexandra resident remarked:

> They took my groceries and a boy of about fifteen years of age walloped me with a sjambok and said I do not want to listen … They trampled the articles that I had bought, spilt out the cooking [oil], as well as soap powder and meat.[100]

Interestingly this kind of punishment was also meted out to the adult struggle leaders in Alexandra. Paul Tshabalala, an executive committee member of the Alexandra Action Committee, remembered how the youth destroyed his goods. In his words

> Children were misbehaving. When you come from Oks (OK Bazaar) for instance, with your parcels, they would take them and destroy them. I personally bought a *Sowetan* [newspaper] one time and it was destroyed in my hand.[101]

According to Bozzoli such experiences "… augured the beginnings of adult disillusionment with youth behaviour, and signalled the emergence of a distinctively adult political stance".[102] Indeed, in some areas like Thabong, Welkom, for example, adults formed themselves into a vigilante group to fight the younger generation.

The chapter will now, briefly, turn to the adult-led politics. These involved mainly civic organizations (or associations) and the local governments.

In the aftermath of the student uprisings, which erupted in Soweto in 1976 and spread to other townships across the country, the government introduced reforms aimed at arresting further protests by black people in the townships. One of these involved the promulgation of the Community Council Act of 1977, which allowed the devolution of specific powers from the Administration Boards to the new councils, subject to ministerial approval.[103] In 1982 the government enacted the Black Local Authorities Act, devolving more powers to the Town and Villages Councils without ministerial approval. The latter, unlike the Community Councils before them, were given greater responsibility for housing provision and settling and

[100] Bozzoli, *Theatres of Struggle,* p.134
[101] Ibid. p.135
[102] Ibid. p.134
[103] See Bonner and Nieftagodien 'Kathorus', p.96

implementing rent increases – "… this was a responsibility that put them on a collision course with residents[104].

Simon Bekker and Richard Humphries' work sheds light on the role of local government in South Africa during the apartheid years. They discuss, among other issues, the origins of the Community Councils in 1977 – which replaced the Urban Bantu Councils (UBCs) and the Advisory Boards before them. Furthermore, they discuss the establishment and the role of the Town Councils under the BLA Act of 1982. Crucially, they note that the National Party government's intention to establish the Community Councils was to create a link between the homeland governments and the urban blacks deemed to be homeland citizens.[105] In Maokeng, as in many other townships, this link was encouraged by the government by having homeland representatives residing in the township. In my informal conversation with Botiki Oliphant, a resident of Maokeng, he claimed that there were different representatives from various homelands residing in Maokeng who assisted their followers to gain citizenship rights in their homelands. According to him, after he was granted the citizenship of QwaQwa, he left Maokeng to stay and work in Witzieshoek for two years.[106] In similar vein, David Lebethe noted in our interview that his father, Daniel Motlogelwa Lebethe, represented the Bophuthatswana homeland.[107] Furthermore, homelands were also used by local councillors as dumping grounds for politically troublesome residents in the townships.

Seekings in his D. Phil thesis demonstrates the changing role of the councillors in township politics. He shows that, before the promulgation of the BLA Act, councillors enjoyed popular support and thus acceptable in their communities. This is because, according to him, during this period councillors "served as arbiters in township disputes, mediators for residents with the authorities, and dispensers of limited forms of patronage."[108] One of Seekings' interviewees described community councillors as follows

> The councillors were people who were just going to help with family disputes. Our people didn't think of them playing any active political role whatsoever, they were just like social workers, or marriage counsellors[109]

[104] Ibid.
[105] Bekker, S. and Humphries, R. *From Control to Confusion: The changing role of Administration Boards in South Africa, 1971-1983* (Grahamstown, Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University, 1985), pp.96-98
[106] Conversation with Botiki Oliphant
[107] Interview with David Lebethe (LHPR), Khotso House, Johannesburg, 23 April 2008
[108] Seekings 'Quiesecence and the Transition to Confrontation: South African Townships, 1978-84 (University of Oxford PhD Thesis, 1990), p.69; also see Seekings 'Political Mobilisation in Tumahole, 1984-1985', in *Africa Perspective: Agrarian Struggle in South Africa – The debate continue.* New Series, Vol.1, Nos.7 & 8, 1989
[109] Ibid.,p.72

The councillors' role during this period helps explain the non-confrontational (or non-violent) tactics used by the recently established civic organizations in different townships in response to rent increases. According to Seekings, civics during this period resorted to legal action, or refused to meet with local state officials or councillors, or called public meetings, or called a stayaway.[110]

Most significantly, Seekings notes that after the 1983 BLA elections which ushered in the new Town Councils, the situation changed and the tactics used by residents to protest against the councillors also altered. When the new Town Councillors took over the management of the townships they did not have financial support from the national government. In fact, they were left to devise their own methods of raising revenue. For them, the easy and quick method of achieving this was to increase rent and service charges. This was the beginning of violent protests in many townships.

Bonner and Nieftagodien list and discuss some of the grievances raised by residents of Kathorus against the councillors. These included the deteriorating social conditions, rent increases, corruption by councillors. But, perhaps, most importantly they discuss the role played by opposition councillors, or the group Seekings calls dissident councillors. They demonstrate that within the councils there were divisions, with some of the councillors opposing some of the resolutions adopted by other councillors. The issue of rent and lack of real power seem to have been the main cause.

One such figure in the Katlehong Council, according to Bonner and Nieftagodien, was Jacob Khoali. In 1982 he was elected a councillor … And in 1984 Khoali and fellow councillor, EA Sukazi, boycotted the inauguration of the newly elected Black Local Authority because they believed that it was as useless as the community councils. They asserted "Until such time we are given real powers to govern ourselves we feel that at the present moment we are still working in the dark."[111] Again in 1985, Khoali threatened to resign if the council implemented rent increases."[112]

Seekings', and Bonner and Nieftagodien's work counters the myth that councillors in the apartheid-created structures were homogenous. On the contrary, their studies demonstrate that there were councillors who opposed these structures – albeit from within. It is not the intention of this thesis to counter the work by these scholars, but to add another dimension to the study of council politics.

Maokeng Township, particularly from 1983 until 1989, did not experience protest against the council administering the township. There are two reasons for this. First, the Town Council was

[110] Ibid.,p.153
[111] Bonner ands Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* pp.98-99
[112] Ibid.,p.99

led by a charismatic chairman and mayor, Caswell Koekoe. Koekoe, for example, operated in the same way as the community councillors in the late 1970s: arbitrated on behalf of the residents and resolved the residents' personal matters. And second, the Council under Koekoe's leadership did not only resist raising rent and service charges, but was also able to provide the necessary services to the residents of the township. And this, did not only "shut down the space for civic opposition for several years", as Twala and Seekings conclude,[113] but it also made it very difficult for activists aligned to the UDF to organize against the Council. Furthermore, the Maokeng Town Council's case is important because it demonstrates that the governing councillors and not the dissident or opposition councillors mounted opposition against government policies which they deemed contentious, which as a result could lead to a collision course with residents. In other areas this role, as evident in the studies by Seekings, and Bonner and Nieftagodien, was played by either the dissident councillors or opposition councillors.

1.3 Methodology and Research Process

1.4.1 Methodology

This study takes an approach grounded in social history, or 'history from below'. Social history has as its main focus the response by ordinary people to their daily experiences.[114] By using this methodology, social historians aim to democratize history by recovering what they perceive as "hidden histories" (i.e. histories that have not been documented). Through this, they encourage especially ordinary people's involvement in the documentation of their own history. Social history's most distinct methodological orientation has been the emphasis on oral history (or oral sources). Allessandro Portelli reminds us: "oral sources give us information about illiterate people or social groups whose history is either missing or distorted".[115]

Although oral history provides invaluable accounts which would otherwise not have been brought to public attention, John Tosh cautions that it should be "heard alongside the careful marshalling of social facts in the written record".[116] This is mainly for verifying the authenticity of information. Tosh explains that there are two main reasons why oral history should be practiced. First, because personal reminiscences should be viewed as an effective instrument for revisiting the past, and second, because many historians see oral history as a democratic

[113] Twala and Seekings 'Activist', p.811

[114] The word 'ordinary' is used here to mean people who normally did not receive scholarly attention when historical accounts were written. In the past, historians tended to focus more on the 'big man or woman' such as kings, queens, prime ministers, and so on. This kind of history excluded the voices and experiences of the 'ordinary' people.

[115] Portelli, A. 'What makes oral history different?' Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson (eds) *The Oral history reader* (Routledge, London and New York, 1998), p.64

[116] Tosh, J. *The pursuit of history: Aims, Methods and new directions in the study of modern history* (United Kingdom, Longman group, 1991), p.210

alternative.[117] In South Africa, oral history assists in documenting histories of the previously marginalized communities. For instance, history of black people, generally, but Africans in particular is either not documented or, if documented, it is distorted or marginalised. Through the use of oral history we are able to uncover their histories and document them.

According to Luli Callinicos cited by Phillipe Denis "in South Africa oral history is a particularly necessary medium because of our dearth of documents written by ordinary people".[118] This is especially the case when researching the country's political history of the 1980s, and even early 1990s. In the 1980s political activists were forbidden to take notes during meetings or to [tape] record the meetings. This was for security reasons. Activists were cautious that if such information could end up in the hands of the security personnel it could lead to mass detentions, and in turn it could be used against them in court. The non-existence of primary political documents like the minutes and letters is largely as a result of police actions. When the police raided political activists' homes or offices, they confiscated everything, with the objective of incriminating political activists. In Maokeng, for example, police are alleged to have confiscated some of the primary sources such as the letters which were written by some of the political activists to the leader of the Three Million Gang, George "Diwiti" Ramasimong (and vice versa) in the early 1990s. In the letters the two parties explained the futility of the "war" and called for a truce. Unfortunately, these are nowhere to be found. They could have shed light on the numerous attempts by both parties for a truce. It is for this reason, therefore, that to reconstruct the history of political mobilization and protests in Maokeng I, as a researcher, heavily relies on oral history.

Through oral history, Monique Marks in her study of *Youth Politics* was able to trace the socio-economic factors which caused the youth of Diepkloof, Soweto, to participate actively in the struggle. In her interviews she focused on the youths' family background, upbringing, education, and political mobilization. Through the life histories of the youth she managed to uncover the turning points in their political careers. For instance, some of Marks' interviewees claim that their political awareness was raised by the "effect of the poor Bantu Education system on their future life chances". Xorile, cited by Marks, described the education system as follows

> Personally, I don't see that we have any future as students or people, because what we learn under this education system is that we as blacks are inferior and the whites are superior. This is what we are taught. I don't see a future under such a system …[119]

Due to this feeling of relative deprivation, to change the situation, the students had to destroy the inferior education system. In similar vein, it is evident from the interviews I conducted with

[117] Ibid
[118] Denis, P. 'Oral history in a wounded country' in Jonathan A. Draper (ed) *Orality Literacy and Colonialism in Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publications, 2003) p.207
[119] Marks, *Young Warriors,* p.27

some of the former students at Bodibeng High in the 1970s that the turning point in their political careers was because of the teachings of the BC philosophy they received from some of their teachers, who were politically conscious.

This kind of history is hardly known, because it is not documented. And one way of obtaining it is through the use of oral history.

However, this does not mean that oral history is not without its limitations. One of the major limitations of oral history is flawed (or selective) memory. Tosh acknowledges this and warns that "testimonies which can be gleaned from surviving members … of groups, like the memories of old people about their youth, is often confused as regards specific events and the sequence in which they occurred".[120] This could be caused, first, by loss of memory and, second, sometimes informants deliberately "block" their memory because of brutal past experiences. Louisa Passerini in her book *Memory and Totalitarianism* writes that certain interviewees during her research tended to confuse either names of mass organizations or significant events because of the brutal past they experienced under the Nazi period or Stallinist *reign*.[121] Tsepo Oliphant, who was born in 1958 and in 1976 was doing Junior Certificate (JC or today's Grade 10), for example, confused the date when the students at Bodibeng demonstrated in 1976. He remembered the demonstration taking place on the 15th of June – a day before the Soweto uprisings.[122] However, going through the interview transcripts I realized that this could not have been the case, because, first, there is no evidence to suggest that students' demonstrations in 1976 were organized anywhere else before Soweto and, second when the students at Bodibeng took to the streets it was in solidarity with students in Soweto. Therefore, the student demonstration at Bodibeng could not have taken place on the 15th of June but after the Soweto student uprising had started. To verify this information, as Tosh cautions above, I felt that I had to conduct more interviews with other former students at Bodibeng during this period, and also do archival research. What I found was that the actual day of the demonstration was the 24th of August 1976.[123] An unsuspecting researcher could have accepted the information given without verifying it. Verification is very important.

Relatedly, another concern is chronology. Most of the interviewees, especially older interviewees, tend to confuse dates and events. For instance, in my first interview with Simon Ramogale, an ex-Robben Island prisoner released in 1969 after spending three years for the PAC's activities, he confused the meetings he claimed to have held with students in Tembisa in

[120] Tosh, J. *The pursuit of history: aims, methods and new directions in the study of modern history* (London, Longman, 1991), p.210

[121] Passerini, L. (ed) *Memory and Totalitarianism.* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992, p.12 (Italics my emphasis)

[122] Interview with Tsepo Oliphant

[123] See Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16th of June 1976 to the 28th of February 1977, Vol. 1 (Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand Government Publications, 1980), p.178; Interview with Mkhulu Nhlapo (LHPR), Turfontein, Johannesburg, 15 July 2008

the early 1970s with those he organized in the 1980s. During our interview he mentioned that he used to hold meetings in the 1970s with youth like Simon Mashishi. However, this could not be possible because Simon Mashishi in 1975 was only 10 years old, and furthermore in 1976 his family had relocated to Maboloka, Brits. So he could not have been present in those meetings. It was in our second interview that he realized that it was in the 1980s that he organized meetings with Simon Mashishi and others – Mashishi returned to stay in Tembisa in 1982.[124] It is therefore important to make follow up interviews with interviewees in order to verify their information.

Still on the issue of flawed or selective memory, Portelli notes that "an informant may recount in a few words experiences which lasted a long time, or dwell at length on brief episodes. Dwelling on an episode may be a way of stressing its importance, but also a strategy to distract attention from other delicate points".[125] The last point is important to take into account when using oral history methodology. Because interviewees (or informants) in most cases are cautious about what they say to the interviewer; they tend to speak at length and eloquently about subjects that are close to their hearts and make them seem important, but speak less about issues that embarrass or make them feel ashamed. For example, when I was conducting interviews for my M.A. (Master of Arts) research report with the former members of the Azanian National Youth Unity (AZANYU) in Tembisa Township, in the East of Johannesburg, between 2003 and 2004 it became clear to me that some of my interviewees, especially those who had later joined the Azanian Peoples' Liberation Army (APLA), PAC's military wing, were reluctant to discuss in detail their military activities. When I probed them to speak more about these, they instead preferred to speak about APLA's activities in general terms, particularly referring to military activities involving other members of APLA. And these military activities in most cases were already in the public domain, either having been reported on in the local newspapers or in the PAC's mouthpiece, *Azania Combat.* The classic example they referred to is the battle involving George Nyanga, one of the founding members of AZANYU in Tembisa, and the Bophuthatswana Defence Force. They remembered:

> George Nyanga left the country in 1988 to join APLA in exile. He was killed in 1990 at the Ramatlabama border … in gun battle with the Bophuthatswana Defence Force Patrol.[126]

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[124] Interview with Simon Ramogale, Johannesburg, 7 April and 18 August 2004; also see Moloi, T. 'Youth Politics: The Political Role of AZANYU in the Struggle for Liberation: The Case of AZANYU Tembisa Branch, 1980s to 1996 (University of the Witwatersrand, M.A. Research Report, 2005)

[125] Portelli 'What makes oral history', p.35

[126] Interview with Simon Mashishi conducted by Tshepo Moloi, Thembisa, 12 March 2003; Interview with Mandla Matlala, conducted by Tshepo Moloi, Thembisa, 12 June 2003. This had become public knowledge because it had appeared in the APLA mouth-piece, *Azania Combat.* Abdul S. Bemath Papers (PAC), University of the Witwatersrand Library (UWL) Historical and Literary Papers (HLP), File 2248 BEMATH, *Azania Combat: Official Organ of APLA*; George Nyanga's funeral obituary. For a detailed account about the activities of AZANYU, see Moloi 'Youth Politics'

My interviewees' reluctance to discuss their involvement in the APLA military operations could be explained in two ways. It might be because of the bad memories this issue evokes or, perhaps, they have not, as individuals, adequately dealt with this issue. Denis warns us that inasmuch as the "sharing of memories provides interviewees with an opportunity to deal with unfinished business; memories do not always have a healing effect".[127] Another reason, some of my interviewees claimed, was that they could not speak about their role in the APLA activities in which they were directly involved, because they had not disclosed their role before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to qualify for amnesty. Therefore, speaking about this issue, they believed could incriminate them.[128]

Another limitation of oral history relates to language. This is especially so when the researcher is not conversant with the interviewee's spoken language. Sello Mathabatha, former researcher with the Wits History Workshop, argues in his M.A. dissertation that this "is a particular problem in cases where older African people are interviewed because their language includes maxims, figures of speech and idioms". "The transcriber *or researcher* [not conversant with this language]", he continues, "sometimes fell into trap of misinterpretation and misrepresentation".[129] In my interview with Modki Maseko, born in 1926 in Driefontein, Mpumalanga Province, conducted in Isizulu (and translated into English), I asked him about the whereabouts of his father. In his response he said: "*Ubaba was sishiya".* Direct translation would be "Our father abandoned us". But, in fact, what he meant was that his father had passed away.[130] Thus, for someone who is not familiar with Maseko's language would have misinterpreted what he had said. However, this limitation could easily be overcome by requesting the interviewee to explain what he had said, or to provide examples.

Researchers should also be aware that sometimes interviewees tend to use township-developed 'lingo' (language) when they speak. For example, in my interview with Nkapi Mokuwe, former political activist, in Munsieville, in the West of Johannesburg, when she was explaining the method they used to bomb the house belonging to an alleged *impimpi* (sell-out) in Munsieville said "We would sit here in my house on the stoep and pretend to be chatting and when no one

[127] Denis Oral history in a wounded country', pp. 209-212

[128] In the early 1990s during the negotiations, South Africa's main political parties agreed to the formation of the TRC. Its mandate was to identify the victims and the perpetrators of gross human rights violations between March 1960 and May 1994. The political parties agreed that amnesty should be granted for politically motivated human rights violations, provided that individual perpetrators confessed to their crimes and … victims were given the right to tell their stories of suffering and struggle. Bonner, P. and Nieftagodien, N. 'The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Pursuit of 'Social Truth': The Case of Kathorus', in Deborah Posel and Greame Simpson (eds.) *Commissioning the past: Understanding South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission,* (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 2002). Also see, for example, Mphahlele, L. *Child of this Soil: My life as a freedom fighter,* (Cape Town, Kwela Books, 2002), pp. 202-206. Mphahlele discusses the TRC's response to APLA's application for amnesty.

[129] Mathabatha, S. 'The struggle over education in the northern Transvaal: the case of Catholic Mission Schools, 1948-1994' (University of the Witwatersrand, M.A. dissertation, 2001), p.17 (Italics my emphasis)

[130] Interview with Modki Maseko conducted by Tshepo Moloi, 12 April 2006, Driefontein

was looking, we would then throw an "egg", and that is how we bombed that house".[131] When I enquired how they bombed the house using an egg. She told me that they did not use the real egg, but a hand-grenade. Had I not enquired about the "egg", I would have misrepresented part of the political history of Munsieville.

In my recent interviews with some of the former members of the Self-Defence Units (SDUs) in Maokeng, the latter claimed that when the police and the Three Million Gang were looking for them in the township, they would run to *Ha mangoane* ("Aunt's Place"), where they would hide and sleep. When I probed what they meant by this, I was informed that *Ha mangoane* was actually in the open veld, in the outskirts of the township.[132]

Another limitation has to do with age and gender. These, particularly age, create an unequal relationship between the interviewee and interviewer. An adult interviewee may decide to withhold information, which he or she considers to be sensitive or "delicate" for a younger interviewer. For example, he or she may feel embarrassed to speak to a "child" about his or her love life, rape, or criminal activities. And this may hamper the research particularly if such information is pertinent to it. In a similar vein, a female interviewee may be more reluctant to speak about her life's experiences to a young male researcher than to a young female researcher. And it becomes much easier if the young female researcher is 'one of the members' of the community being researched.[133]

Although oral history has its limitations it is, however, a capable methodology to discover "hidden histories" or undocumented histories of ordinary people. Hence, Tosh asserts that "problems in [oral history] should not be grounds for having nothing to do with oral history. And Marks asserts that notwithstanding the limitations [oral history] "is a satisfactory source".[134] What is critical when using the oral history methodology, like written sources, requires careful evaluation and must be deployed in conjunction with all the other available sources".[135] This view is enhanced by the keen interest shown by various scholars in oral history despite its limitations. Paul la Hausse writes "the value of oral history has been most clearly demonstrated in historical research on the South African countryside, an area in which conventional archival

[131] Interview with Nkapi Mokuwe by Tshepo Moloi, Munsieville, 2006. The copy of this interview was deposited with Sihlangeni Tourism Company, based in Munsieville

[132] They used this term *ha mangoane,* because in the Basotho culture it is believed that the aunt would never turn away her relatives because there was no accommodation in her house. Her relatives were always welcome in her house

[133] See Bozzoli, B. 'Interviewing the women of Phokeng', in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds.) *The Oral History Reader* (London and New York, Routledge , 1989)

[134] Marks *Young Warriors,* p.15

[135] Tosh, *The Pursuit of history,* p.215

records reveal little about the nature of social relations".[136] Some of the notable scholars that have employed oral history in the South Africa context include, Charles van Onselen in his work *The seed is mine: The life of Kas Maine …* [137], Bozzoli in *Women of Phokeng*, Bonner in 'Family, Crime and Political Consciousness in the East Rand[138], Marks *Young Warriors*, Carter in *Comrades and Community*,[139] Delius in *Migrants, Comrades and Rural Revolt: Sekhukhuneland 1950 – 1987.*[140] And recently, Bonner and Nieftagodien in *Alexandra: A History*; and the South African Democracy Education Trust's *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, a presidential project aimed at rewriting the liberation history from 1960 to the mid-1990s.[141]

1.4.2 Research process

To achieve the primary objective of this thesis I felt it was important for me to gain a thorough understanding of the socio-economic and political experiences of the members of the community of Maokeng, especially those who participated in the political mobilization and protests from the mid-1970s to 1990s. To do this, I used the life history interview technique. Through the life history interview technique, social historians focus on the interviewee's life holistically. The interview covers the interviewee's early childhood, family's history (i.e. grandparents' and parents', and siblings' background, for instance), education, employment, social life, religion, and political activities. The idea is to have a deeper understanding of the individual's life chronologically. Through the life histories of my interviewees I was able to gain an understanding of the factors – from an individual's perspective – that caused them to be part of the political processes in Maokeng in the period under review. In addition, this technique also helps explain my interviewees' actions.

My first contact with Kroonstad dates back to 2006. I was employed as an Oral Historian for the South Africa History Archives (SAHA) and *Sunday Times* Oral History project.[142]Part of the project was to introduce oral history in schools, with the objective of training students to research

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[136] La Hausse, P. 'Oral History and South African Historians', in Joshua Brown et al. (eds), Bellinda Bozzoli and Peter Delius for the History Workshop, *History from South Africa: Alternative Visions and Practices* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1991), p. 345

[137] Van Onselen, C. *The Seed is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, A South African Sharecropper 1894-1985* (Cape Town, David Philip, 1997)

[138] Bonner, P. 'Family, Crime and Political Consciousness on the East Rand, 1939-1955, *Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 14, No. 3, April 1988*

[139] Carter, C. 'Comrades and Community Politics: The construction of Hegemony in Alexandra Township, South Africa, 1984-1987' (University of Oxford, Mansfield College Ph.D. Thesis, 1991)

[140] Delius, P. Migrants, Comrades and Rural Revolt: Sekhukhuneland 1950 – 1987 in *Transformation,* 13, 1990,

[141]South African Democracy Education Trust's *The Road to Democracy in South Africa,* Volume 2 (1970-1980) (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2006)

[142] See, 'Meeting history Face-toFace: A guide to oral history'. Copies of this guide can be obtained from the SAHA office or downloaded: http://wwe.saha.org.za/resources/publications/meeting-history-face-to-face-2007.pdf

the history of their local communities, write a report and present it. The report that came first was to be used in the creation of a memorial in the locality of the winning school. Two schools were identified in each of the four provincial towns where the project was to take place.[143] Amongst these were Bodibeng High and Brentpark Secondary Schools in Kroonstad, Free State Province. After contacting the schools and presenting the project, I began with preliminary research. I interviewed a substantial number of people in each town. These included former teachers, religious leaders, members of youth and students' congresses, adult political activists, "ordinary" members of the communities, and many more.[144] From these interviews (and archival research) it became clear to me that Kroonstad, particularly its black townships, had interesting histories, which surprisingly had not been adequately documented. My interest in researching these townships was aroused.

Towards the end of 2007 I registered for my doctoral studies in the "Local Histories and Present Realities" Programme, headed by Professor Philip Bonner at Wits University, and I chose Kroonstad as my case study. Conducting research in a "foreign" township (i.e. township that is not your birth place or a place you have spent most of your life) has its challenges. But it also has its advantages. To my interviewees in Maokeng I was an 'outsider' and I was constantly reminded of this – even though not in a malicious manner. For instance, some of my interviewees when trying to relate to me what they considered an important incident which had taken place in Maokeng previously, tended to take it for granted that I knew Maokeng very well – after all I spoke the same language as them: SeSotho and I was of African descent. When narrating they would mention people's names, supposedly people who were active in that particular incident, or name the place where this incident had taken place. When I asked them who were these people, or where the mentioned place was, they would comment: "Oh, by the way you're not from here". This was most evident in my interview with Thulo Machabe. To illustrate this point, I asked him where Boikemisetso Secondary School was and he responded as follows – he was also assisted by his friend:

Machabe Thulo (MT): You see, we had been promised that on the 11th of February we were going receive textbooks. … They said comrade Machabe must lead the group to Bodibeng. … We were moving from Boikemisetso to Bodibeng. We were walking along the road …

Tshepo Moloi (TM): Where is Boikemisetso?

MT: It's almost a half a kilometre from here (Gelukwaarts). It's not far.

[143] Other schools were Mjindini Secondary and Barberton Combined Schools, in Barberton, Mpumalanga Province; Mzinoni Secondary School and Bethal Hoer Skool in Bethal, Mpumalanga Province; Capricon High and Kgaiso High, in Limpopo Province; and finally, Brentpark and Bodibeng. See, for example, 'Meeting history Face-to-Face: A Guide to Oral History (SAHA, 2007). Some of the schools pulled-out of the project and only schools in Limpopo, Mpumalanga (only Mzinoni), and FS continued their participation.

[144] All the interviews have been deposited with SAHA

TM: From Kananelo (Secondary School)?

MT: It's far from Kananelo. You can see it from Gelukwaarts. I remember you said you are not from here. I can go and show you. Do you know, eh ... shop's? Okay, by the way originally you are not from here.

TM: Oh, that school is Motswela (Secondary)

MT: Ja, that's Motswela.

TM: Motswela is the one next to Troubou, isn't it?

MT: Yes. When you drive from Troubou, next to Motswela, going towards the garage, not far from the shopping complex there's a school.

TM: Next to the library?

MT: No. It's not next to the library. From Motswela in Troubou ... Okay, there's a T-junction next to the shopping centre.

MT's friend: Which school are you asking about?

MT: Boikemisetso.

MT's friend: You pass the Shell Petrol Station…

MT: Here in Constantia

TM: Yes.

MT's friend: You pass that garage and go straight along that road. It's the second street on your right hand side. Do you know Pitso Street? You pass that street, and it's the first street on your right-hand side.

MT: You will see the tarred road. From the shopping centre, there's a small deck at the corner. If you look on your right-hand side, you will see a school. It's that school. That's where we started to "work" from …[145]

From this extract of our interview, it is evident that Machabe is aware that I am not a *bona fide* of Maokeng, but it is equally evident that both Machabe and his friend were at pains to provide me with the correct geography of the place Machabe is speaking about. The last point can be accepted as one of the advantages of being an 'outsider'. Interviewees take time to explain themselves.

[145] Interview with Machabe Petrus Thulo, 23 September 2009, Gulukwaarts, Maokeng

According to Marlize Rabe "the insider versus outsider debate is … not new in social research".[146] Kikumura, cited by Rabe sums it up as follows

> On the one hand, advocates for the outsider perspective generally argue that access to authentic knowledge is more obtainable because of the objectivity and scientific detachment with which one can approach one's investigation as a nonmember of the group. On the other hand, proponents of the insider perspective claim that group membership provides special insight into matters (otherwise obscure to others) based on one's knowledge of the language and one's intuitive sensitivity and empathy and understanding of the culture and its people[147]

Indeed, as Kikumura suggests, because I was detached from the community of Maokeng (and Brentpark), I, with the help of Mr Mpopetsi Dhlamini (more about him below), identified and contacted people for interviews and these were willing to talk to me about the history of Maokeng. This was clearly articulated by one of my interviewees. She said she was happy to speak to me about the township's history and her role in politics, because I was from Johannesburg therefore I would write a proper account of what really happened. Of course, not everyone was happy that an "outsider" was researching the history of the townships. Instead, they preferred that an "insider" should be the one doing it. This issue came up in one of the many informal conversations I had with Michael "Baba" Jordan. The latter was active in the politics of the BCM in the 1970s and spent over 20 years in exile.[148] He warned me that one of the key leaders in the struggle in Kroonstad had complained to him about my research. This individual, according to Jordan, felt that I would misrepresent the history of the area. This feeling, Rabe believes is based on the view that in any "research there is inequality of power (between the researcher and the researched), because researchers are the ones who write the papers, articles and books, even if those they studied had an opportunity to comment on the researcher's written work …"[149] Marks makes a similar point. She writes that "the central youth figures in Diepkloof, Vuyani Mabaxa and Makgane Thobejane … were concerned that I would go into Diepkloof, take information, and make it public in any way I saw fit".[150] For this reason the said individual in Kroonstad has avoided to grant me a follow-up interview.

Apart from the lone concerned voice about my research in Kroonstad, everybody that we had contacted was happy and eager to assist me. This is largely as a result of my association with

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[146] Rabe, M. 'Research Reports: Revisiting 'insiders and outsiders' as social researchers', *African Sociological Review, 7, 2, 2003*

[147] Ibid.

[148] See interview with Michael "Baba" Jordan by Brown Maaba, for the SADET Oral History Project, Brentpark, Kroonstad, 3 March 2005. I am grateful to Dr Greg Houston, Chief Executive of the SADET for allowing me to make use of this interview; also see, for example, *Post* January 24, 1979

[149] Rabe 'Research Reports'

[150] Marks *Young Warriors,* p.11

Dhlamini. Dhlamini is a former teacher and inspector in Kroonstad. In the early 1970s, while at Tshiya Teachers' Training College in Qwaqwa, southern Orange Free State, he joined SASO. After retirement from his educational post, he focused on promoting the history of Maokeng. To achieve this he founded the 'Rebirth of Kroonstad', a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO), focusing on capturing the history of Kroonstad, but particularly of Maokeng. This turned him into a local historian. I met Dhlamini in early 2007 when I was involved in the SAHA/*Sunday Times* Oral History project.

Dhlamini was born and had lived all his life in Kroonstad. His vast knowledge of the area and the people from different backgrounds was helpful to me in understanding the political nuances in the area; to gaining access to the "relevant" people, as he put it; and knowing who to contact for other sources like archival materials, especially in the municipality, for example. He introduced me to people as the 'young man from Wits (University), who was doing a very important job: writing the history of Kroonstad, something that is long over due'. He always emphasized to the residents of Maokeng that it was imperative for them to participate in the research by granting me interviews, because one day they would be "gone" (dead) and their history would be forgotten, and at worst distorted. This seemed to work. People made time for me. They welcomed me to their homes and offices to conduct interviews with them. Some, like Hennie Ludick, former employee in the Town Council of Maokeng, even entrusted me with their personal photographs and few pamphlets.[151]

Inasmuch as Dhlamini's knowledge about the area and its people was helpful, it proved, at times, also to be detrimental. He only referred me to the people he knew; the people who, according to him, "would give you the best and honest interviews". He tended to dismiss other people as "irrelevant". In my observation this was mainly in the case of the people he did not take "seriously" (i.e. people outside his circles). Moreover, he seemed mostly acquainted with the older people (residents). And this was expected. These were the people of his generation, although this does not mean he was not acquainted with the younger generation, especially those who were actively involved in politics. Indeed, he introduced me to some of the key members of the students and youth organizations in the township. And they gladly assisted me, because I was introduced to them by *mosuoe* (teacher). However, generally his knowledge of this generation was limited. To gain access to this generation I had to rely on referrals by other former members of students and youth organisations I had interviewed. But most importantly when I began doing archival research, particularly on newspapers and trial records, I would come across names of activists from Maokeng and I would call Dhlamini to try and locate them for me. For example, when doing research at the Historical and Literary Papers at Wits University, I came across the judgment in the lawsuit case against the Minister of Law and Order, The Commissioner of Police and the District Commandant of Kroonstad by Reverend Ndimase Humphrey Gozongo and 13 Others. The latter were suing the former for damages caused by the shooting which took place on

[151] Hennie Ludick joined the local council of Maokeng in 1982

15 May 1990 in Phomolong.[152] One of the applicants in the case was Seele Sekonyela. I called Dhlamini to enquire if he knew him. He did not know him but promised to trace him. Interestingly, when he finally got hold of Sekonyela it turned out that he knew the latter's mother; they grew up together in the Old Location.[153]

At the later stage of my research referrals, especially by local political activists, became slim. This was because of the formation of COPE (Congress of the People).[154] ANC members felt it was unnecessary for me to interview those who had joined COPE. And members of COPE, on the other hand, "wanted to set the record straight" and made concerted efforts to channel me only to the people that would give me the "accurate" history of the township, especially in relation to the infighting within the congress movement. Sometimes it was hilarious, I thought. Members of both the ANC and COPE who were prepared to refer me to their former comrades, would emphasise that I should not divulge their identity (i.e. that is, I should not inform the potential interviewees who had referred me to them). The situation deteriorated to the extent that the former comrades no longer trusted each other.

Furthermore, what was disturbing was that even during the interview members of the opposing parties would refuse to acknowledge or talk about the role their former comrades had played. In one of the interviews my interviewee, after mentioning the names and roles of the comrades he worked closely with in the early 1990s during the era of the Three Million Gang, refused to discuss the role played by one his comrades, because he had joined COPE. This was interesting but also provided me with a challenge of convincing my interviewees that it was important to get as many voices and as diverse as possible, irrespective of one's political affiliation. Sometimes I was successful but not always.

However, unlike Monique Marks' experience when doing her research in Diepkloof, Soweto, I was never questioned about my political allegiance, and as far as I am aware there were no security checks conducted on me.[155] Everyone I interviewed, especially the elderly were curious to know more about my family and educational background – and I was always honest with them. My knowledge of youth politics seemed to put the younger generation at ease. During the interviews I would sometimes give examples about the other townships where youth politics were strong like in Alexandra, Tembisa Townships, and Soweto. And the youth activists in Maokeng were acquainted or had met some of the youth activists I mentioned from these places. They became convinced that I knew what I was doing.

For this thesis I interviewed 62 respondents. The latter are from different backgrounds socially, economically and politically. For example, some are former teachers, local councillors, civic

[152] UWL HLP AK2274 'Gozongo and Others versus Minister of Law and Order and Others
[153] See interview with Seele Sekonyela, Constantia Park, 20 May 2009
[154] Cope was launched late 2008 by former members of the ANC
[155] See Marks '*Young Warriors,* pp.11-12

leaders, gangsters, religious leaders, and former trade unionists, and former cadres of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), ANC's military wing. The diverse backgrounds of my interviewees provides the thesis with many and different voices. The interviews were conducted over a period of three years, 2007-2010. All the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed, and sometimes translated.[156] The duration of the interviews vary. Some lasted an hour and others went up to three hours. Very few were less than 50 minutes. Some of the interviewees were interviewed more than once.

I found recording the interviews very helpful (compared to taking notes by hand), because I could conduct the interview without disrupting the flow of the interview by requesting the interviewee to stop and repeat what he or she had said, because I had missed it. But most importantly I was able to capture the whole interview. As noted already, after each round of interviews (I spent five days in Maokeng per fieldwork trip) the transcribers employed by the programme transcribed the interviews. I tried to return as many transcripts as I could to my interviewees to read and make comments, if they wished.[157] This proved to be helpful in two ways. First, my interviewees felt a sense of involvement in the project and this resulted in them opening up to me and beginning to reveal more information, which I do not think, they would have otherwise given me. For instance, after my first interview with Tommy Makau I returned the interview transcript to him. In our follow-up interview he seemed more relaxed and trusting to speak freely to me about the split between the MDCC and AF, and how this split affected political mobilization and protests in the township. But, perhaps, most importantly he was even prepared to discuss the effects of this split in the present situation.[158]

Second, my interviewees, after reading the transcripts, assisted me in pointing out and correcting some of the mistakes in the transcripts, particularly the names of people and places which had been mis-spelled. This method further enabled me, after reading the interview transcripts, to develop detailed and specific set of questions for follow-up interviews. When conducting the first interview I raised unstructured questions, because I intended to gather as much information about my interviewees' life histories as possible. In the follow-up interview I then asked structured questions, which dealt with specific issues and events, and my interviewees' feelings and interpretations of their actions.

Taking into account flawed memory as one of the limitations of oral history, I adopted Anna Bohlin's study of the physical landscape of District Six Museum as an "aide-memoire".[159]

[156] The audio material and transcriptions of the interviews will be deposited with the "Local Histories and Present Realities" Programme at the University of the Witwatersrand.
[157] Sometimes it proved difficult to return the transcripts mainly because of the distance and the fact that some of my interviewees did not have access to the internet, which would have made easier to email them.
[158] See interviews with Tommy Makau (LHPR), Phomolong, Maokeng, 9 July 2008 and 23 September 2009
[159] Bohlin, A. 'The Politics of locality: Memories of District Six in Cape Town', in Nadia Lovell (ed.) *Locality and Belonging* (London and New York, Routledge, 1998), p.171

Bohlin in her study demonstrates how the Museum has been used to revive the former residents of District Six's memories. Many years after the forced removals by the National Party government, for former residents who visited the museum and viewed the exhibition made of original symbols like street signs, the museum helps them to remember District Six, the area, as if it was yesterday. This was captured in one of the visitor's response to Bohlin's question about his experiences when watching the signs [in the museum]. The patron explained as follows:

> Oh, I see too many memories …because I walked most of those roads, you see. … I played there, and I kissed for the first time in one of those roads … I can touch it, it [be]comes real like a little video recorder playing it over in my head …"[160]

In the course of my interview, for example, with Machabe Thulo, the former commander of the SDU, I realized that he tended to forget (or confuse) some of the events (or incidents) which he claimed he was directly involved in. I asked him if he would be willing to accompany me to some of the places (or spaces) he had been mentioning in the interview, which were significant to them as the SDUs during their fight with the Three Million Gang. He agreed. Amongst the places he took me to included the houses they used as camps like 'Cuito Cuanavale', named after the area in Angola which was used as a base by the Angolans, together with the FAPLA (The People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola), ANC's MK, backed by the Cuban troops, in their battle against the South African Defence Force (SADF), alongside Jonas Savimbi's UNITA (The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola).[161] 'Cuito Cuanavale' was the principal base of the SDU's, commanded by Machabe. As he was showing me around the house (belonging to his grandmother) and the shack the members of the SDU slept in, he recalled some of the members of the SDU he had forgotten; he discussed how his late grandmother, a traditional healer, offered them with *muthi* (traditional medicine) to protect themselves against the Three Million and the police. The other space we visited was *Thuteng* – an open veld between Brentpark and Phomolong. When the police were about to raid the township, with the objective of detaining the members of the SDU and other political activists, they would receive a tip-off from some of the sympathetic police and they would escape to *Thuteng*, where they would sleep until the raid had been called off. This method was helpful in jogging Machabe's memory. He could remember incidents and people he could not remember during our formal interview. The use of photographs was another method I used with some of my interviewees to help them remember.

In addition to the interviews, I also conducted archival research. As already noted somewhere in the chapter that Tosh cautions us that oral history should be "heard alongside the careful

[160] Ibid., p.175

[161] For a detailed account of Cuito Cuanavale, see, for example, Campbell, H. *The Siege of Cuito Cuanavale* (Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, October 1990); 'Cuito Cuanavale, 1987-88: Every cause needs a victory' Greg Mills and David Williams (eds.) *Seven battles that shaped South Africa* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2006)

marshalling of social facts in the written record", it was imperative to search for archival material in order to test the validity of the interviews. To accomplish this exercise I began at the South African History Archives (SAHA), situated at the University of the Witwatersrand's African Library. Amongst the materials I uncovered were the UDF 's and Julie Frederikse's Collections. In the UDF Collection I found the UDF's Regional Working Committee of the OFS' information sheet about the organizations in Maokeng. These included COSAS, Maokeng Youth Congress (MYC), the South African Youth Congress (Maokeng Branch), and Maokeng Civic Association (MCA). This sheet also contains the names and positions of activists. Through this information I was able to trace some of the activists in Maokeng to interview.[162] Furthermore, in the same collection there is a three-page document, filled with newspaper reports about the political incidents in Maokeng in 1986. For example, there is one about how Dennis Bloem[163], a leading political figure in Maokeng and Brentpark, narrowly escaped death after been shot at by four prominent community leaders. And the other report is about a united show of political strength by the UDF and AZAPO, when they launched a two-day consumer boycott.[164]

On the other hand, in the Julie Frederikse's Collection I found an interview Frederikse had with Mongezi Radebe (no date). Radebe was born in Phiritona, in Heilbron, in 1957. He relocated to Maokeng in the mid-1970s to continue with his studies at Bodibeng High – the secondary school at Phiritona ended in Standard Eight (today's Grade 10). The interview demonstrates Radebe's political development and his active role in the Young Christian Workers (YCW) in Maokeng.[165] The significance of this interview is that it shows the role of the church, especially the Roman Catholic Church, in introducing young people to politics; and it also illustrates the pivotal role played by the YCW in mobilizing the young workers in Maokeng in late 1970s; and, finally, the experimentation with nascent mass mobilization, using the BC emphasis of self-reliance.[166] For instance, Radebe and some of his colleagues began to fix shelters for commuters at the bus terminus. This conscientised members of the "community" that they do not need the bus company or the Council to do things for them. They can do things for themselves.[167]

Furthermore, I searched through the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) Collection based at the Historical and Literary Papers (HLP), at the University of the Witwatersrand. This collection is useful to my study in that it has press cuttings about the rent crisis in Maokeng in the mid-1970s. One of the cuttings carries a story about how the residents of

[162] UWL SAHA AL 2431 (Box 49) 'UDF Affiliates in the Orange Free State'
[163] Dennis Bloem has since joined the COPE
[164] UWL SAHA AL 2431 (Box 48) 'Dennis Bloem: OFS Organisations and Incidents'
[165] Also see, for example, the author's interview with Peace Tsotetsi (formerly Modikoe), Dagbreek, Welkom, 25 October 2009
[166] UWL SAHA AL2460 (Box A31) 'Julie Frederikse Collection'
[167] See interview with Radebe; for a brief account about the role of Self-help groups, with the intention of mobilising people, see, for example, Jeremy Seekings 'The Development of Strategic Thought in South Africa's Civic Movements, 1977-1990', in Glenn Adler and Jonny Steinberg (eds.) *From Comrades to Citizens: The South African Civics Movement and the Transition to Democracy* (Macmillan Press LTD, 2000),pp.52-82

Maokeng refused to move into 200 new houses built by the North Orange Free State Administration Board because of the high rents.[168] This report demonstrates that before the mid-1980s there were attempts to mobilize in the township against high rents. Another report is about the shortage of housing in Maokeng in 1977.[169] The SAIRR collection also carries press cuttings about the black local government elections which took place in 1988. Although, the reports are not specifically about the elections in Maokeng, but those in other areas, they, nevertheless, shed light on how township residents responded to these elections. In one newspaper it was reported how the youths attacked a group of voters in Soweto.[170] Finally, the SAIRR collection has press cuttings reporting on boycotts in the 1990s in Maokeng and elsewhere. The newspaper reports on the consumer boycott against white business because of the municipality's decision to cut water and electricity supply in the township. Moreover, there is a report about the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) opposing the boycotts in Maokeng. This report is important because it shows the IFP's entry into the politics of Maokeng, and its link with the Three Million Gang.[171]

In the Karis-Gerhart Collection I found a short piece about the YCW. The latter provides a brief background of the YCW, and reasons for its foundation. Of significance for my study is that it also has a list of people detained in 1978 all over the country, including Maokeng. Because of this list I was able to know about Peace Modikoe.[172] Finally, I researched the Delmas Treason Trial. This trial involved some of the leadership of the UDF like Patrick Mosiuoa "Terror" Lekota (a resident of Maokeng) and Popo Molefe. Of particular interest is the substantial number of witnesses called to testify on behalf of the defence. Amongst these were residents of Maokeng. Their testimonies provide an insight into the limited politics of the UDF in Maokeng in the 1980s. The trial also shed light on the role of political funerals as a mobilizing strategy.[173]

In addition I visited the Johannesburg Public Library, where I went through newspapers like the *World* and *Weekend World*. The *Weekend World* covered a story about the police beating and forcing students from Bodibeng High to blame Ms Mekodi Arcilia Morailane, a Science teacher at Bodibeng, as the one who instigated the students to demonstrate in 1976.[174] The *World* reported on the role of the Urban Bantu Council (UBC) helping the aged.[175]This concurs with the view that prior to the BLA, councillors attended to the communities' needs. At the Free State Provincial Library, in Bloemfontein, I searched through *Die Vriend/The Friend.* This was a provincial newspaper until 1985. In this newspaper there are reports about the riots in Maokeng

[168] UWL HLP AD1912 (Box 259.12) 'Urban conditions – OFS, 1934-1992, Kroonstad', SAIRR. H & LP, University of the Witwatersrand
[169] UWL HLP AD1912 (Box 259.12) 'Urban conditions – OFS, 1934-1999' (General)
[170] UWL HLP AD 1912 (Box 91.7) 'Elections 1987-88', reported in *Business Day, October 27, 1988*
[171] UWL HLP AD1912 (Box 40.14) 'Rent and Consumer Boycotts - 1990'
[172] UWL HLP A2675 (Folder 978) 'Political Documents', Karis-Gerhart Collection
[173] UWL HLP AK2117/I2.31 'Delmas Treason Trial
[174] *Weekend World, November 28, 1976*
[175] The *World, December 19, 1976*

in 1976.[176] Again in 1985 *The Friend* covered the riots in Maokeng.[177] At the National Library, in Pretoria, I found the *The Northern Times*, a local newspaper of Kroonstad. The *Times*, for example, ran the story about Caswell Koekoe's trip to the United States of America and his criticism of the sanctions against South Africa.[178] Koekoe at the time was the mayor of Maokeng. Another story covered by the *Times* was about the judgment given in favour of five candidates of Maokeng People's Party (MPP) to hold public meetings during the run-up to the local elections in 1988.[179] This was after the governing council had refused them permission to campaign.

Furthermore, I also did desktop research, searching through the TRC testimonies on the website, with a particular focus on Maokeng. The latter covered the period of the fight between the Three Million Gang and the SDUs in Maokeng. I uncovered several testimonies by former members of the SDUs and the Three Million Gang, who appeared before the TRC Amnesty hearings in 1996. These provide insight particularly about the formation of the Three Million Gang, the roots of violence, and attempts at brokering peace between the two warring factions. Of significance, the testimonies also shed light on the difficulty political structures faced in terms of mobilizing and protesting during this period – all their energies were focused on the Three Million Gang.

I also visited Bodibeng High School to request permission to search through the school's logbooks. Permission was granted. Although the logbooks were incomplete; some were missing. Nevertheless, they provide an interesting account about the school's outstanding performance over the years and how it suddenly deteriorated after 1976. In some of the logbooks there are entries about delinquent students and ill-disciplined teachers; teachers who did not prepare for their lessons and sometimes failed to turn up for work. In another logbook there is an entry about some of the senior students refusing to be punished (in 1975). Also there is another entry about political statements written on the chalkboard in one of the classrooms (in 1980). This illustrates that some of the students were becoming politically conscience and aware of the political situation inside the country.

Finally, my research at the Moqhaka District Municipality yielded interesting records of the various local council meetings, dating back to 1977 (Community Council) and ending in 1994 (City Council of Maokeng). These were useful because they provide a bird's eye view about the way the councils functioned. The Community Council's minutes, for example, show how the council increased rental and services charges but simultaneously challenged the Regional Director to instruct the Chamber of Commerce and the Afrikaanse Sakekamer in Kroonstad, to consider the payment of higher salaries to black employees and to give preference to the

[176] *The Friend, August 26, 1976*
[177] *The Friend, February 12-14, 1985*
[178] *The Northern Times, October 21, 1988*
[179] Ibid., August 26, 1988

employment of local blacks instead of blacks from Qwaqwa.[180] Other minutes illustrate the manner in which the council made concerted efforts to meet the residents' needs half way. For example, the council offered bursaries to university students from Maokeng.[181]Some of the minutes cover the council's role in allocating business sites.

During the tenure of the Town Council of Maokeng, it, amongst other issues, discussed the trust it enjoyed from the "community". In one of the meetings, Koekoe, the mayor said "… the community admires the services rendered by the Council in their interests. He explained that the work done by the Council and the developments initiated by the Council are the reasons for peace and order in Maokeng".[182] Other issues discussed during this period related to the shift to the Transitional Local Council (TLC), which comprised of the Town Council of Maokeng, Kroonstad City Council, and the Brentpark Management Committee.[183]

Ethical considerations

According to Lawrence W. Neuman "the researcher has a moral and professional obligation to be ethical, even when research subjects are unaware of or unconcerned about ethics".[184] Drawing from Neuman, and taking into account that my research is focused on human subjects, I have tried to ensure that my research subjects clearly understood the nature of my research and its purpose. I thoroughly explained to my subjects about my research before I asked them to participate in it. In addition, I also informed them that this research is not for commercial reasons but for academic purpose. When my subjects finally agreed to participate in my research, it was on the basis of a clear understanding that they were under no obligation (they could terminate their participation at any time during the course of the research) nor were they to receive any remuneration. They participated voluntarily.

Prior to interviewing my subjects I guaranteed them anonymity, if they so wished. This is because some of my subjects in the past participated in political activities that caused permanent damage to other members of the "community". "Anonymity", Neuman writes "is the protection of the identity of a specific individual from being known".[185] I proposed to use pseudonyms to protect their identity. Exposing their identity without their knowledge (or consent), I thought,

[180] Kroonstad Community Council Minutes, 12 December 1980 to 10 December 1981. Council Minutes (all with the 'Local Histories and Present Realities' Programme unless stated on first reference)
[181] Kroonstad Community Council Minutes, 10 March 1981
[182] City Council of Maokeng – Ordinary Meeting (Fifty Second Ordinary Meeting), Minutes of the Fifty Second Ordinary Meeting of the City Council of Maokeng, held in the Council Chambers, Maokeng, on Thursday 25 Aug 1988. I have a copy of these minutes in my possession
[183] Minutes of the Two Hundred and Thirty council meeting of the City Council of Maokeng, held at Council Chambers, Maokeng, Mon 17 Oct 1994. I have a copy of these minutes in my possession
[184] Neuman, W. Lawrence, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Boston, Allyn & Bacan, 1997)
[185] ibid, p.452

might be unethical and negligent on my part as the researcher, but worse this could have a negative impact on their future relations with some of their victims. To my surprise, none amongst my subjects wished to remain anonymous. Instead, they felt that this was their history that needed to be told and therefore they had nothing to be ashamed about or to hide. This was appropriately summed by Machabe Thulo when he said, "I would like to thank you for the means you have taken, especially since it is not for my benefit but for the benefit of South Africa, the Free State, and Maokeng, so that we can leave this history for the coming generations, so that they would know where we come from and where we are heading".[186]

After my subjects had agreed to participate in the research, I intended to request them to sign a consent form, permitting me to record the interview, use the interview for writing up my thesis, and depositing copies of the interview transcripts (and any other personal material they offered me) with the 'Local Histories and Present Realities' Programme at the University of the Witwatersrand. Talking to some of them about my intention, I had a sense that they were uneasy about signing a consent form. Many people who were politically active in the 1980s and even in the 1990s are still suspicious of being recorded when interviewing them. They believe that the information they give may be used against them at some point in the future. This is perfectly understandable, taking into account that security agents within the 'progressive' structures used tape recorders to record discussions during meetings, for example. And this information would then be used as incriminating evidence against political activists. It is probably for this reason that they felt uncomfortable signing the consent form. After discussing this issue with my supervisor, he suggested that I should record their verbal consent when interviewing them. This helped. At the beginning of each recorded interview I explain about the project and its purpose, inform my subjects about their right to be anonymous and that they participate voluntarily (if they wished, they can terminate their participation at any time). In conclusion, I ask them whether they agree to participate or not.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter One will discuss the existing literature on black politics, with a particular focus on political mobilization and protests, and local governments in South Africa, dating back to 1977. Furthermore, it reviews literature on generational struggles. The chapter identifies gaps in the literature, and indicates new insights that need to be added. It also examines the importance of studying Kroonstad. Finally, the chapter discusses the research methodology, and charts the research process.

Chapter Two examines the early history of Kroonstad's black townships, exploring the socio-economic and political life in the township. It deals with the evolving political culture in

[186] Interview with Machabe Thulo, Gelukwaarts, 23 September 2009

Maokeng until the 1960s. Moreover, it focuses on the role and influences in politics of the "respectables" or the learned group in the township. The chapter attempts to demonstrate that because of the role and influences by these, there was lack of political mobilisation and protests in Kroonstad's black townships. In addition, it also looks at the role of gangs and politics in the township. In conclusion, it alludes to the unsuccessful attempts by the congress-aligned-women and members of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in recruiting members in the area.

Chapter Three focuses on the period from the mid-1960s to the end of 1979, demonstrating the different entry points the residents of Maokeng were introduced to politics, following the "lull" period of the 1960s. It particularly looks at the role of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM)-aligned groupings like the South African Student Organisation (SASO), Black Consciousness-orientated teachers, and the Maokeng Student Art Club (MASAC) in politicizing students and young people in Maokeng leading up to the 1976 student demonstration. Finally, the chapter deals with the role of the Young Christian Workers' (YWC's) attempt to recruit and mobilize young workers and students in Maokeng. Following the detention and ultimately the trial of the members of the YCW, the latter ceased to exist.

Chapter Four deals specifically with the various local governments in Maokeng and the Management Committee in Brentpark. It shows that prior to the introduction of the Black Local Authorities Act (BLA) in 1982, the Kroonstad Community Council (KCC) enjoyed some support within Maokeng. This was because of their mediating role. The chapter demonstrates that the KCC was opposed particularly by the opposition councillors and not by the established civic associations as was the case elsewhere. Furthermore, the chapter illustrates that, unlike in other areas, in Maokeng the Town Council under the BLA did not experience opposition, with the intention to dissolve it, at least until 1989, because it made concerted efforts to provide service delivery and not increase rent and service charges.

Chapter Five looks at the period between late 1984 and1989, with a particular focus on the beginning of mass political mobilization and protests across the country. It, first, begin by demonstrating the various entry points young people, particularly school-going students, were introduced to politics in Maokeng and Brentpark. Moreover, it focuses its attention on the 1985 student riots and how these were later broadened to challenge the central state. It also looks at the formation of the students and youth organizations. Relatedly, it will explore the methods (or repertoires of collective action) these organizations used to mobilize the community and to engage in the struggle for liberation. Finally, the chapter deals with the effect the deployment of some of the politically experienced student/youth leaders and the split within the 'progressive' structure in Maokeng had on mobilization and protests.

Chapter Six examines the violent phase in the history of Maokeng Township between the Three Million Gang and the 'community', led by the ANCYL Maokeng Branch. It explores the historical roots of this violence, arguing that it was initially gang-related, and how this violence

was finally resolved. Furthermore, the chapter also explores the role of political parties like the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the police, and councillors in this violence. Finally, it demonstrates the combative role some women played in the violence which erupted in the early 1990s.

Chapter Seven focuses on the impact the unbanning of the liberation movements, particularly the African National Congress (ANC) had on the local politics of Maokeng. It attempts to demonstrate the factors which caused tension between the ANC Free State leadership and the South African National Civic Organisations (SANCO). Relatedly, it shows that the ANC Free State leadership's lack of consultation and uncompromising attitude cost the ANC votes in the first democratic local government elections.

CHAPTER TWO

Political Culture in Kroonstad's black locations, 1920s -1963

Introduction

The politisation of Kroonstad's black locations dates back to the late 1920s and it was led by the members of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) living in Kroonstad. However, after the ICU started experiencing internal problems which finally caused it to split, 'radical' politics in the locations came to an end. Furthermore, the dearth of political campaigns such as those organised by women in Herschel, in the Eastern Cape, against soaring prices in 1922,[187] by women in Natal and Durban opposing the municipal liquor canteens in 1929[188], and finally by the Brakpan black community's protest against the location's heavy-handed and unsympathetic Non-European Affairs Manager in 1944,[189] propelled this situation.

In this chapter I argue that, because of the absence of campaigns similar to the ones mentioned above, and political organisations such as the African National Congress (ANC), CPSA (and later SACP), trade unions and politically conscientised individuals who could galvanise the masses, the leading role of bodies such as the Native Advisory Board (NAB), Joint Council of Europeans and Natives (JCEN), Orange Free State Teachers' Association (OFSATA), and later the Society of Young Africa (SOYA) contributed to the tranquillity and quiescence in the locations at least until the early 1950s. These bodies did not concern themselves with mobilising and organising the masses. The NAB and JCEN, for example, saw themselves as 'working for the people' rather than 'working with the people'. In the long term, especially when the residents failed to see any tangible results, they were discredited. The OFSATA and SOYA, in contrast, mobilised, but this was limited only to a particular constituency in the community, teachers.

From the mid-1950s the situation changed. There was a sudden eruption of political energy in the locations. This was after the ANC Women's League embarked in a campaign against the passes. Although the police were able to swiftly stop this campaign after arresting the leaders, they could not, however, contain the impact this had on some of the residents of Kroonstad black locations. In 1960 the residents demonstrated against the pass laws, others established a cell linked to the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) aimed at recruiting members for the PAC for its 'war' against the state. Just like the women's campaign, this cell was also quickly detected and its leading member was arrested, causing an abrupt end of this cell. It was in the early 1970s that the black residents of Kroonstad began to mobilise again, only this time the teachers and students were at the forefront (more about this in the following chapter).

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[187] Beinart, W. 'Women in Rural Politics: Herschel District in the 1920s and 1930s', in Belinda Bozzoli (ed.) *Class, Community and Conflict: South African Perspective* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987

[188] Bradford, H. 'We are now the men': Women's Beer Protests in the Natal countryside, 1929, in Bozzoli *Class, Community and Conflict*

[189] Sapire, H. 'The Stay-away of the Brakpan Location, 1944', in Bozzoli *Class, Community and Conflict*

To fully comprehend the reason why the 'conservative' bodies mentioned above were able to influence Kroonstad black locations' politics for more than a decade, it is important, first, to understand the origins of Kroonstad, its inhabitants, economy, and the role of the various local authorities during the period under review.

Settling on Kroonstad

Kroonstad, located in the northern Free State Province (formerly Orange Free State) was founded in the 1850s and was proclaimed a municipality, with its own local government in 1875.[190] Already in the 1880s Africans (or Natives, as they were called then) had settled in this area. In 1885, FG Hill, a school-going girl, observed that Natives resided about a mile (1.6 kilometres) outside town.[191] Tsiu Oupa Matsepe, who was born in 1948 in Kroonstad, remembers that his maternal great-grandfather, Musere Thlapane, lived in Kroonstad during the town's earliest days. He takes up the story as it was told to him

> The Tlhapanes ... was an old Kroonstad family that must have come into the area of Kroonstad in the mid-1800s and then settled themselves along the banks of the river in Kroonstad, which is known as the Horse River, but which the old people refer to as *Likubu* (Hippopotami) ... According to the old history, as explained to us by the old people, they lived in the vicinity of where the Pick 'n Pay (Shopping Centre) and the Magistrate's Court are situated. I am unable to give the street's name as it sits now. But it was a community that was really mixed in the sense that there were some white people also living in the area. The rest of the other white people, according to what I am told, lived towards the east of that portion of the bank of the river and the town. ... And the reason why I am inclined to believe that the Tlhapane family must have lived in that area in and around that time is because my great-grandfather Musere Tlhapane, who was buried in Kroonstad, was born around 1850 and he died in 1906. And he is buried, I'm told, at the old graveyard which is situated near the rail-line as one moves north of town just outside the subway. His grave's stone is still intact and is in existence[192]

Matsepe's interview suggests that Musere Thlapane was either born in Kroonstad or had arrived with his family when he was still very young. This is because he was born around the same time Kroonstad was founded. It would seem that some of the earliest black families to live in Kroonstad included the Beukes, Maraba, M'Baco, Thekiso, Mokoena, Nothibi, Buffel, and Mareka. This is because the male members of these families (most probably the heads of these

[190] Kay, P. SND de N. *Notre Dame,* pp.52-53
[191] Ibid., pp.96-98
[192] Interview with Tsiu Oupa Matsepe by Tshepo Moloi, for the South African History Archive -Sunday Times Heritage Project (hereafter STHP), Welkom, 28 March 2007. The STHP interviews can be found at the Witwatersrand University Library, SAHA (all interviews for the STHP with the author, unless otherwise stated on first reference)

families) were amongst the first people to be involved in the *Bantoe-administrasieraad* (Bantu Administration Council) established to help the Kroonstad Town Council, first, to remove 'A' location from the centre of town, and second, to manage the "new" locations (see below)[193]. It would seem that this 'Council' was established to advise the municipality on matters relating to the Natives. In 1924 it was formalized and led by the following members: W A Botha (chairperson), P A Beukes, Jan Maraba, Jas M'Baco, William M'Baco, Oriel Moerena, Moses Peter and Oriel Thekiso.[194] It is possible that this 'Council' was instrumental in the establishment of the other three settlements: 'B' (or Marabastad) 'C' (or EC/Cairo), 'D' locations.

White people living in Kroonstad began to voice their discontent about sharing living space with black people in the early 1900s. This was after they had observed an increase in the number of inter-racial relationships between white men and black women. They abhorred this but felt powerless to do anything because there were no regulations to deter such relationships. This was evident in the Kroonstad Deputy Divisional Commandant's response to Captain Dickson's letter appealing for municipality's intervention in this matter. He responded as follows – in part

> It is perfectly true I regret to say but we are powerless in the matter … At present there appear to be no Municipal Regulations preventing white men from going into the location when they like … I would suggest that after the sounding of the bell at 9 (o'clock) no white should be allowed in the location. Were that the rule the police would then be able to lay lands in many white men[195]

In 1919 white people were ready to have black people removed from the town and settled in their own areas. Their views were expressed clearly in the same year during the campaign for the town council elections when Mrs Eksteen, the first woman in Kroonstad to contest these elections and a librarian by profession, was bombarded with questions regarding her plans for the town. Amongst these was the question about 'A' location. Her response illustrated the long-held desire by whites to rid the town of the black location. She said "A disgrace to the town. No one should object to raising money for the purpose of removing it. The natives should be compensated for any loss".[196] Not long thereafter 'A' location was removed from town and relocated to the north of the town.

There are two possible explanations for the sudden change of attitude by whites in Kroonstad. In 1915 Kroonstad was overwhelmed by the Scarlet Fever, a deadly and an infectious disease. Forty

[193] Serfontein *Keurskrif*,p.449
[194] Ibid.
[195] Free State Provincial Archives (hereafter FSPA) NAB 2, Squatting: Kroonstad. 'Letter from the Deputy Divisional Commandant to Captain Dickson', 1906; Similarly some of the black residents were against such relationships. In 1906 the Reverend Masopi (Masopie) wrote a letter to the Attorney General complaining about white men sleeping with black women in Kroonstad. BFSPA NAB 2, Squatting: Kroonstad
[196] Serfontein *Keurskrif,* p.364

nine people died as a result, although we have no evidence of how many whites died compared to blacks. Again in 1918, the town was badly hit by the influenza epidemic, which had swept across the country during the months of October and November. Writing about this subject, Howard Phillips notes "towards the end of September 1918 the second wave of the world-wide Spanish Influenza pandemic of 1918-1919 struck South Africa. Within a fortnight the country was overwhelmed by the worst natural disaster in its history".[197] According to him, this pandemic could have possibly been spread by the Natal mineworkers bound for the Rand who had been infected by the black stevedores workers in Durban or by the migrant workers from Mozambique who carried the Spanish flu to the Rand.[198] Because of the migrant labour system, the pandemic soon spread throughout the country, leaving masses of people dead. "By the time that it abated in November", Phillips writes "probably more than a quarter of a million South Africans had died".[199] In contrast, Sue Parnell estimates that the Spanish Influenza epidemic killed 150 000 people in South Africa.[200] And according to Dot Serfontein, in Kroonstad more than 5 000 cases were reported.[201] Phillips, on the other hand, estimates that about 229 both black and white people died in Kroonstad because of this epidemic.[202]

At such times white authorities throughout the country tended to locate the source of the epidemic in the existence of locations in the towns. In most cases this was unfounded.[203]

Secondly the white authorities' aim in establishing "new" locations for blacks was to impose total control over these in order to reduce the number of the "master-less" or "redundant" Africans in towns. Only Africans who sold their labour to whites were to be allowed in urban areas. The rest had to be repatriated to where they came from – rural areas and reserves. To achieve this, the "new" locations were to be laid out with proper streets and houses; and its inhabitants were to be registered. In Kroonstad, for instance, the town council issued licenses and passes to residents.[204] This would enable the authorities to police and maintain law and order in the locations unlike in the uncontrollable locations-turned slums.

Although the (Natives) Urban Areas Act of 1923 was enacted three years after the removal of 'A' location from town, it nevertheless had an impact in the manner this location and other 'new' locations for black people were to be developed and administered in future. Parnell writes "the Native Urban Areas Act No. 21 of 1923 was to provide the legislative framework for the

[197] Phillips, H. 'Black October': The Impact of the Spanish Influenza Epidemic of 1918 on South Africa' (Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand Government Publications), 1990, p. xv
[198] Ibid., p.1
[199] Ibid., p. xv
[200] Parnell, S. M. 'Johannesburg Slums and Racial Segregation in South African Cities, 1910-1937' (Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand, PhD Thesis, 1993), p.27
[201] Serfontein *Keurskrif*, p.357
[202] Phillips 'Black October', p.166
[203] Parnell 'Johannesburg Slums', p.24
[204] Serfontein *Keurskrif,* p.448

resolution of all conflict over the growing settled African population of the towns".[205] The Act was intended, *inter alia*, to achieve two objectives. First, to "create a reliable, manageable supply of semi-skilled labour through the social differentiation of the African population into rural dwellers, urban migrants and permanently settled urbanites".[206] And second, African working class had to be settled in their own areas separate from the whites.[207]

Moreover, the establishment of the "new" black locations shifted the financial burden from the central state to the local authorities, who in turn made it the responsibility of the inhabitants of the locations to upgrade their residential areas. Parnell, in her study focusing on Johannesburg, found that "money for location development was in critically short supply because it was a low priority in city budgeting". [The] "council justified their decisions", she continues "not to spend locally generated funds on African services because all monies generated from African passes were paid to the Provinces".[208] Instead local authorities resorted to a Native Revenue Account – copied from Bloemfontein.[209] According to Parnell "additional funds for the new Native Revenue Account were to be gleaned by appropriating the revenue which employers contributed to native contract registration and from the sale of "Kaffir beer" monopolized by the councils.[210] Finally, rent charges were another form of accruing funding for the development of the locations. In 1949 the Manager of Native Administration in Kroonstad reported that the Location's Revenue (Account) had increased in the sum of £2 757 compared to the previous financial year.[211]

It was against this background that finally black people living in 'A' location in town were removed. Serfontein claims that the town council "provided good prices to residents for their huts and prohibited any other construction of buildings".[212]

Black Locations

The Kroonstad's black residential area, initially, consisted of four settlements: 'A', 'B', C', and 'D' locations. In 1950 the government promulgated the Group Areas Act, "which was designed to allocate separate residential areas to Africans, coloureds, Indians and whites"[213] and this led to the establishment of 'model' townships for Africans across the country. In Kroonstad,

[205] Parnell 'Johannesburg Slums', p.41
[206] Ibid., p.42
[207] Ibid.
[208] Parnell 'Johannesburg Slums', pp.57-8
[209] Ibid., p.58
[210] Ibid., p.59
[211] Minutes: Kroonstad Municipality, 26 April 1949
[212] Serfontein *Keurskrif,* p.448; See also the UWL HLP Minutes of the Kroonstad Joint Council, August 1935
[213] See Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* p.105

Seeisoville[214] and Phomolong (also known as Vuka 'Zenzele – IsiZulu for 'Wake up and do it yourself')[215] were built in 1958 and 1960, respectively. Similarly, Brentpark was established for coloureds at the same time as Seeisoville. Dennis Bloem, who was born in 1953 in 'A' location recalls that he moved to Brentpark with his grandmother when he was five years old.[216]

It would seem that the residents of 'A' location in town used the money they received from the municipality for their properties in town to purchase plots from the municipality and built their own houses in the new settlement, which was also named 'A' location. They became stand-holders, but they did not own the land their houses were built on. It belonged to the municipality.[217] Similarly, some of the families in Alexandra Township like Philip 'Kay' Manana's were able to purchase plots there in the early 1920s.[218] As noted above, the "new" 'A' location was the first settlement to be established in 1920. According to Steel Setiloane, the "new" 'A' location was situated nearest to the white residential area. It consisted of 200-300 houses stretching from Mmote Street in the east to Thlapane Street in the west". "About half of these houses", he adds, "were built with red bricks, while the other half were built with mud bricks". "A mixed population", Setiloane notes, "inhabited this settlement". There were Southern Sotho and Setswana speaking people, [Ama]Xhosa, a few IsiZulu-speaking people and a number of Afrikaans-speaking people".[219] James "Jimmy" Naanyane, who was born in 'A' Location in 1938, likewise remembers the area comprising a mixed community. He recounts: "Well, the community where I lived was a mixed community: coloureds and blacks [Africans], and [people speaking] other languages. … So, it was mixed. Most coloureds came from town. There was an old location; they called it the old 'A' location. At [new] 'A' location we had about 300-400 houses.[220]

Taking up the same issue, Ntantala writes

> The majority of the people in Kroonstad location were Southern Sotho-speaking, with a good number of both Rolong and Kgatla-Tswana, a sprinkling of Xhosa and a few *Oorlaams mense*, a totally de-culturated group of Africans who knew no African language or claimed they did not. About three-quarters of the people were

[214] Seeisoville was named after Chief Seeiso Lerothodi of Basotholand. See Pherudi, M. L. *The History of An African Son From The Dusty Marantha-Maokeng, 1965-2007:Life History with Pictures* (Gaborone, Printing and Publishing Company Botswana, 2008), p.104
[215] Ibid., p.104
[216] Interview with Dennis Bloem (LHPR), Pretoria, Sheraton Hotel, 14 January 2008; see also interview with Anthony Bouwer (STHP), Kroonstad, 23 November 2006
[217] Ntantala *A Life's Mosaic*, pp.83-4
[218] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* p.24
[219] Setiloane *The History,* p.3
[220] Interview with James Naanyane, by Tshepo Moloi, for the "Local Histories and Present Realities" Programme (hereafter LHPR), Brentpark, Kroonstad, 14 November 2011 (all interviews for the "Local Histories and Present Realities" Programme with the author, unless otherwise stated on first reference)

> Afrikaans-speaking, having grown up on the farms of the Orange Free State …[221]

Finally, Hilda "Mantho" Motadinyane remembers 'A' location as the settlement where its inhabitants "used to speak mixed languages like Sekgatla (SeTswawa), Afrikaans and so on, just like in Sophiatown. There were many coloureds staying there". "So, my father and I", she adds "would visit the Oliphants in 'A' location and when he comes back he'll be speaking Afrikaans"[222]

Miscegenation seemed to be the main cause of the growing coloured community in the area. Matsepe recalls that his grandfather Jonah Thlapane married a white woman, Miss Pretorius, and they had coloured children. One of their children was Malithuli Violet Thlapane, who was later married by an African man, Singaphe Dorrington Matsepe – Tsiu Matsepe's father.[223] . Similarly, Motadinyane remembers that her grandmother was married to a white man and they lived in 'A' Location.[224]

Matsepe claims that his maternal grandparents were amongst the first people to reside in the location. He explains

> 'A' location … that is the location I was born in. It is of interest to note that the first erf in 'A' location was my grandfather's, Aaron Thlapane. So, Aaron Thlapane occupied erf numbers 1 and 2 in the location. And his brother [Jonah] occupied erf number 5 … which is indicative of the fact that they must have been the earlier people to live in the … location[225]

The old residents of 'A' location have fond memories of life in it. For example, when Leboseng Violet Selele, who was born there in 1933, was asked to describe 'A' location when she was growing up, she responded as follows

> Very quiet and it was fun. We were living in peace. The majority of people who lived there were Basotho. The elders of the community were getting along; children were disciplined. There was peace and harmony[226]

Over a period of time, the population grew and new locations were established. A substantial number of black people arrived in Kroonstad during the 1920s and 1930s, in search of employment opportunities and a place to stay. Some came from the Setswana-speaking areas in

[221] Ntantala *A Life's Mosaic,* p.82
[222] Interview with Motadinyane
[223] Interview with Matsepe
[224] Interview with Motadinyane
[225] Interview with Matsepe, 28 March 2007
[226] Interview with Violet Leboseng Selele (STHP), Seeisoville, Kroonstad, 24 November 2006

the north and others were from Basotholand (today's Lesotho).[227] Matsepe's maternal great-grandparents were Batswana from the area known today as Brits. Matsepe explains

> The Tlhapanes, when they settled in Kroonstad, as far as I know they must have come from the Brits area. One picks this up in some of the things that they say in reminisce (sic) of their families who are connected with them. Some of whom are in Botswana, some of whom are in Randfontein, some are in Brits. The way they would refer to their family is that they would refer to them as coming from there - and I believe that ...[228]

In similar vein, Hilda "Mantho" Motadinyane, who was born in 1927 in 'B' location, Kroonstad, recalls that her parents were from the Setswana-speaking areas. In her words: "Father came from Ga-Motlatla, Ventersdorp. Mother was from Serowe, in Botswana".[229] Although a sizeable number of Batswana lived in Kroonstad, this does not seem to have had any significant influence on the place the bulk of whose population were southern Sotho-speaking. Because of this, the children of the Setswana-speaking parents were forced to learn Sesotho. The trend continues even today.[230]

Parkies Setiloane, who was born in the same year as Motadinyane, also in 'B' location, notes that his father was a Motswana, who had moved from a place he cannot remember but ended up in Allanridge, about 70 kilometers from Kroonstad. According to him, his father married his mother who was born in Kroonstad in 1917. However, notwithstanding his father's Setswana background, Parkies Setiloane and his siblings learned Sesotho at school. He recalls

> 'B' location was largely made up of settled people. I mean, we were BaTswana-speaking at home but I did not do Setswana at school. I did Sesotho. We never did any [Se]Tswana. The main language here it was Sesotho. He (referring to Mpopetsi Dhlamini, also a long-term resident of Kroonstad) is Zulu but he did Sesotho[231]

The Sesotho influence cut across ethnic groups. Anthony Bouwer, recalls that his grandmother, Deborah Nomsa, who was married to his grandfather Ariel Bouwer, was an IsiXhosa-speaking person from the Transkei but could speak Sesotho.[232] Similarly, Phyllis Ntantala, who was originally IsiXhosa-speaking, remembers that while teaching in Kroonstad she was forced to learn to speak Sesotho and her daughter Nandi, whose minder only spoke Sesotho and could not

[227] There were also individuals who arrived in Kroonstad from Zululand. Michael (Mike) "Baba" Jordan remembers that his maternal grandfather, Ndaba Zikhali, arrived in Kroonstad before 1917 (before the birth of his daughter – Jordan's mother) to work at the hotel laundry. Interview with Jordan (STHP), Brentpark, Kroonstad, 24 November 2006

[228] Interview with Matsepe

[229] Interview with Hilda "Mantho" Motadinyane (LHPR), Constantia, Maokeng, 22 May 2009.

[230] This is confirmed in the interview with Moses Masizane. Masizane was born in Kroonstad in 1968. See interview with Masizane, 10 July 2008

[231] Interview with Parkies Setiloane (STHP), Constantia, Kroonstad, 7 December 2006

[232] Interview with Bouwer

speak English, instilled the Sesotho culture in her as well. She writes "Nandi would proudly tell people: *Ke Mo-Sotho nna! Ake mo-Qhosa* (I am Sotho; I am not Xhosa).[233] The prevalence of Basotho in Kroonstad would later in the 1990s play a vital role in mitigating against ethnic violence, which turned to political violence, experienced in the Rand (see chapter six).

The predominance of Sesotho can be attributed to the large number of Basotho from Basotholand who settled in Kroonstad.[234] In the interview with Michael "Baba" Jordan, who was born in 1942, he recalled that his paternal grandfather, Maimane Rakhetla was originally from Butha-Buthe in Basotholand. He came to Kroonstad in search of employment.[235]

In the early 1930s more and more Basotho (and coloureds) left the farms dotted across the Orange Free State. Philip Bonner and Noor Nieftagodien, in their illuminating study of Alexandra Township, write that because of the drought which began after 1927 and reaching its worst in 1932-34, many farmers abandoned their farms and those who remained laid off black labour tenants in their thousands. The latter sold up their cattle (some did not), left the land and headed for small and large towns.[236] A sizeable number of them, particularly those who had settled on the farms in the Kroonstad district, drifted to the newly established locations for blacks in Kroonstad. For Ntantala this explained the influence of Afrikaans in the black residential area. According to her, when she arrived in Kroonstad in 1937 she found that "about three quarters of the people were Afrikaans-speaking, having grown up on the farms of the Orange Free State and moved to the city (or town) for better opportunities and wages".[237] Minutes of the Kroonstad's Europeans and Natives Joint Council which dealt with the problem of unemployment confirm that black farm-workers invaded the Kroonstad's locations in 1931.[238]

Furthermore Bonner, in his study of the Basotho gang called 'Russian' (or Ma-Rashea) on the Reef, offers another explanation for the high rate of migration of Basotho into South Africa. Drawing from Murray's work he writes that "Basotholand's economy entered a period of deep distress in the early 1930s when the effects of rapidly climbing population, mounting land shortage and accelerating soil exhaustion were compounded by the onset of an unprecedentedly savage drought". "Maize production", he continues, "slumped, never to recover, livestock holdings collapsed, and for the first time Basotholand turned into a net importer as opposed to a

[233] Ntantala *Life's Mosaic,* p.87

[234] Pherudi, M. *Who's Who in Maokeng, Vol.1* (Printing and Publishing Company Botswana, 2009), p.273

[235] Interview with Michael (Mike) "Baba" Jordan (STHP), Brentpark, Kroonstad, 24 November 2006

[236] Bonner P. and Nieftagodien N. *Alexandra: A History* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2008), p.25; For a detailed account on the earlier migration of Basotho to South Africa, particularly to the Orange Free State towns, see Keegan, T. 'The Transformation of Agrarian Society and Economy in Industrialising South Africa: The Orange Free State Grain Belt in the Early Twentieth Century' (University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, Ph.D Thesis, 1981); and for an account on the meltdown of the economy of Basotholand in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century, see Gill, J.S. *A short history of Lesotho* (Morija, Lesotho, Morija Museum and Archives, 1993)

[237] Ntantala *Life's Mosaic,* p.82

[238] UWL HLP AD1433 (Box CK5.3) Kroonstad Joint Council: Minutes of Meetings

net exporter of grain".[239] He also notes that the impact of this varied between the rich and poor families. But such pressures undoubtedly contributed to the growing exodus of Basotho migrants to South Africa.[240] True the majority headed for the gold mines in the Rand, particularly in the East Rand[241], but a sizeable number also drifted to the OFS towns like Kroonstad.

Other families drifted from KwaZulu to work in Kroonstad. Moses Masizane, who was born in Kroonstad in 1968 recalls that his grandparents, the Khambules, arrived in Kroonstad in the 1940s – seemingly during the course of the Second World War. He explains: "The house number was 153 'A' Location, where I was born … one of those places selling liquor … was called HaMakhambule (Makhambule's place). My grandmother originated from KwaZulu. My grandfather came here to work as a soldier, at a local soldier camp here in Kroonstad. They then settled here".[242]

Black people arrived in Kroonstad mainly in search of employment opportunities. Besides working on the nearby farms, blacks could also find work in the number of businesses which had been established in town. In her description of Kroonstad, FG Hill writes that in 1885 there were 10 stores in Kroonstad.[243] And in 1917, according to the Braby's directory of that year, the number of businesses had increased to more than 15, which among others included a chemist, hotels, a railway cartage contractor, and a jeweller.[244] At this point, Kroonstad had turned into a place of transit. "Travelling salesmen" writes Ntantala, "to and from the Cape, Natal and Transvaal ma[de] stops [t]here".[245] As a result, according to Ntantala, "hotels were always full on weekends with these men".[246] A substantial number of black people also found work in the four hotels in Kroonstad. Jordan remembers that his grandfather and, later, his mother as well were employed in one of the hotels in Kroonstad. In his words

> My maternal grandfather, Ndaba Zikhali, according to my mother came here as a migrant worker; working in the hotel laundry in Kroonstad. She cannot remember the name of the hotel. But Kroonstad then as it grew had four hotels. My mother also worked at a hotel. Incidentally, she worked at the same laundry

[239] Bonner, P. 'The Russians on the Reef 1947-1957: Urbanisation, Gang Warfare and Ethnic Mobilisation', in *Apartheid's Genesis 1935-1962* (eds.) Philip Bonner, Peter Delius and Deborah Posel (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1993), P.169
[240] Ibid.
[241] For an in-depth account on the migration of Basotho, particularly Basotho women, to the East Rand, see Sapire 'The Stay-away'
[242] Interview with Masizane
[243] Serfontein *Keurskrif,* p.97 (In 1917 FG Hill was the Mayoress, see, Serfontein *Keurskrif,* p.349)
[244]Ibid., p.348
[245] Ntantala *Life's Mosaic,* p.86
[246] Ibid.

where my grandfather used to work[247]

Without doubt the seemingly abundance of employment opportunities in Kroonstad was the cause of the arrival of black people in large numbers during this period. According to the Joint Council of Europeans and Natives Kroonstad Minutes in 1934, unemployment amongst blacks decreased from 600 to about 80. And about 500 were sent away to work on contracts (for 6-9 months) in other areas.[248] In the same year, in December the Council noted in its minutes that because "... of the large scheme of building on hand *in town* ... at the moment there was hardly any unemployment. Setiloane notes that during this period, some of the residents, particularly men, worked at the South African Railways plant, at the Milling Company, the municipality, at shops in town, on the roads …"[249] As a result, farmers found that they could not get labour from the location for harvesting".[250]

Trading and Survival mechanism

In spite of the fond memories the early inhabitants of Kroonstad's black locations hold about their residential areas, life was not always easy for some of the residents, particularly those who were unemployed. They were forced to eke out a living somehow. Many engaged in trading. However, in Kroonstad this was deemed illegal. The Kroonstad Town Council refused to grant blacks trading rights, using the authority of the Urban Areas Amendment Act No.25, 1930, to deny such rights, which stipulated that

> Any urban local authority which has under its administration and control a location or native village – (a) may, and, if so directed by the Minister after consultation with the Administrator and after due enquiry at which the urban local authority shall be entitled to be heard, shall, on such condition as he may prescribe in the absence of approved regulations framed under paragraph (g) of sub-section (3) of section twenty-three, let sites within the location of native village for trading or business purposes[251]

The Town Council's position was that it would only make a definitive decision on this matter after the sitting of the Native Trading Rights Inquiry. This sat in Kroonstad on 5 September 1932. By January 1933 the government had not made its decision regarding the Native Trading Rights. This was evident from the letter addressed to J. D. Rheinallt-Jones by B.W. Shepered

[247] Interview with Jordan; The hotels in Kroonstad were Victoria, Grant, Central and Selborne Hotels. See Serfontein *Keurskrif,* pp.348-50; interview with Jordan
[248] UWL HLP Joint Council of Europeans and Natives, Minutes, Kroonstad, March 23, 1934
[249] Setiloane *The History,* p.4
[250] UWL HLP Joint Council of Europeans and Natives, Minutes, Kroonstad, December 12 1934
[251] UWL HLP AD1433 (Box CK5.3) Kroonstad Joint Council, 'Draft of Memorandum on Granting of Trading Rights in Locations'

from Lovedale, Cape Province, enquiring about the outcome of the inquiry.[252] It does not seem, however, that the government was convinced by the Kroonstad's Joint Council of European and Natives' (JCEN) argument for Natives to be granted rights to trade in Kroonstad[253]. This caused the Kroonstad Town Council to dig its heels and refuse to grant the trading rights to blacks. To make a more convincing argument in future for the JCEN on Native trading rights, in August 1934 Rheinallt-Jones sought advice on this issue from people in East London.[254] Meanwhile, black people continued trading - illegally. A number of them were arrested and fined. This was, of course, one of the few ways in which the Council accrued finances for the Native Revenue Account. In June 1931, for example, 17 year-old John Moseka was arrested in 'B' Location and charged for hawking and peddling unlawfully. He was found guilty and fined £5 or one month in prison, doing hard labour.[255] In the same year, Sam Kaulane, a Native Sergeant in the South African Police, testified in court that he had arrested a man trading illegally in the location. He said

> On the 20 June 1931 I found accused in 'D' Location, in Kroonstad, pushing a handcart, shouting "goods for sale". I saw him stop in front of hut No.193 and selling some two packets of mealie meal, which he took from his cart. Accused had no licence of any kind. 'D' Location is within the municipality of Kroonstad[256]

Not all the black traders were unfortunate, though. Some managed to engage in their business without detection by the police. Lydia Malehlohonolo Mphosi is one of these. She was born in 1918 at Heuningspruit, a farming area in the Kroonstad district. She came to Kroonstad in 1942. She did not attend school; instead, conducted a vegetable business. "At the time", writes Pherudi, "no family in Maokeng slept without food because Mrs Mphosi was not only selling cheap but was also providing credit for weekend and month end collection".[257]

The refusal by the Kroonstad Town Council to grant blacks trading right seemed to have continued until after the Second World War. Then in 1947-48 "the [Native Affairs] Committee in Kroonstad recommended that Abel Mathike, Sam Kuolane (possibly Kaulane), David Chakane, Nicodemus Ntanga and Gilbert Mayeza (possibly Mateza) be permitted to trade as

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[252] UWL HLP Joint Council of Europeans and Natives, Minutes, Kroonstad, 18 January 1933

[253] In March 1935 Father Martin Knight, of the St. Francis Priory, and member of the JCEN in a letter addressed to Mr Saffery, the secretary of the Council, lamented the Council's late "move on the Free State Trading Rights until the Conference (Inquiry) met here, when it was too late". He recommended that in future the Council should establish central committees in each area to deal with matters which [we]re of local rather national importance. UWL HLP Joint Council of European and Natives, Minutes, Kroonstad, 20 March 1935

[254] UWL HLP Minutes: Joint Council of European and Natives, Kroonstad, 21 August 1934

[255] Ibid.

[256] Ibid.

[257] Pherudi *Who's Who,* p.56

butchers in the location ...[258] In the interview with Simon Mateza, who was born in Marabastad in 1931, he remembers that his father Gilbert Mateza opened his vegetable business during this period. He explains

> I went up to Standard 5. Thereafter, I went to help my father because as he was working, he also used to own a shop. We had some donkeys and a cart, which we used to collect some vegetables from the market, and sold them around the location. That is how we started[259]

With the relaxation of the trading laws, Mateza senior, went on to establish his first formal business. But trading was still heavily restricted. Simon Mateza continues

> Yes, it used to be difficult during those times for a black person to start a business. We used to have something that resembled a shop at our house. So, the law was that we were only allowed to open very early in the morning before people went to work, so that they could buy some sugar and some coffee. After that you had to close for the rest of the day. And only open at five when people returned from work. That was how it worked[260]

Having learnt his business trade from his father, Simon Mateza continued in the trading business. Amidst tribulations, he opened a barbershop, then transported people, thereafter opened a bar, where he sold food. In 1955 he married and in 1959 moved to Phomolong, where he established (after initially renting) Langa Cash Store. Describing his journey into business, Mateza remarks

> We carried on until my dad passed on [in 1951]. But during that time I already had an idea [about running a business]. And then I later opened something like a barber-shop, where I was cutting people's hair. I ran that shop even though I was not making enough money. … I already knew how to drive. And I did some piece jobs, and also transported people around the location By the way cars were scarce back in the day. I did that until I had a car of my own. I would … transport them to the farms. We went as far as Ficksburg. Then there were municipal bars during that time. Women were not allowed in bars; only men were allowed. I went to rent a shop in Marabastad from a man called Mr. Konyana. We started by selling food in the bar, me and my partner by the name of Mkhoane. When Mkhoane and I separated, I decided to open my own [business]

[258] Kroonstad Municipality Council Minutes, 21 February 1949 to 29 August 1949
[259] Interview with Simon Mateza (LHPR), Phomolong, 8 July 2008; also see Pherudi *Who's who,* p.41
[260] Interview with Mateza

Mateza continues

> I came to start my business here in Phomolong, where I was renting a place. Then in 1963 I found myself a place of my own. I found my own stand and built a shop, which I named Langa Cash Store. That was my breakthrough. Business was … doing well. Shops like Pick 'n Pay and Shoprite were not there yet. Shops which were there used to close at 5 [o'clock] in the afternoon. And in town no shops operated on weekends and during holidays, as well. That was a good chance for us to sell and make good money[261]

Other less fortunate Africans who migrated from the farms found work as domestic labourers and some were employed as chars.[262] For example, Lucy Mosele Taje, who was born in 1919 in April's Kraal Farm, in Kwakwatsi (Koppies), came to Maokeng during *ntwa ya Hitler* (Adolf Hitler's War, or World War II), and worked at the *kitchens* (domestic work) for the greater part of her life.[263] According to Setiloane, "they all earned a mere pittance".[264] Because of this, young boys in the locations took up part time jobs as caddies at the golf course, carried luggage of passengers at the railway station, worked in the gardens in white suburbs, and washed cars of the visitors staying in the hotels in town to supplement their parents' meagre earnings.[265]

And, of course, women who were not employed survived by selling homemade beer. Moses Masizane's grandmother, the owner of the 'Khambule's Place', as noted already, survived by selling homemade beer. "Beer brewing", Bonner and Nieftagodien note, "... was a pervasive feature of location life".[266] They observe that "women monopolised the brewing of beer and it was often their major source of income". "Surveys carried out in the 1930s", they write, "showed that up to 75% of urban African women were involved in the brewing trade".[267] However, this trade was deemed illegal by the white authorities. As a result, the government, through the Native Urban Areas Act No.13 of 1928, prohibited the supply or delivery of any liquor to Africans.[268] Instead, it regulated that Africans seeking to purchase liquor should do so in the municipal-created beer halls.

Accordingly, Bonner and Nieftagodien note that the Witwatersrand municipalities enforced a total ban on the buying and consuming of liquor on its African population.[269] The same was the practice in Kroonstad. The police constantly raided the households suspected of trading in

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[261] Ibid.
[262] Ntantala *Life's Mosaic,* pp.85-6; Setiloane *The History,* p.4
[263] Pherudi *Who's Who,* p.325
[264] Setiloane *The History,* p.4
[265] Ibid.; Ntantala *Life's Mosaic,* pp.85-6
[266] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* p.11
[267] Ibid., p.12
[268] Kros, C. 'Urban African Women's Organisations and Protests on the Rand from the years 1939 to 1956', (Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand Bachelor of Arts Honours, 1978), p.46
[269] Ibid.

homebrewed beer. The women brewing and selling this liquor devised measures to avoid police raids. Some used "watchmen" (particularly children of the women who brewed beer), who stood at the corner of the streets to watch the police. "When the police came by on their bicycles", Bonner and Nieftagodien write, "the watchmen would signal by saying 'it is red' or by walking away quickly from their spots".[270] Others brewed and hid their stock so that the police could not find it. Unfortunately, their home-brewed beer was sometimes stolen by gangsters which had sprung up in Kroonstad's black locations at the time.[271] Other home-beer brewers in order to stay in business bribed the police by allowing them to drink beer without paying.

In a miscalculated move to attempt to resolve the illegal trading of home-brewed beer, in 1935 the Kroonstad Native Advisory Board adopted the resolution that licensed 'Kaffir' beer be placed under the Municipal control. The Native (or Location) Advisory Boards were established in the 1920s "to serve as mechanisms of liaison between location residents and the authorities".[272] Without doubt, the residents of Kroonstad's black location believed that if such a resolution was to be implemented it would have had an impact on the women's lucrative home-brewed trade. This resolution prompted agitation in the locations, causing Keable Mote, a leading figure in the ICU in Kroonstad, to demand the resignation of the Native Advisory Board.[273] The women continued trading in home-brewed beer. Similarly, the police increased their raids. This led to the residents of Kroonstad's black locations calling a mass meeting at the Bantu Hall to protest, amongst others, against the police raids on Sundays for 'Kaffir Beer'.[274]

In spite of the police raids and the government's policy on home-brewed beer, there is no evidence to suggest that women in Kroonstad's black locations, particularly those who were brewing homemade beer, mobilised and protested (see below).

Perhaps the most distinguished arrivals during this period were those who had come for educational purposes; either to learn or to teach. By 1940 Bantu High School (subsequently – in 1967 - renamed Bodibeng High School), had become one of the major centres of education for African students in the then OFS. It was one of the two day-schools to offer matric as early as 1940 (the other was in Bloemfontein), the only school to offer a Lower Primary Teachers' Course for girls in the mid-1950s,[275] and the only one to have its matriculants writing the Joint Matriculation Board (JMB) Examination in the mid-1960s, instead of the Bantu Education's

[270] Ibid.
[271] Interview with Ditheko Josias "Makula" Molai (LHPR), Gelukwaarts, Kroonstad, 20 May 2009
[272] Nieftagodien, N. M. 'The Implementation of Urban Apartheid on the East Rand, 1948-1973: The Role of Local Government and Local Resistance' (Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand PhD Thesis, 2001), p.197; also see UWL HLP AD 1947/2 (Box 1), SAIRR, 'Advisory Boards – Location, 31 July 1959
[273] *Umteteli wa Bantu, 6 July 1935*
[274] *Umteteli wa Bantu, 2 October 1937*
[275] Setiloane *The History,* p.110

senior certificate examinations.[276] For these reasons, and later the National Party government's policy opposing the building of new secondary and high schools[277] in urban areas, dictating that all new provision for post-primary education should be directed almost exclusively towards the homelands",[278] Bantu High School attracted many students, especially those from the surrounding farms and other townships in the OFS such as Edenville, Heilbron, Bethlehem, Bothaville, Vredefort, but also from the neighbouring countries like Botswana and Lesotho.[279] Nana Mahomo is an example of students who left their hometown and went to Bantu High because of the dearth of high schools. Mahomo was born in 1930 in Vereeniging, south of Johannesburg, but grew up in Edenville, a small farming town about 30 kilomtres from Kroonstad, where his father was a church minister. In 1942, after completing his higher primary schooling, he enrolled at Bantu High to start his Form 1. Because of financial constraints at home, he had to leave school in 1945 after obtaining his JC (Junior Certificate – today's Grade 10).[280]

Similarly, Peter Hlaole Molotsi, who was born in 1929 in Steynsrust, arrived in Kroonstad with his grandfather, Mr Afrika, at the age of seven. He started schooling at Bantu United School and matriculated in 1949.[281] In the interview, Molotsi noted that during his school days at Bantu High "the student body comprised of people from Botswana, from Natal, from the Eastern Province (today's Eastern Cape), from Lesotho, and from other places in the Free State.[282] This trend continued well into the 1970s (more about this in Chapter Three). Inevitably, the student body increased. Ntantala estimates that when she arrived at Bantu High in 1937 about a thousand students studied there, and the school then offered lessons to students from Sub A to J.C.[283] Because Bantu High did not have boarding facilities, students either rented rooms in the locations or lived with their relatives.[284] Either way they became residents in the locations.

[276] See, Ntantala *A Life's Mosaic,* p.84; Setiloane *The History,* p.161

[277] Secondary school comprised of Forms One to Three, and High school started from Forms One to Five

[278] See, P. Bonner and L. Segal *Soweto: A History* (Cape Town, Longman Maskew Miller, 1998), 78; Setiloane *The History,* 66

[279] See interview with Peter Molotsi. Molotsi became a key figure in the Pan Africanist Congress from the 1960s.

[280] Interview with Nana Mahomo

[281] See Interview with Peter Hlaole Molotsi by Brown Maaba for the SADET (South Africa Democracy Education Trust) Oral History Project, Kroonstad, 7 January 2001. I am indebted to Dr Greg Houston, SADET's former executive director, for allowing me to use this interview. I have a copy of this interview in my possession. Also see Pherudi *Who's Who,* p.90. In his book Pherudi writes that Molotsi matriculated in 1949 at Western Native School, later called Madibane High in Johannesburg. It is unlikely this was the case. In the interview with Maaba in 2001, Molotsi recounted that after completing his matric in 1949 (at Bantu High) he moved to Johannesburg where he worked for the Bantu Press. It was during this period, in the early 1950s, that he became active in the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL), and "I got to know people from Orlando High, from St. Peters, from Madibane High, who were like me and we used to meet during holidays …".

[282] Interview with Molotsi

[283] Ntantala *A Life's Mosaic,* 84; also see Setiloane *The History,* 93

[284] See interview with Ramotsoela

Just as Bantu High (and later Bodibeng High) attracted students from areas outside Kroonstad, it also held a prized status for many teachers who taught there. It was for this reason that the school was always staffed by teachers from different areas, alongside locals. Dating back to the 1930s the school's committee and Reginald Ndumiso Cingo, the longest serving principal of the school, identified and employed some of the best qualified teachers in the country. A number of them came from the Cape Province. Amongst the most notable was Cingo himself, who was born in eFundisweni, Pondoland, and attended school there. He became the principal of the school in 1932.[285] Dorrington Matsepe, who was born in Douglas, Cape Province, in 1906, joined the staff of Bantu High in 1931.[286] Timothy Alphy Makae from the district of Mount Fletcher, Cape Province, was employed at Bantu High around the same period as Matsepe.[287] And Archibald Campbell Jordan, who was born in Tsolo, the district of Transkei, began teaching at Bantu High in 1935, while Phyllis Ntantala (later Jordan's wife), who was born at the Duff Mission, in the district of Idutywa, Cape Province, joined the staff two years later.[288]

Other teachers arrived from different areas. Prince Alfred Itumeleng Lefafa, from Kimberley, joined the staff of Bantu High in 1943 at a tender age of 18.[289] Some of the teachers at Bantu High came from neigbouring countries. For example, Cephas Hlabangana, originally from Southern Rhodesia (today's Zimbabwe), became a member of the staff of Bantu High in 1940[290] and Jakotett Kholoue Kheleli, from Mokhohlong, in Lesotho, joined the staff in the same year as Hlabangana.[291]

The population of Kroonstad's location's increased. It was further augmented by the arrival of ministers of churches and their families. "There were various churches", Setiloane writes, "which represented a number of denominations: Methodist, Anglican, Dutch Reformed , Presbyterian, Ethopian, Apostle Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.), Roman Catholic and a few representing traditional churches.[292] Matsepe recalls that church activities became a significant part of the lives of the residents of the locations. He explains

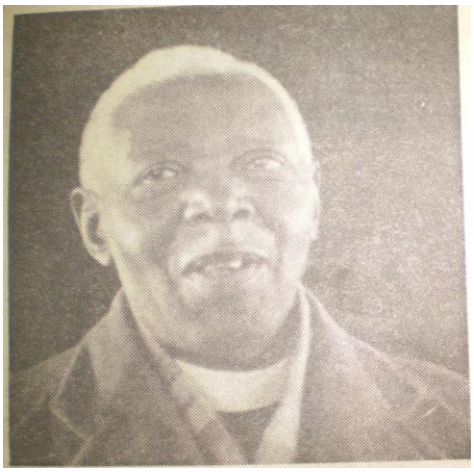
> ... Church [was] engraved in us. You go to Sunday school on Sunday, and you would go to what was called Band of Hope, which is a younger children's organisation, where we [were] taught about the evils of alcohol. And on Tuesday we must go to another church event in the Methodist Church, which is called 'Class'. On Wednesday, which if you go to a Methodist Church, you would go to an event called 'Prayer'. It was church,

[285] Setiloane *The History,* p.49
[286] Pherudi *Who's Who,* p.117
[287] Setiloane *The History,* p.85
[288] Ibid., pp.88-96; Ntantala *A Life's Mosaic,* p.1 and pp.78-99
[289] Setiloane *The History,* p.102; Pherudi *Who's Who,* p.97
[290] Setiloane *The History,* p.99
[291] Pherudi *Who's Who,* p.115
[292] Setiloane *The History,* p.6

church, church. That is the kind of environment that [we were] brought up under ...[293]

The most notable amongst the church ministers to settle in Kroonstad before the 1960s was the Reverend Zaccheus Richard Mahabane.[294] He was born in 1881 in Thaba 'Nchu, "an important Wesleyan Mission centre in the eastern Orange Free State", writes Gwendolen Carter.[295] There is no available evidence when he arrived in Kroonstad. Neither Carter nor Pherudi (profile of Mahabane) provide the date of his arrival in Kroonstad.[296] However, what is apparent is that in 1955 he was already in Maokeng. In the interview with Matsepe, who was born in 1948, he recalled the time when he was very ill and Reverend Mahabane was called in to pray for him. He remembers

> There was a time that I got very sick and, I think, I was about seven years old at the time. I discovered that there was something called prayer. Reverend Mahabane ... was then called in because he was then the church minister for the Methodist Church in Kroonstad. I remember vividly this experience. There was this old man with his white-grey hair who came into my bedroom to pray for me ... and suddenly I felt well[297]



Reverend Z.R. Mahabane *(Source: Drum, July 1959)*

The other church ministers who came to Kroonstad during this period, included Bishop Lengoabala of the Presbyterian Christian Apostolic Church.[298] The arrival of teachers and church

[293] Interview with Matsepe
[294] The Reverend Mahabane is renowned for serving two terms as the president-general of the ANC, in 1924-1927 and 1937-1940. See *City Press, 8 January 2012*
[295] Carter, G. 'Introduction', in *Zaccheus Mahabane: The Good Fight: Selected Speeches* (Evanston, Illinois, Program of African Studies, North-western University, n.d.), p.10
[296] Carter 'Introduction'; Pherudi *Who's Who,* pp.276-79
[297] Interview with Matsepe

ministers in Kroonstad's black locations had an incredible influence in the politics of the area (see below). To accommodate the rapidly increasing number of black people drifting to Kroonstad, the Kroonstad municipality, which like other municipalities, under the Urban (Natives) Areas Act of 1923, had a responsibility to house urban Africans,[299]established 'B' location.

'B' location, also known as Marabastad, Setiloane writes "… was said to have been named after [Jan] Maraba, one of the first blacks to settle in Maokeng".[300] The collective memory of the residents of the black locations in Kroonstad widely accepts that when Jan Maraba realised that 'A' location was no longer capable of accommodating the growing number of people living there, he left the area and found an open space not far from 'A' location and built his house and kraal. The area was later named Marabastad. Matsepe explains as the story was told to him

> I am told that 'A' location, long before my birth; that is in 1948, was too crammed [with] people because the community was growing. A police officer decided to move out of the designated area and moved north of the area and established a house there and built himself a kraal. His name was Maraba. ... A kraal in Afrikaans is called stat. ... This was done in defiance of the regulations and rules, which were set by the authorities. But Maraba insisted on staying there, and soon other families started joining him. And once the authorities realised that they can no longer control the movement of the people [to] that area, they then decided to expand the 'Stat of Maraba' ... by creat[ing] an orderly township that then came to be known as Marabastat[301]

Although this explanation of the origin of the name of this location is widely accepted, there are some people who offer another explanation to the naming of the settlement. Mokete Pherudi, who was born in Kroonstad and grew up in 'D' location, argues that 'B' location was named after Mrs P. Buffel, who was the senior community nurse in charge of Seeisoville clinic.[302] Pherudi's argument is, however, not convincing. It is highly unlikely that this area could have been named after Mrs P. Buffel (and not Jan Maraba), who was heading the Seeisoville clinic which was established in the early 1950s – following the construction of Seeisoville in 1951."[303] In spite of these explanations, it is also unlikely that Maraba could have invaded a municipal

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[298] See Pherudi *Who's Who,* p.273
[299] See Sapire 'The stay-away', p.365
[300] Setiloane *The History,* pp.3-4
[301] Interview with Matsepe; Dot Serfontein writes that Jan Maraba was a legendary sport-hero, who Marabastad was named after. This is wrong. The sport hero was Jan's son, Billy Maraba. See, Serfontein *Keurskrif,* p.449; most of the literature on Kroonstad spell the word with a 'd' (Marabastad). However, if indeed this was Maraba's kraal, the correct spelling should be with a 't' (Marabastat). A kraal in Afrikaans is stat and city is stad, see *TweetaligeSkool Woordeboek: Afrikaans-Engels* (Kaapstad, Pharos, 2003)
[302] Pherudi *The History,* p.104
[303] Interview with Selele

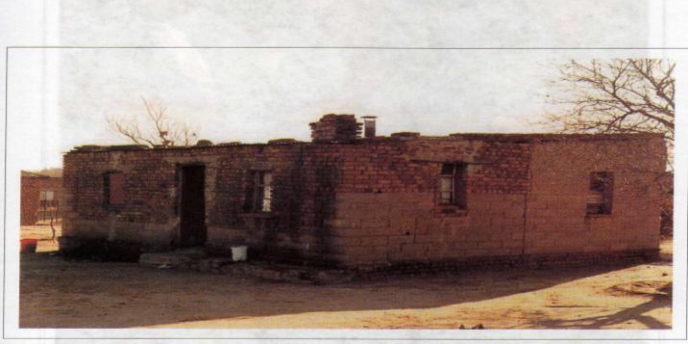
space and settle there without the municipality's consent. It is, however, plausible that Maraba, as a member of the body responsible for advising the Kroonstad Town Council on matters relating to blacks in Kroonstad, could have raised the issue of lack of accommodation in 'A' location and suggested that a new location be established, and becoming the first resident there.

According to Setiloane, "Marabastad was a very big place, consisting of eleven avenues, each approximately one mile long, running from east to west, and fifteen streets which ran from south-east to south-west".[304] Godfrey Oliphant, who was born in 'B' location in 1939, remembers 'B' location as "quite a vibrant place and quite an active place ... People used to be excited with jive. There used to be a local group that used to play ... musical instruments. … One of their members was Miki Matsepe, who used to play the piano".[305] Isaac "Sakkie" Oliphant, who was born in the same location in 1952, also recalls the area as the centre of sports.[306] He remarks

> Marabastad. You'll be surprised that place used to accommodate, sports-wise, teams like Orlando Pirate used to beaten there. Moroka Swallow was the big team in Gauteng, but used to be beaten. Shemrocks was one of the team … When I grew up, Shemrocks was always on top. These big teams used to come here specially to beat Shemrocks. But in my time we always came on top[307]

Just like 'A' location, 'B' location also comprised a mixed community, containing coloured families like the Oliphants, and the Louws.[308] The last location to be established in the African's residential area was 'D' Location, also known as Matikiri, built West of Marabastad. According to Setiloane, it was a settlement of people who were not the original inhabitants of Maokeng. "Most of them were squatters who settled here in search of employment". "They originated", Setiloane adds, "from the neighbouring farm districts". [309] Pherudi writes that the latter found employment in places like railway, Epol, kitchens (domestic work), and gardens".[310]

[304] Setiloane *The History,* p.4
[305] Interview with Godfrey Oliphant (LHPR), Eldorado Park, Johannesburg, 5 December 2007
[306] Interview with Isaac "Sakkie" Oliphant (LHPR), Kroonstad, 28 October 2008. Isaac Oliphant and Godfrey Oliphant are not related
[307] Interview with "Sakkie" Oliphant
[308] Interview with Bouwer
[309] Setiloane *The History,* p.4
[310] Pherudi *Who's who,* p.327



Typical house in "D" Location (*Source:* Pherudi, *The History)*

Neither Setiloane nor Pherudi indicate when this location was established, but it is probable that it was in the mid-1920s and that the area was inhabited largely by people who had been residing and labouring on the white farms in the Kroonstad District. The 1913 Land Act which "… stated that there would be parts of the country where 'Natives' shall not be permitted to acquire or hire land or have interests in land"[311] had a negative effect on Africans, especially those who lived and worked on white farms. Mulaudzi and Schirmer argue "as land became scarcer, and populations grew, so did the need for restrictions on the size of plots and on stock numbers. These restrictions often led to conflicts, and sometimes to tenants leaving in protest, but in the 1920s and 1930s it became increasingly difficult for Africans to find alternative places to live".[312]Those who were willing to compromise and "accommodate new regulations as far as possible"[313] remained on the farms. But the majority seem to have drifted to the towns, and some to Kroonstad and ended up living in "D" Location.

In the early 1920s a dramatic change took place in the racial politics of South Africa. This resulted in the establishment of the coloured-only location in Kroonstad. This was called 'C' location (or Cairo).[314] Sue Parnell contends that in order to understand the creation of the 'separate coloured racial identity', we need to look at the Native Urban Areas Bill (NUAB) of 1918 which illuminates the whites', particularly the more powerful municipalities', position on racial classification.[315] In her study she shows how "... the draft NUAB was manipulated to delineate urban controls on coloured people ..."[316] To solicit South Africans', including location residents', views about the Bill, Prime Minister Smuts, through, first, the Native Affairs Department, and after 1920 the Native Affairs Commission, embarked on a consultative process.

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[311] Malaudzi, C. and Schirmer, S. 'Land struggles in the 20th century', in Peter Delius (ed.) *Mpumalanga: History and Heritage* (Scottsville, KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2007), p.352

[312] Ibid., p.357

[313] Ibid.

[314] Pherudi *The History,* p.104; similarly in Bloemfontein, in the Orange Free State, the Cape Stands designated for coloureds was established following the promulgation of the Native Urban Areas Act of 1923. See Twala, C.M. 'From Pedagogues to Politician: Winkie Direko in the Free State, 1994-2004', (Bloemfontein, University of the Free State Ph.D. thesis, 2010), p.6

[315] Twala 'From Pedagogues', p.42

[316] Ibid.

This, according to Parnell, enabled the local municipalities like in the Free State to "effect one of the more critical revisions to the NUAB even before it reached the second parliamentary reading".[317] The Native Affairs Commission (NAC), Parnell argues, had not considered the impact on coloureds at all, and construed the legislation as improving the position of "Europeans and Natives".[318] This position was rejected by the Free State municipality.

The reason the conservative Orange Free State officials objected was because they were worried that the NUAA would revoke the provincial and municipal legal restrictions on urban segregation, thereby giving coloureds equal legal status to white people.[319] "This meant not only free residential choice", writes Parnell, "but also that coloured land owners could vote in town elections".[320] Although this privilege already existed in the more liberal Cape, it was vigorously opposed in the conservative Orange Free State. This should have come as no surprise, because in the early 1920s conservative Orange Free State officials opposed the move by the Bloemfontein Council to settle the coloureds in town. This was done despite the fact that "an area of ground for occupation by coloureds had been laid out and the Council was keen to see its establishment".[321] Using a paternalistic argument, the officials explained: "... it was not in the best interest of the coloureds to live in town, in association with drink and other evils which tend to degradation of themselves and their children".[322] According to Parnell, this segregated scheme drew support from the African Peoples' Organisation (APO), an organised coloured organisation. "APO", Parnell observes "feared that coloureds would be grouped with Africans and would be incorporated under NUAB". "It implored the Town Council", she adds "to recognise the fact that 'coloured people, though yellow in colour, possess the intellectual and brain development of the white man'".[323] The main intention of the APO was to secure a guarantee of freehold under the old OFS Law 8 of 1893 – *alas,* this was ignored.[324]

The deadlock between the central government and the Orange Free State municipalities forced the two to compromise, resulting in the OFS municipalities agreeing that "the standard of coloured citizenship in the Province", writes Parnell, "would be raised in the Province by granting segregated but freehold suburbs with some measure of self-government under the auspices of town council".[325] It was against this background that 'C' location, like many other coloured "suburbs", was established in Kroonstad. "Cairo", writes Setiloane, "was situated east

[317] Ibid., p.43
[318] Ibid., p.44
[319] Ibid., p.43
[320] Ibid.
[321] Ibid.p.44
[322] Ibid.
[323] Ibid.
[324] Ibid.
[325] Ibid., p.45

of the African residential areas. Some 300 coloureds lived [t]here".[326] The establishment of Cairo seems also to have been intended to create a division between the coloured community itself: between the real *kleurling* (coloured) and other coloureds. Anthony Bouwer explains: "The area we knew as Cairo, there was this thing that those who lived around here ('A' and 'B' locations) were not coloured and those who lived in Cairo were the real *Kleurling".*[327] Bouwer's explanation of the differences within the coloured community in Kroonstad illustrates his recent understanding of the Population Registration Act of 1950 which determined South Africans' racial categories. Bouwer was born in 1960, long after Cairo had been demolished and its inhabitants moved to Brentpark. The Population Registration Act divided the coloured people into various categories: Cape Coloured, Cape Malay, Griqua or Other Coloured.[328] This invariably caused tensions amongst the coloureds. In local communities, for example, those who were lighter in complexion and did not associate with Africans tended to regard themselves (and also seen) as 'real' coloureds (*kleurling*). It is possible that in Kroonstad in the 1920s and 1930s coloureds who remained in the black locations like Anthony Bouwer's grandfather, Ariel Bouwer, and who continued associating with Africans (and sometimes married to Africans) were seen as not 'real' coloureds than those who had agreed to move to Cairo to live on their own and practicing their own culture.

[326] Setiloane *The History,* p.3
[327] Interview with Bouwer
[328] Lauren Segal and Paul Holden (eds.) *Great Lives: Pivotal Moments* (Johannesburg, Jacana Media, 2008), pp.72-9



An open space where Cairo was built, opposite is the white residential area *(Source: Tshepo Moloi)*

To encourage this mindset (and segregation), the town council supported the building of a school designated for coloured children. The application for the school was made in 1926 but was only approved in 1933.[329] Coloureds working in schools in the African locations were also forced to relinquish their positions and to seek employment in the coloured location. Violet Matsepe, mentioned above, was one of the people affected by the NUAA. Matsepe remarks

> My father teaches with my mother at Maokeng Bantu Primary School. Then a law comes that says that the coloureds must be separated from Africans. When that law came into operation, my mother had to stop to teach at that school because she was classified coloured. My father is an African.[330]

However, at this stage coloureds were not obliged to relocate to their new location. It was voluntarily done. Thus people like Violet Matsepe worked in Cairo but continued living in 'B'

[329] FSPA G76, PAE 52 'Subject: Kroonstad Coloured School'
[330] Interview with Matsepe

location with her family. Other so-called coloureds like Anthony Bouwer's grandfather, Ariel Bouwer, did not even move to Cairo. So, did Godfrey Oliphant's mother, Ruth Oliphant. She continued to stay in 'B' location.[331]

Politics: protests and mobilisation

In 1915 the South African Native National Congress (renamed the ANC in 1923) held its fourth meeting in Kroonstad.[332] This suggests that there could have been an ANC branch in Kroonstad already in existence during this period. The SANNC was established two years after the passing of the 1910 South African Act of Union, which withheld the franchise from all Africans outside of the Cape. In order to consolidate white minority rule over the black majority, Francis Meli argues "the first post-Union administration quickly passed laws"[333] which suppressed and restricted blacks while empowering whites. In 1911 this administration also drafted the Native's Land Bill, which was passed into an Act in 1913. This Act prohibited rural land ownership by Africans or occupation outside the 'reserves', which comprised nearly eight per cent of the areas of the country.[334]

In spite of all these, and many other suppressive laws, the leadership of the SANNC failed to mobilise the African masses to oppose the post-Union administrations. Instead, it relied on petitioning and pleading with the British Crown to intervene on behalf of the black people in South Africa. Occasionally it held days of prayer.[335] In fact, Lodge writes "in the first six years of its existence ... Congress contented itself with less dramatic forms of response". "African leaders", he adds "were keen to demonstrate their loyalty for the duration of the First World War".[336] Lodge argues that this was because the Congress' leadership was then dominated by Cape-educated and influenced men, who tended to take a less confrontationist line than their Transvaal colleagues.[337]

It could be speculated here that, because of the mother body's *modus operandi*, the ANC branch in Kroonstad remained inactive. In 1936 Simon Ndlovu, Keable 'Mote and Sol Ngaonabase were reported to be attempting to revive the ANC in Kroonstad.[338] Again, in 1938, Paul Rich notes that the President-General, the Reverend Z.R. Mahabane, pressurised 'Mote, who was now provincial secretary of the All African Convention (AAC) in the OFS, to establish the branch of

[331] Interview with Godfrey Oliphant (LHPR), Eldorado Park, Johannesburg, 5 December 2007
[332] Meli, F. *A History of the ANC: South Africa Belongs To Us* (Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988), p.53
[333] Ibid., pp.34-5
[334] Lodge *Black Politics,* p.2
[335] Two delegations were sent to Britain in 1914 and 1919 to request Imperial intervention in South Africa. Lodge *Black Politics,* p.3
[336] Ibid.
[337] Ibid.
[338] *Umteteli wa Bantu,* 6 May 1936

the ANC in Kroonstad.[339] In spite of these attempts, the branch does not seem to have actively functioned. For example, Ntantala admits in her book that, while staying in Kroonstad, before departing for Cape Town in 1946, she and her husband, Archibald C. Jordan, were merely paid up members of the ANC, which was the only organisation we could join in Kroonstad ..."[340]This trend continued until the mid-1950s when the ANCWL revived – albeit briefly – the ANC's politics in Kroonstad.

In 1935 *Umteteli wa Bantu* reported that African residents of Kroonstad were delighted with the election of A. Krebsen, known for his liberal views, to the position of mayor of Kroonstad. They had hoped that progressive methods would now be taken by the Municipal Council. Before this, the residents of the black locations lived under suppressive rule. The mayoral term of F.A. van Reensen was characterised by constant police raids in the locations even on Sunday.[341] The police raids were ostensibly for home-brewed beer and lodger's permits.[342] Evidently, this negatively affected the lifestyle of the residents of the black locations. But, unlike residents in other places, the residents of the black locations in Kroonstad failed to mobilise and oppose the Kroonstad Municipal Council.

Elsewhere in the country Africans mobilised and protested either against overbearing municipal regulations or any other perceived injustice inflicted upon them. For example, in March 1922 when African women in Herschel felt unjustly treated by the local traders, usually Europeans, in their district for failing to reduce commodity prices as it was happening in other parts of the country, they mobilised and boycotted the local stores.[343] According to Beinart, because of the migrant labour system women in Herschel were left alone to deal with the hardships of raising children and providing for their families. Macmillan, cited by Beinart, suggests that 75 per cent of men were absent for at least six month of the year.[344] In such circumstances, women were forced to complement their husband's remittances by becoming involved in harvesting crops to exchange for cash to pay for the hut tax, ... government levies, and food purchases.[345] Beinart notes that the years immediately after the First World War were particularly hard for the women in Herschel.[346] This was caused by the sharp decline of prices for produce, and lack of rain at the end of 1921, badly affected the production of crops. "To make matters worse", writes Beinart, "commodity costs were high ... indeed, they (rural people) felt themselves to be more vulnerable

[339] Rich, P. 'Managing Black Leadership: The Joint Councils, Urban Trading and Political Conflict in the OFS, 1925-1942', in Phil Bonner, Isabel Hofmeyr, Deborah James and Tom Lodge (eds.) *Holding Their Ground: Class, Locality and Culture in the 19th Century and 29th Century South Africa.* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1989), 190
[340] Ntantala *A Life's Mosaic,* p.124
[341] *Umteteli wa Bantu, 30 March 1935*
[342] Ibid.
[343] Beinart 'Women in Rural Politics', pp.324-7
[344] Ibid., p.326
[345] Ibid.; Women who did not have cash to purchase commodities from the stores received them on credit on the agreement that they would pay their debt after they have made enough cash
[346] Ibid., pp.326-7

than most, for early in 1922 they began to hear that commodity prices were falling in other parts of the country – yet they remained stable in Herschel".[347]

The women's frustrations were summed up by Mrs Annie Sidyiyo, a women's leader, when she explained at a later meeting with the magistrate

> We bore the high prices when told they were due to the war and were told prices might get lower ... We are poor and live hardly. We cannot even get coffins which cost £3 and a beast only brings in £1. What are we to do ...[348]

It was against this background that the women in Herschel, particularly those who closely identified with the bulk of Christian community scattered through the locations, mobilised other women such as traditionalist, Sotho, Hlubi and Thembu and led the store boycott.[349] This boycott caused the traders, whose power in relation to individual families was great in that they could threaten to withdraw credit and even sue for debt, to reconsider taking unilateral decisions on behalf of the community. Beinart argues "a total boycott placed them in a difficult position – they too needed a constant cash turnover to meet their debts to suppliers".[350] After the boycott had begun they met and approached the magistrate who advised them that they should meet with a group of headmen and local African dignitaries from the Herschel branch of the Native (later the African) National Congress, and together they set up a committee to monitor the prices.[351]

Similarly, in 1929 women in KwaZulu and Durban mobilised and protested against the municipalities' decision to establish liquor canteens. Helen Bradfort writes

> Incidents of women marching through the streets, chanting war songs, raiding beerhalls, and assaulting male drinkers, first occurred in Ladysmith in August 1929. In September spread to Weenen, Pinetown, Glencore, Dundee, Howick, Escourt and Vryheid. In October it was it was in Newcastle, and finally Durban[352]

Like in many places, African women in KwaZulu and Durban brewed and sold beer for survival. Thus when the Native Beer Act of 1908, which effectively prohibited Africans from selling liquor and forbade them to brew in excess of a meagre amount near the mines or towns, and promoted the establishment of municipal monopolies which granted municipalities rights to possess or make beer to sold in canteens open only to African men over the age of 15.[353] To enforce this Act, municipalities unleashed their police to conduct midnight raids, searching for

[347] Ibid., p.327
[348] Ibid.
[349] Ibid., p.331
[350] Ibid., p.327
[351] Ibid.
[352] Bradford 'We are now men', p.293
[353] Ibid., pp.294-5

homemade beer. For Bradford "this generated enormous resentment for the authorities by women".[354] and the 1928 Liquor Act, which extended the scope of rural raids, African women in these areas mobilised and protested. This issue boiled over when in 1928 the Liquor Act extended the scope of rural raids.[355]

Aided by the ICU yase Natal (ICU of Natal) led by A.W.G. Champion, the women mobilised and demonstrated against the liquor canteens.[356] The African women were against the municipalities' liquor canteens because they perceived them as places where their husbands spent their hard earned money which they were supposed to use to feed and cloth their children. For example, Jacob Mnchunu recalled that Escourt women raided the beerhall at a time when men were spending rent money on *utshwala* (liquor), and 'the houses were under arrest because of liquor.[357] The situation was further worsened by the 1928 devastating drought which affected crop production, and in Weenen, for example, by the Weenen Local Board's renewed attempts to whittle away herds. Bradford notes "one homestead had with three wives was ordered to cut his cattle from 30 to eight and his goats from 87 to 25 – and was forced to sleep in the veld for a week while he sold his stock for a song".[358] This agitated women in particular, because they were mostly left alone to carry the burden of providing for the family while men migrated to the urban areas in search of employment opportunities, or when others drowned their sorrows in municipal canteens. When urging closure of canteens, Matobana Mjara declared "they lived on the stock they were being ordered to reduce, and 'I have come here to ask what are we to eat?'[359]

Moreover, African women felt discriminated against because they were prohibited from drinking in these canteens. women protesters were also aggrieved by the fact that money generated from the sale of liquor in the municipal canteens was not used to develop their areas, but used by the Natal municipalities to purchase Town Lands for black settlement, the provision of matchbox houses in segregated locations, the maintenance of grim barracks for migrant labourers, and/or the payment of salaries to bureaucrats and policemen.[360] To vent out their anger against this blatant disparities, African women in Durban (assisted by male members of the ICU *yase* Natal), for example, attacked canteens and clashed with the police.[361] In spite of the physical attempts by 2000 whites in Durban to stop the attacks on canteens, the boycott continued with astonishing success for the next 18 months.[362]

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[354] Ibid., p.295
[355] Ibid.
[356] Ibid., p.297 Champion's ICU *yase* Natal ran a campaign in Natal in favour of legalizing domestic brewing by African women.
[357] Ibid., p.300
[358] Ibid., p.301
[359] Ibid., p.301
[360] Ibid., p.295
[361] Ibid., p.297
[362] Ibid., pp.297-8

The political void created by the absence of the ANC in Kroonstad was filled by the ICU. The latter was founded in 1919[363] by Clements Kadalie, who was born in Nyasaland (today's Malawi).[364] Ultimately it organised workers, particularly farm workers and fought for better wages and working conditions on their behalf. At the same time it gradually shifted its activities towards politics. This was evident when Kadalie urged the ICU members to join the ANC "the only political body we recognise".[365] The ICU's shift of emphasis resulted in becoming what Lodge describing it as "a workers' organisation but function[ing] as a mass-based political party because its charismatic leaders voiced a broad range of popular grievances".[366] Likewise Johns III remarks

> In April 1925 the ICU was on the verge of becoming an organised movement of mass protest. It tried to maintain its trade union character. But in a situation where any question regarding non-white labour was inevitably a political one, the pronouncement and actions of the ICU and its leader took on an increasingly political colour[367]

Available evidence suggests that there were few ICU branches in the other towns in the Orange Free State, particularly in the northern part of the OFS that could match the role of the ICU branch in Kroonstad. The ICU branch in Parys came close, although it seems to have operated mainly from the farms. In the same way as the ICU branch in Kroonstad, the ICU branch in Parys was formed because of bad working conditions on the white farms and the meagre payment. It fought for improved working conditions for black people on the farms and also challenged the local authorities in town. Despite the threats by whites to physically confront members of the ICU, in 1933 this branch still functioned.[368] Simon Ramothibi, who was born in 1934 in Phiritona, remembers his father Sebolelo telling him about the ICU that they used to say 'I SEE YOU MULUNGU' (I see you white man) and that the ICU's mass meetings were held in Heilbron".[369] The brutal attacks on Africans associated with the Union by the white Afrikaner community in the area precipitated the demise of the ICU branch in Heilbron. According to

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[363] See Ian Liebenberg and Fiona Lortan 'The role of the labour movement in the struggle for liberation', in *The Long March: The story of the struggle for liberation in South Africa,* (eds.) Ian Liebenberg et al. (Pretoria, Haum, 1994), pp.228-30

[364] For an in-depth account of the formation, activities, and demise of the ICU, see Bradford, H. *Taste of Freedom: The ICU in Rural South Africa, 1924-1930* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987)

[365] Ibid., 715

[366] Lodge, T. *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1983), p.6

[367] Johns, S.W. III 'Trade Union, Political Pressure Group, or Mass Movement? The Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa', in *Protest and Power in Black Africa* (eds.) Robert I. Rotberg and Ali Mazrui (New York, Oxford University Press, 1970), Johns III 'Trade Union', 716

[368] Bradford *A Taste,* pp.68-7 and p.334

[369] Interview with Simon Ramothibi by Gift Poli and Ace Nyeleka, for the FS Centenary Project, Phiritona, Heilbron, June 2011

Bradford, "In Heilbron, a landlord actually murdered an African for being a Union member".[370] This forced some of the blacks living on the white farms gradually to drift to Phiritona location.

The branch of the ICU in Kroonstad was different because it also involved itself in the locations' affairs. In 1928 the Mayor of Kroonstad, Vorster, accused the ICU of being instrumental in advising the stand-holders not to pay their taxes (rent charges).[371] Although Keable 'Mote was singled out as the primary instigator, this boycott seems to have been mainly led by the Women Section of the ICU. Helen Bradford, in her seminal work on the ICU, contends that the latter were defending their middle-class status. According to her, "the Kroonstad ICU Women's Section leaders were distinguished from those forced into the labour-market by possession of a house, and hence ability to draw rent from lodgers".[372] It is not clear whether this protest yielded the desired results, but it certainly shook the Town Council to begin to take note of the ICU's presence in the area.

Towards the end of the 1920s serious tensions had developed between Kadalie and Kroonstad activist Keable 'Mote. There is no available evidence to explain the exact reason(s) for this tension. But it is possible to surmise that after his trip overseas Kadalie, as the leader of the Union, felt that 'Mote was becoming too radical whereas he favoured a moderate approach.[373] This was evident when during the ICU's fight against the Kroonstad's Town Council, Kadalie failed to come to 'Mote's defence. Instead, he distanced himself and the National Council of the ICU from 'Mote's, insisted that he was away in Europe at the time and therefore could not be associated with 'Mote's actions. Kadalie's changed position had a great deal to do with his fear of being deported back to Nyasaland by the government.

When 'Mote, in his capacity as the secretary of the ICU in the OFS, advocated the replacement of the Native Advisory Board with a new association, after concluding that this body was not advancing the community's interests, this proposal was hotly challenged. In a letter to the *Kroonstad Times*, M. M. Tladi, a school teacher at Bantu United criticised 'Mote for deceiving people. He argued that 'Mote had informed the paper that an association was to be formed, which will get rid of the Native Advisory Board. He went further and noted that he had interviewed the teachers and ministers of the church whom 'Mote purportedly claimed to have mobilised who said they knew nothing about the imminent association.[374] The story did not end

[370] Bradford *A Taste,* 187; the white Commando also threatened to attack and maim Union members
[371] Serfontein *Keurskrif,* p.449
[372] Bradford *A Taste,* p.69
[373] It is possible that Kadalie was becoming jealous of 'Mote's rapidly increasing popularity in the OFS. In 1927, for example, at an ICU meeting held in Parys, 'Mote was introduced by Simon Elias, who addressed about 600 people, as 'my Jesus', and when 'Mote ascended the platform to speak the crowd broke spontaneously into song "God Save Africa". FSPA SOO 1/1/47, No. 8/10 1946, see *The Parys Post, 10 May 1927*
[374] Serfontein *Keurskrif*, p.450

there. Soon rumours that 'Mote was embezzling the Union's funds began making rounds.[375] This was a ploy to turn the members against him. Johns notes "complaints were made that Keable 'Mote, the Provincial Secretary of the OFS whose speeches particularly disturbed white South Africans, was spending union funds illegally and that he refused to heed advice from the headquarters in Johannesburg".[376] To contain him, in 1928 the union decided to transfer 'Mote to the Transvaal.[377]

'Mote did not take this decision lying down. He threatened to secede from the ICU. But after negotiations he reconsidered.[378] Later he hit back by associating himself and the ICU in the OFS with the Communist's organised campaign to burn passes on Dingaan's Day, December 16 1929.[379] Kadalie, who by this time had made a deal with the government not to deport him back to Nyasaland, openly opposed the campaign. This struck the final nail in the coffin of the ICU and the OFS' ICU branch, spelling disunity. Already at this stage there were serious tensions and differences within the ICU leadership nationally. There were accusations and counter-accusations of embezzlement of the union's finances.[380] Champion, mentioned above, broke-away from the mother-body and formed his ICU *yase Natal* (ICU of Natal).

In April 1931 'Mote convened a conference in Kroonstad of ICU branches in the OFS and western Transvaal. At the meeting 57 delegates formed the Federated Free State ICU of Africa, and elected Selby Msimang president and 'Mote secretary.[381] However, this new organisation was stillborn. And in 1934 the ICU branch in Kroonstad ceased to function after a lengthy period organising both on the farms and in the location, which had once led Kadalie to boast that "the ICU [has] never failed in Kroonstad".[382]

The contentions, differences, and finally the demise of the ICU in Kroonstad did not only pave the way for the Native Advisory Board (and other conservative bodies) to function without any hindrance, but it also arrested the vibrant political engagement in the locations for the next two decades.

[375] Ibid., p.451
[376] Johns III 'Trade Union', 732
[377] Bradford *A Taste,* 163
[378] Johns III 'Trade Union', 732
[379] A similar campaign was called by the CPSA in Potchefstroom on Dingaan's Day, 1929. See Edgar R. *The Making of an African Communist: Edwin Thabo Mofutsanyana and the Communist Party of South Africa 1927-1939,* in Hidden Histories Series (Pretoria, University of South Africa, 2005), p.10
[380] Liebenberg, I. and Lortan, F. 'The role of the labour movement in the struggle for liberation', in Ian Liebenberg at al. (eds.) *The Long March: The story of the struggle for liberation in South Africa* (Pretoria, HAUM, 1994), p.228
[381] Johns III 'Trade Union', p. 747
[382] Serfontein *Keurskrif,* 451

'Conservative' bodies in Kroonstad

After realising the growing schism between urban blacks and whites, particularly the officials in various towns which was reflected in widespread protests, the government through the Native Affairs Department (NAD) recommended the creation of the Boards, "and the Urban Areas Act of 1923 carried this through".[383] With this "the state intended the Boards to bridge the chasm between urban Africans and local officials".[384] Despite this the Boards had no real power. "They were explicitly", Nieftagodien argues "denied any real power and their overall functions were limited to an advisory capacity".[385] Moreover, according to Nieftagodien "local authorities were neither obliged to consult the Advisory Boards nor to take into account any recommendations by them".[386]From the start this arrangement placed the Advisory Boards at a disadvantageous position.

More worrying at this stage, the Boards, notes Tetelman, "tended to be drawn from the members of the petty-bourgeoisie, the 'teachers and semi-literate'".[387] Furthermore, Board members had to be upstanding members of the community, who "had to be free of rental arrears", in short, exemplary people in the community. And these, Tetelman contends "did not agitate for radical change".[388] In Kroonstad, for example, the Board comprised of teachers. Among the members of the earliest Kroonstad Native Advisory Board were Manes, Pitso, Makhetha, Damane, Dingalo, Molete, Modise, Tladi (possibly the teacher who is the complainant in the letter above), and Lekhetla, [389] all of whom were teachers. In fact, in 1947 the Council waited eagerly for the decision whether Marumo would resign as a teacher to remain on as a member of the Board.[390] However, in spite of the educational background and standing in the community, teachers who sat in the Boards did not only fail to influence the decisions of the Town Council but also seemingly condoned some of the unfriendly decisions by the Council. This dented the Board's credibility in the eyes of the black residents.

Because of their profession, teachers were prohibited from becoming members of political organisations or participating in activities of organisations associated with opposition politics. The department of education threatened any teacher with dismissal found to have contravened the government regulation governing the teachers. Examples are in abundance of teachers who were either threatened with immediate dismissals or had their salaries withheld by the

[383] Tetelman 'We Can', p.25
[384] Ibid.
[385] Nieftagodien 'The Implementation'
[386] Ibid.,p.197
[387] Tetelman 'We Can', p.25
[388] Ibid., p.26
[389] Serfontein *Keurskrif,* p.523
[390] Minutes: Kroonstad Council, 25 April 1947 – 9 March 1948

government for being members of the ICU.[391] Some like Elias Maliza were not fortunate. His services in the teaching profession were summarily terminated on 15 December 1927 because of his active membership in the ICU.[392] But it was the case of Abiel Thabo Seele that probably caused teachers in the OFS, especially Kroonstad, to be particularly cautious. Seele, a teacher at Heilbron United Native School, was humiliated by the Department of Native Education, demanding that he write a letter to the department giving reasons why the department should not dismiss him after he seen addressing a meeting of the ICU held on 1 November 1936. Seele was not a member of the ICU. In his reply, Seele wrote – in part

> In the first place may I sincerely apologise for having participated at all – this error was done in ignorance. To relate ... circumstances attending this participation may I mention that on this day while proceeding from church I was requested by the officials of the said movement to assist them in interpretation – to this request I readily acceded because there be no one efficient for the purpose. At the end of the meeting I was asked to say a few words. ... I had not the least desire or motive of creating a spirit of ill-feeling and hostility between white and black, nor did I habour any malicious intention of publicly criticising government administration[393]

Seele's imminent dismissal was finally shelved after the intervention on behalf of Seele by the Reverend C. Jummen, who noted that Seele had learnt his lesson and pleaded with the department to forgive him.[394] It was probably because of such intimidation and threats of immediate dismissal from the teaching profession that teachers in Kroonstad felt comfortable working within 'conservative' bodies such as the Native Advisory Board.

For Alan Cobley "[the NAB] credibility was ... damaged by the role of the white chairman, which often precluded the possibility of direct criticism of the local authority".[395] He writes "board members were encouraged to use their "good office" in such matters as resolving domestic disputes, discouraging illegal brewing and sale of liquor, informing the authorities of necessary repairs and improvement of services and, in general preserving 'peace and good order'".[396] In some places like Cradock, Location Advisory Board members resolved small

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[391] FSPA SOO 1/1/47, No. 8/10 1946 'Parys Municipality: Letter from the Town Clerk and Treasure to the Director of Education', 11 May 1927;
[392] FSPA SOO 1/1/47, No. 8/10 1946 'Letter from Secretary of Education to the Secretary for Native Affairs, Pretoria', 24 September 1927
[393] FSPA SOO 1/1/47, No. 8/10 1946 'Letter from Abiel Thabo Seele to the Secretary for Native Education, Bloemfontein', 2 December 1936.
[394] FSPA SOO 1/1/47, No. 8/10 1946 'Letter from Reverend C. Jummen to the Secretary for Native Education, Bloemfontein', 2 January 1937.
[395] Cobley, G. Allan *Class and Consciousness: The Black Petty Bourgeoisie in South Africa, 1924 50 1950* (New York, Greenwood Press, 1990), p.69
[396] Ibid.,p.206

disputes, studied pauperism, launched ward clean-up contests, and asked the Town Council to maintain the location's cemetery".[397] Bonner and Nieftagodien note that when the magistrate of Johannesburg suggested that an Advisory Board should be formed in Alexandra, it was also stated that this Board "... would not only assist the police in carrying out the law, but it would also make representation on any other matter affecting the welfare of the township".[398]

Finally, Boards' members were made to believe that they were superior to the rest of the community members. And, therefore, it was their duty to lead by example. This message was stressed to the delegates attending the Location Advisory Boards Congress in 1935 by J.R. Brent, Kroonstad's Superintendent. He asserted

> You leaders must never lose sight of the fact that you are at least a century or two ahead of the Bantu masses you lead. You are educated men. You understand and have absorbed the modern civilised outlook. Never fall into the error of imagining that any appreciable number of your followers have the same outlook. Labour patiently to teach and to leaven them so that one day they will be able truly to enjoy the benefits of modern civilisation. Don't always aim at popularity or political advantage, but stem their rush towards the precipice, when the necessity arises, and head them gently in the right direction[399]

Disillusioned with the NAB, some public bodies in Kroonstad by-passed the Board and negotiated directly with the Town Council. The Board complained bitterly at this and requested the Town Council to ensure that all public bodies in the location should approach the Council through it.[400] In an attempt to demonstrate its concern for the residents, the Board requested the Town Council to stop the night raids during the months of December and January. This request however was turned down. [401]Again, in 1945, the Kroonstad NAB's request to have the name of the wife be removed in the lodger's permit and for the lodger's fee be reduced from 3 pennies to 2 pennies was rejected by the Council.[402] And in the same year the Board was reprimanded for misleading the Council that the number of taxis in the location had decreased.[403] Finally, in 1946 the Board's request that the location's inhabitants should be allowed to slaughter cattle in the

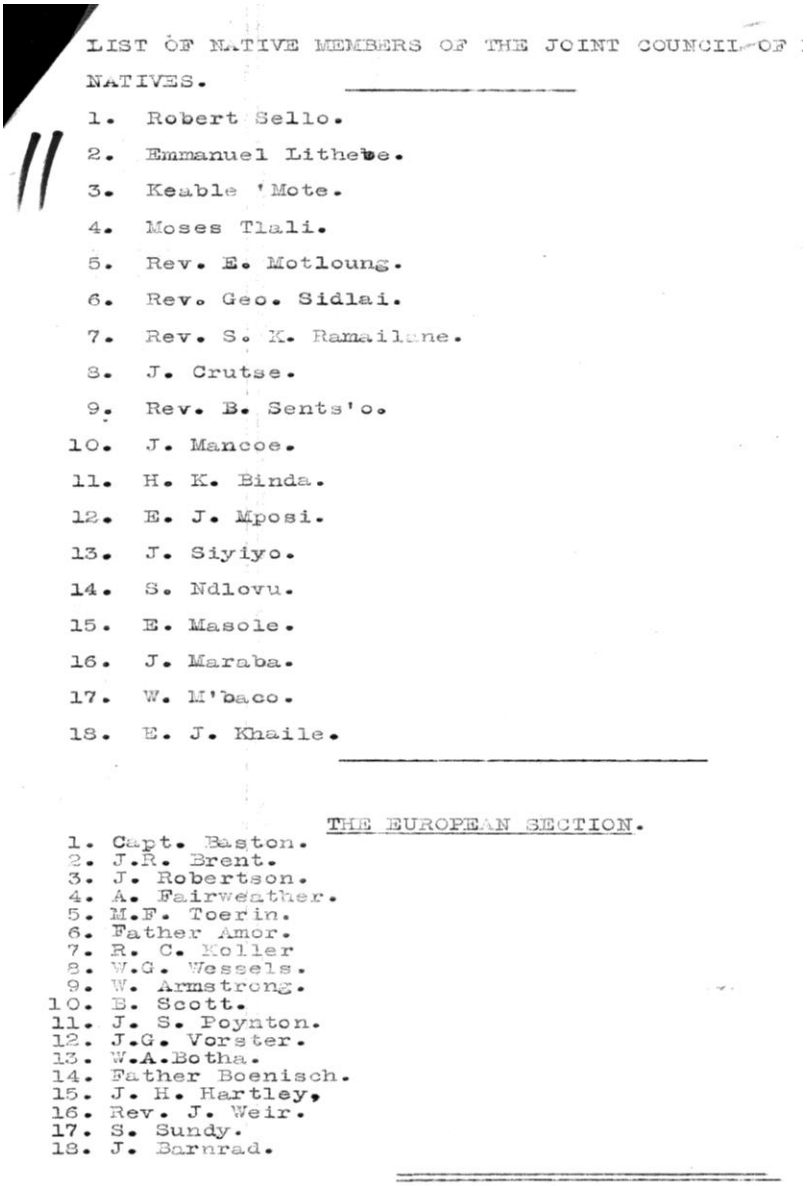
[397] Tetelman 'We Can', p.26
[398] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* p.37
[399] Cobley, *Class and Consciousness,* p.208
[400] Kroonstad Town Council Minutes, January 1945
[401] Ibid.
[402] Kroonstad Town Council Minutes, November 1945
[403] Kroonstad Town Council Minutes, November 1945

location for marriage feasts was turned down.[404] For the members of the community, these were clear signs that the Board was failing to advance its best interests.

It is important to note here that after 1944 some of the NAB's were radicalised. This could have been as a result of the formation of the ANCYL which introduced radical ideas into black politics. It was at this stage that politicians became members of the Advisory Boards. Some of these included members of the ANC and South African Communist Party (SACP). Lodge writes "The Communist candidates stood and won the Springs, Brakpan, Benoni and Nigel Advisory Board elections in December 1945".[405]Similarly, Bonner and Nieftagodien note that "in 1953 ANC activist Margaret Maphanga was elected to the Dukathole[406] Advisory Board, along with fellow ANC member J. Monaheng, who had already served as an elected member for several years"[407]

Still the people of Kroonstad's black residential areas were not mobilised and organised. This was to carry on for some time. At the same time as the NAB was functioning in Kroonstad, the Kroonstad Joint Council of European and Natives (JCEN) was formed. In Kroonstad, according to Paul Rich "the Kroonstad Joint Council was established in September 1928 [consisting of] 18 whites and 18 Africans (see list of members attached)."[408]

[404] Kroonstad Town Council Minutes, September 1946
[405] Lodge *Black Politics,* p.133
[406] Dukathole: 'Where the Calves go Astray' was the name of the black residential area in Germiston, East of Johannesburg. See Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* p.5
[407] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* p.30
[408] Rich 'Managing Black Leadership', p.184



LIST OF NATIVE MEMBERS OF THE JOINT COUNCIL OF NATIVES.

1. Robert Sello.
2. Emmanuel Lithebe.
3. Keable 'Mote.
4. Moses Tlali.
5. Rev. E. Motloung.
6. Rev. Geo. Sidlai.
7. Rev. S. K. Ramailane.
8. J. Crutse.
9. Rev. B. Sents'o.
10. J. Mancoe.
11. H. K. Binda.
12. E. J. Mposi.
13. J. Siyiyo.
14. S. Ndlovu.
15. E. Masole.
16. J. Maraba.
17. W. M'baco.
18. E. J. Khaile.

THE EUROPEAN SECTION.

1. Capt. Baston.
2. J.R. Brent.
3. J. Robertson.
4. A. Fairweather.
5. M.F. Toerin.
6. Father Amor.
7. R. C. Koller
8. W.G. Wessels.
9. W. Armstrong.
10. B. Scott.
11. J. S. Poynton.
12. J.G. Vorster.
13. W.A.Botha.
14. Father Boenisch.
15. J. H. Hartley.
16. Rev. J. Weir.
17. S. Sundy.
18. J. Barnrad.

Names of members of the Kroonstad European and Natives Joint Council *(Source:* UWL AD1433 (Box CK5.3) Kroonstad Joint Council

According to the constitution of the Council the main objective of the Joint Councils was, inter alia[409],

a. To promote co-operation between Europeans and Natives in South Africa
b. To investigate and report upon any matter relating to the welfare of the Native people's of South Africa to which the Council's attention may called

[409] UWL HLP AD1947/65.2 (Box 39) Miscellaneous/ Memoranda in South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR)

c. To make such representations to the Union Government , Provincial Administration, public bodies or individuals as may be thought necessary

Skimming through the list reproduced here, particularly from the African members, one can see the involvement of a 'respectable' number of ministers of churches, the rest being a mixture of individuals involved in various trades. For example, Robert Sello, 'Mote, Henderson Binda (trade unionist: ICU)[410], J. Crutse (teacher)[411], and Jan Maraba (Policeman)[412] Their non-militant approach (except for the trade unionists) shaped the role of the Council. Worse in 1931 'Mote was no longer a member of the JCEN in Kroonstad. This is evident in the correspondence between Knight and Rheinallt-Jones, in which Knight informed Rheinallt-Jones about 'Mote's speech at the JCEN meeting. He wrote

> Rather a disturbed meeting of the Joint Council last night. 'Mote was introduced as a visitor, and let off his usual hot-air. I doubt if he will be given another opportunity[413]

The non-militancy of the JCEN was also possibly influenced by the presence of the white members. Although the Council's constitution stipulated that whites be the majority of members, in Kroonstad this was not the case. But they, as the constitution, again, stipulated held the leading positions.[414] For example, Fathers Charles F. Martin and Amor were in the executive of the Kroonstad's Council.

Just like the NAB, the JCEN's did not have real power to influence or change decisions adopted by the Town Council. Its role typified that of both pressure and lobbyist groups. It raised issues to put pressure on the local authorities. For example, it took up the issue of trading rights for blacks in the location, making representations to the Kroonstad Town Council and, later, to the OFS Municipalities' Conference.[415] Furthermore, it made representations before the Inquiry into Native Trading Facilities at Kroonstad beginning on September 5 1932.[416] In between, it sought to send a deputation to the Minister of Native Affairs – who however refuse to meet them.[417] Again, in 1935 it began discussing the issue of home-brewing, because the Illicit Liquor Commission was about to report on it.[418] Relatedly, it failed to mobilize the community, particularly African women brewing and selling beer, when the Kroonstad Municipality decided

[410] See Ntantala *A Life's Mosaic,* p.83
[411] Setiloane *The History,* p.14
[412] See interview with Jordan
[413] UWL HLP AD1433 (Box CK5.3) Kroonstad Joint Council: Letter: 'letter from Father Martin to Rheinallt-Jones', 27 October 1931
[414] Tetelman 'We Can', p.27
[415] See UWL HLP AD1433 (Box CK5.3) Kroonstad Joint Council: Letter: 'letter from Father Martin Knight to Rheinallt-Jones', 3 February 1932; 'Letter from Rheinallt-Jones to Martin Knight, 24 August 1932
[416] Ibid.
[417] Ibid.: 'Letter from Rheinallt-Jones to Father Martin Knight, 5 September 1931
[418] Ibid.

to establish municipal canteen system, similar to those operated in KwaZulu and Durban.[419] Finally, it raised the issue of the exorbitant interest expected by the local authority from blacks in the locations.[420]

The JCEN's representations did not solve the problems such as inability to trade freely in the locations experienced by Africans in Kroonstad. This caused the residents in the black locations to begin to doubt the capacity of the JCEN to advance their interests. It can be speculated that black members in the JCEN might have felt pressure from members of the community who saw no progress in the Council's role. Indeed, in the case of Cradock when the police raided beer brewing with increasing frequency, and in 1929 the municipality increased the powers of search and seizure for home-brewed beer, the black members of the JCEN in particularly understood the potential for conflict, since they lived with poor residents in a small location and were tightly connected through clan and social networks.[421] They tried unsuccessfully to advise the municipality against this approach.

Differences in approaches caused some of the blacks in the JCEN to feel that their white counterparts were controlling them and telling them what to do. In 1936 cracks in the JCEN began to show in Kroonstad. In August 1937 Charles F. Martin Knight, of the St. Francis' Priory, addressed a letter to Senator Rheinallt-Jones explaining the reasons for this. The letter read – in part

> But in Kroonstad the type of European here is rather put off by the title Joint Council because he thinks it is a suggestion of what his ancestors called "ungodly equality". ... It is true, [he continued], that the actual dissolution of the Kroonstad Joint Council was due to the defection of the Africans which made it impossible to carry on without doing them more harm than good. But there had always been a problem connected with European members. They were so few that certainly did not effectively balance the African members ...[422]

Finally, in 1941 Father Amor, the secretary of the JCEN in Kroonstad, wrote to Rheinallt-Jones making the same point. In his letter he said, inter alia,

> I know how the Joint Council has faded away in the OFS. ... From the African side there was much desire to exploit the JCs for the purpose of getting things for them-

[419] See UWL HLP AD1433 (Box CK5.3) Kroonstad Joint Council: Letter from the secretary of the SAIRR to Father Martin Knight, 15 August 1935
[420] UWL HLP AD1433 (Box CK5.3) Kroonstad Joint Council: Letter from Rheinallt-Jones to Father Martin Knight, 5 September 1931
[421] Tetelman 'We Can', pp.28-9
[422] UWL HLP AD1433 (Box CK5.3) Kroonstad Joint Council: Letter: 'Letter from Charles F. Martin to Senator Jones, 24 August 1937

> selves which were difficult or impossible in other ways. ... And often Europeans also used their position in an endeavour to tell the Native what his place and where he got off[423]

In conclusion, he proposed the establishment of a Study Cell, which would comprise an equal number of Europeans and Blacks. The purpose of the Study Cell was to meet on a monthly basis to "hear and discuss papers".[424] However, this idea does not seem to have gone any further than the proposal stage. In 1949 there were talks of reviving the Joint Council,[425] but there is no evidence to suggest that the Joint Council of Europeans and Natives was ever reintroduced in Kroonstad.

Almost at the same time as the JCEN started experiencing tensions another body emerged which, like the NAB and the JCEN, did not mobilise and organise the masses. Instead, it concentrated on a select constituency, the teachers. And this perpetuated the quiescence and tranquillity prevailing in Kroonstad's black residential areas. As mentioned above, from the early1930s young 'fresh-from university colleges' teachers (especially from the Cape Province) arrived in numbers to take up teaching posts in Kroonstad. Although, some of them joined the ANC when they arrived in Kroonstad, they did not play any active role in promoting the organisation's politics.[426]

The political situation, however, changed in the post-1944 period, partly as the result of the formation of the ANC Youth League[427], which radicalised the mother-body. Now some of the teachers, especially in the East Rand, joined political organisations and explicitly participated in their organisation's activities. But this was not the case in Kroonstad. Could this perhaps have been because of fear of intimidation and threats of dismissal from work by the department, as noted above?

According to Setiloane, the branch of OFSATA, Kroonstad African Teachers Association (KATA) was already active in the 1930s. There is no evidence to suggest that KATA ever involved itself in raising issues affecting the community directly with the local officials. Its attention was rather focused on its members' immediate interests. The teachers' militancy was aroused by the terrible working conditions teachers worked under and the low payment.[428] To demonstrate their frustrations, teachers in 1944 staged a march in Johannesburg, only dressed in

[423] Ibid: letter from Father Amor to Rheinallt-Jones, 15 August 1941
[424] Ibid.
[425] Ibid.: letter from Reverend E.S. Pons to Rheinallt-Jones, 7 October 1949
[426] Ntantala *A Life's Mosaic,* p.124
[427] The ANC Youth League was formed in 1944
[428] Bonner and Nietagodien note that 'in 1941 and 1942 war-time inflation began to bit and further eroded teachers' pay', which promoted the Teachers' Association Journal, *The Good Shepherd,* to express outrage that domestic servants could earn more than a female teacher'. Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* p.36

blankets to dramatise the depths of their poverty.[429] According to Ntantala, the OFS was one of the provinces where teachers were not treated as professionals and as result OFSATA "started looking critically at their contracts and conditions of service".[430] OFSATA's reputation grew. This was particularly the case following the election of A.C. Jordan to the presidency in 1943. Teachers organised branches in city, town, and dorp. Ntantala writes "during the two years of A.C's [Jordan] presidency, new branches of the organisation sprang up in the most unlikely places in the OFS – Clocolan, Wepenar, Steynsrust, and other little places that one hardly ever heard of".[431] "By 1945", concludes Ntantala, "OFSATA [was] the most militant in the whole country".[432] Even so, they were aloof from the masses.

This was different from what happened in Stirtonville, in the East Rand in the 1940s. The conditions experienced by teachers, and most probably the radical influence of the ANCYL, caused some of the teachers to be effectively drawn into community politics.[433] Nebojah Mokgako was such a teacher. According to Bonner and Nieftagodien, Mokgako, after being elected into the Stirtonville Advisory Board, unlike other teachers, "injected a more confrontational tone into Advisory Board proceedings".[434] Moreover, Mokgako became a constant thorn in the side of the location administration, challenging them on a host of issues, including permits, liquor raids, unsatisfactory bus services, poor water supply, the location regulations and the prohibition on hawking by women, among others.[435] This earned him support from the single quarters and beer-brewing women.[436]

Similarly, David Bopape in Brakpan, in the East Rand, was a founding member of the ANCYL, ANC branch chairman in Brakpan, secretary of the Villgilance Association (replaced the NAB in Brakpan), vice-president of the location's Child and Social Welfare Society, member of the Communist Party of South Africa, secretary of the Anti-Pass Council of 1944. This was in addition to his earlier involvement in the Transvaal African Teachers Association's salary campaign in 190-41.[437] Evidently, he commanded a presence in the community and its affairs. It was for this reason that when the newly appointed manager of the NAD in Brakpan, Dr Language, influenced the dismissal of Bopape from his teaching post at the Brakpan Amalgamated Mission School, that on 10 May 1944 the 7000-strong workforce in Brakpan

[429] Ibid.
[430] Ibid.,pp.119-120; Basner was campaigning to replace Senator Rheinallt-Jones as the representative of Natives in Parliament
[431] Ntantala *Life's Mosaic,* p.120
[432] Ibid.
[433] Some of the teachers were members of the ANCYL like Oliver Tambo, and were active in the Reef.
[434] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* p.37
[435] Ibid.
[436] Ibid.
[437] Sapire 'The Stay-away', pp.390-2

stayed away from work, demanding the removal of Dr Language.[438] When the Brakpan Council refused to budge and to reinstate Bopape, African women in Brakpan, led by Mrs Sello and Mrs Masekane, led a school boycott.[439] Although the Brakpan Council remained intransigent and refused to reinstate Bopape, but the strike and school boycott galvanised the community of Brakpan to the extent that the Council was propelled "into pursuing a policy of 'cleaning up' the location and of reasserting total control over the lives of the town's labour force".[440] In spite of these measures, Sapire argues "Brakpan remained a centre of political ferment, which the ANC would profitably tab a decade later".[441]

Back to OFSATA/KATA. The latter's distant relations with the masses should not, however, be construed to mean that there were no teachers who were political and who, again, tried to conscientise their students. Peter Molotsi, who studied at Bantu High in Kroonstad and later became a founding member of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), in the interview with Brown Maaba recalled that in the 1940s teachers in the same school openly discussed politics with the students. In his words "the idea that this was our country was always instilled in almost every lesson". "… The members of the staff", he added, "were people with a clear purpose … prepared to teach us and liberate us". "They delivered two messages", he continued, "the syllabus and its need and [our] purpose in life … Our teachers were so devoted that they actually taught beyond the syllabus: they taught our minds to satisfy the needs of the syllabus, but they then also prepared us as future citizens of a South Africa that would be free. They delivered the massage of liberation".[442] It is possible that it was some of the politicized teachers in Kroonstad who invited a Youth Leaguer to come and address them in 1949. The Youth Leaguer cajoled the teachers to take a more militant approach

> A significant thing has happened recently. In the tram boycott of Western Native Township the lead has been taken by African youth who in their enthusiasm even use violence to make this a success … These [sic] are manifestations of the new spirit – the spirit of nationalism. Only these youngsters haven't the correct orientation. The spirit is there and undeniable[443]

The advent of the Nationalist's government in 1948, and at the beginning of the 1950s passing a myriad of oppressive laws, including Bantu Education Act in 1953, brought to an abrupt end the open involvement by teachers (and other civil servants) in politics. And so did the method of teaching of fusing the syllabus and politics. Ntantala strongly believes it was because OFSATA

[438] Ibid., p.358
[439] Ibid., pp.390-1
[440] Ibid., p.393
[441] Ibid.
[442] Interview with Peter Molotsi by Brown Maaba
[443] Lodge *Black Politics,* p.22

was then in control of collaborators, who welcomed Bantu Education.[444] Apart from the efforts alluded to by Molotsi, there is no evidence that in Kroonstad black teachers mobilised the community to protest against the introduction of Bantu Education, as was the case in Benoni and Alexandra.[445]

In spite of this setback, in the early 1950s the Kroonstad's teacher militancy continued, although in a different form. A small number of teachers were drawn into the politics of the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) – and they in turn formed the Society of Young Africa (SOYA). In Kroonstad, SOYA, like bodies before it, also staked its political claim. Writing about SOYA in a different locality, Tom Lodge notes "In the Transvaal the Society of Young Africa enjoyed a certain vogue in the early 1950s amongst the young and usually well-educated men and women who attended its discussion groups.[446] Lodge's observation applies to the situation in Kroonstad. A.C. Jordan, who had moved to Cape Town and joined NEUM, was instrumental in the formation of SOYA in Kroonstad. Parkies Setiloane, a former member of SOYA and teacher at Bantu High School recalls

> I was recruited in the 50s by [teacher] Nqeleni to the A.A.C. I was a teacher then. And then we had a youth organisation called SOYA, Society of Young Africa. We didn't pay subscription fee to join SOYA; you just became a member You see, at the time the ANC was using boycotts, resistance, and all that to fight oppression. But SOYA was saying educate the masses first so that the masses must know their importance in society. Yes, educate the people first politically; it's then that you can take action. I can still remember, eh, A.C. Jordan came up and lectured … And then you had to buy stationery like *The Awakening of the People* by [Isaac] Tabata – he was from the Eastern Cape. We held meetings in Reverend Mahabane's study-room at the Methodist Manse and discussed about oppression at the time. Sometimes we would attend conferences.[447]

Evidently SOYA operated at an intellectual level. Although it managed to attract like-minded people, especially teachers, it also had few members who were not teachers. Parkies Setiloane recalls "some of our members were not teachers. I remember we had Willie Nhlapo. Nhlapo was a postmaster here. Mohope "The Great" was there too.[448] SOYA's lifespan, however, was short. Functioning during the action-oriented period of the 1950s (1952 was the beginning of the

[444] Ntantala *A Life's Mosaic,* p.120. In 1943 A.C. Jordan, while teaching at Bantu High, was the president of OFSATA. By 1945 OFSATA and the Transvaal African Teacher's Association liaised and co-ordinated, and they became the most militant bodies in the whole country.
[445] See Lodge *Black Politics,* Chapter Five; Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* p.137
[446] Lodge *Black Politics,* p.87
[447] Interview with Parkies Setiloane. The correct title of the book is *The All African Convention: The Awakening of A People* by Tabata I.B. (1950)
[448] Ibid.

Defiance Campaign), the masses no longer tolerated political debates and discussions the SOYA was so much engrossed in. They wanted action. Some of the members of SOYA felt the same. Parkies Setiloane explains

> What did not impress me about SOYA was that it was highly critical of the ANC. It criticised it a lot. We never took action as SOYA like the ANC. I mean the Defiance Campaign started when we were already active in 1952. But we never took part in the Defiance Campaign. The action only came from the ANC. And SOYA would argue that 'they (ANC) are wisening up the white man to come up with more stringent laws. We said let's leave them (the government and its employers) and hit them where it hurts the most, which was educating the masses. And then take action once! We would target labourers, teachers, ministers – everybody. And once we embarked on a strike action, there'll be a standstill[449]

SOYA's intention to 'educate the masses', however, remained an idea only. It was never implemented. Finally, some of the members of SOYA like Parkies Setoloane (and possibly others as well) left the location in his case to find a teaching post on the farms. This closed the chapter of SOYA's functioning in Kroonstad.

The revival of radical politics

Although the rolling out of the Defiance Campaign in 1952, led mainly by the ANC and the South African Indian Congress, did not produce "an extraordinary response" as it did in some of the areas in the Eastern Cape, like Port Elizabeth and East London it, nevertheless, helped to revive the ANC in Kroonstad.[450] Residents, ostensibly members of the ANC, embarked in mass political mobilisation and demonstrations – albeit briefly. From oral evidence, it is apparent that before or during the campaign the ANC leadership visited Kroonstad possibly to galvanise the people. This visit was possibly prompted by lack of action in the locations during ANC's call for a national stay-at-home on 26 June 1950.[451] Recalling the visit by the ANC's leaders to Kroonstad, Mekodi Arcilia Morailane (now Mokoena), who was born in 1946 in Bloemfontein and had moved to Kroonstad by 1952, remembers seeing Walter Sisulu (during this period the only ANC's full-time paid official)[452]

> What I remember is that in '52 or a little earlier than that we arrived in Kroonstad.

[449] Ibid.
[450] Over 2000 volunteers filled the jails of Port Elizabeth, and some 1 300 volunteers were arrested in East London. On the Defiance Campaign in the Eastern Cape, see for example, Tetelman 'We Can', pp73-6
[451] The reason for the ANC's call for a national work stay-at-home was in protest against the shooting and killing of protesters by police on May Day in 1950.
[452] Setiloane *The History*

> We were from Bloemfontein. Immediately when I arrived there I went to a crèche, Dorcas House. I was around five years. Who's this short and light in complexion? I think he has passed away. He was arrested together with *ntate* Mandela ... Walter Sisulu. He once came to Kroonstad. We saw *him* ... At that time we didn't know this as politics. We just knew that they were well-respected men. You'll just hear that at home[453]

During this period some of the teachers, even those at the crèche level, were politically conscious. Their awareness bordered on radicalism. This was evident in their teachings. At Dorcas House, Morailane remembers that they were taught recitations (poems) which were grounded in the history of dispossession. She recalls that during the visit by the ANC leadership they were made to recite this poem for them as a form of entertainment. According to her the poem went as follows

> *Mo-Afrika, ke kgotsofetse ka se keleng sona. Le hoja naha ya rona e ne e se tshehla. Naha ya rona e fetohile lehaha la mashodu, teng ho phela batho ba mefuta yohle. Batho ba ikemiseditseng ho ripitla Mo-Afrika* (Stumping her foot)[454]

> I am satisfied to be an African. Our country was never barren. It has been turned into a heaven of thieves, where many people live. But some of these people are constantly preparing to destroy Africans (Stumping her foot)

Some of the members of Dorcas House were members of the National Council of African Women. Hilda Motadinyane was one such teacher. Lodge describes the National Council of African Women, up until the late 1940s, as different (together with the Zenzele Clubs led by Mrs Xuma)[455] which worked for the upliftment and upward mobility of African women.[456] In the 1950s their role had shifted. They now became involved in political issues. Motadinyane remembers that she joined the National Council of African Women after listening to Winkie Direko, the leader of the Council, criticizing the carrying of passes by women. She remarks

> For me to join this organisation was when Winkie Direko had come to Kroonstad from Bloemfontein. She was addressing women like Mathakane and others. I listened to her and I became interested. She was discussing women's issues like passes[457]

[453] Interview with Mekodi Arcilia Morailane (LHPR), Siyathemba, Balfour, Mpumalanga Province, 3 July 2009
[454] Ibid.
[455] This was the wife of the President of the ANC in the 1940s, Alfred Bitini Xuma
[456] Lodge *Black Politics,* p.141
[457] Interview with Motadinyane

At this stage the ANC did not have a strong branch in Kroonstad, mainly because of the non-radical stance adopted by the ANC leadership over the years until 1949. Then the ANCYL pushed for the adoption of its radical 'Programme of Action'. According to Benjamin Pogrund, a journalist at the time, "The Programme of Action set the goal of 'freedom from white domination and the attainment of political independence". "Specifically" he continues, "it called for direct representation in all the government bodies of the country, and abolition of all differential institutions for blacks such as representative councils and the existing parliamentary council." Finally, "the Programme suggested ... wide press dissemination of ideas to raise political consciousness; boycott of differential institutions, together with strikes, civil disobedience and non-co-operation ..."[458] For Lodge, the 'Programme of Action' "was the most militant statement of principles adopted by the ANC to date". "Congress, it said" Lodge adds "struggle for the rights of national freedom, political independence, and self-determination and the rejection of white leadership and all forms of segregation".[459]

It was against this backdrop that some of the members of the ANC in Kroonstad organised a march to town to demonstrate at the municipal offices. According to Setiloane, Amos Mahomane, Esther Montshiwa and Lenong led a demonstration in the 1950s to the municipal office to complain about the excessive number of whites working in municipal offices, increased rent and the proposed ejection of all unmarried young men from their homes in the townships and housing them in municipal hostels".[460]

The political momentum grew after the government promulgated the Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents Act in 1952, which made provision for women to carry reference books.[461] Recounting the indignation women felt about this law, Maggie Resha writes in her book "To extend the Pass Laws was to pull down the wall which protected the women from the humiliation of carrying these documents".[462] Throughout South Africa women were incensed by this Act and decided to protest. To coordinate their protests, 150 women from different parts of the country converged in Johannesburg in 1954 to adopt a 'Women's Charter' where they launched a new organisation, the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW).[463] The following year, 2000 women from the Transvaal marched to Union Buildings in Pretoria, with a petition to the then Prime Minister B.J. Strijdom. However, the Prime Minister snubbed the women.[464] This did not deter the women – they were to march again in 1956. Before that,

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[458] Pogrund, B. *How Can Man Die Better: The life of Robert Sobukwe* (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1990), p.46-7

[459] Lodge *Black Politics,* p.26

[460] Setiloane *The History,* p.139

[461] Lodge *Black Politics, 1*40

[462] Resha, M. *'Mangoana O Tsoara Thipa Ka Bohaleng': My Life in the Struggle* (Johannesburg, Congress of South African Writers, 1991), 112; see also Walker, C *Women and Resistance in South Africa* (London, Onyx Press, 1982)

[463] Resha *'Mangoana*, p.142

[464] Resha *'Mangoana',* 112

however, in March 1956 African women marched "in virtually all the major cities ... from locations into city centres to hand in petitions and protests to Town Clerks, Native Commissioners, Magistrates and other local affiliates.[465] It possible that it was during this period that African women in Kroonstad's black locations also participated in the anti-pass campaign.

In Kroonstad this campaign was led by some of the older women (possibly members of the ANC Women's League).[466] The most prominent amongst these was Matseki Majoro. Majoro's role in politics dates back prior to the anti-pass campaign. Violet Selele remembers her (and other women) leading a fight against high rent also. She remarks

> This group comprised of older women of the same age as my mother. I know because I was married then. They would go to the town hall in town to protest against rent. They also protested against this thing called ... lodger's permit.[467] Ja, they fought against the lodger's permit and rent. They would go to town and demand that they should be arrested. Indeed, they were arrested. But they later released[468]

Supporting Selele, Mike "Baba" Jordan recalls that Matseki

> was an activist. She features in boycotts. Not only the anti-pass campaign, but also all the boycotts of unfair service from local government. She was always in the forefront – rent boycotts. She was not leading a group of women; she was leading a group of residents. When she was detained, she was detained along side six or seven men for the rent boycotts[469]

Also Godfrey Oliphant remembers Matseki Majoro as a powerful orator. He described as her follows

> Matseki was very powerful. That's the lady I know personally. [She was one of

[465] Ibid., p.143

[466] From the oral testimonies there is silence about the political formation these women belonged to. Only one person claimed that one of the leading women in the demonstration, Matseki Majoro, had close links with Nelson Mandela – 'she reported to Mandela; she was secretary to Mandela'. See interview with Lindiwe Gladys Mwelase, for the 'Local Histories and Present Realities' Programme, Constantia, Kroonstad, 25 September 2009; On the other hand, during this period there was also the National Council of Women fighting against the passes. It was led by Winkie Direko. See interview with Motadinyane

[467] The lodger's permit contained the name of the wife and children, and a certain amount had to be paid every month by those lodging. In 1939 the Advisory Board deputation requested, without success, that the name of the wife be removed from the lodger's permit and the permit be reduced from 3/ to 2/ per month, see Pherudi *Who's Who,* p.4

[468] Interview with Selele

[469] Interview with Mike "Baba" Jordan

> the] people who used to quote Mandela. *As sy ge praat het* (when she spoke), people would listen. [Addressing people she would say] 'It's been long that we've been under the yoke of a white man' – *those were* the words. 'We've got to stand up as the people today and fight for our rights'. She was that type of a person[470]

However, Majoro is most remembered for her role in the anti-pass campaign. Setiloane writes "Matseki had led women in demonstrations, protesting the carrying of passes by black women ..."[471] Selele, who was present at the demonstrations, recalls

> I remember one incident that agitated people was the pass document. I just can't remember the year. There was a group of women – I was there – we used to meet and talk about this thing that we don't want passes. That's one incident that I remember very well[472]

Recalling the actual gathering, Selele adds

> I can't remember some of these women. One of them, if I remember well, it was *Me* Masieletsa – she's late. These women came up with this idea here in Seeisoville. I can still remember I was sitting next to one of these women whose husband was a shopkeeper when I said '*Me* Masielatsa, do you realise that there are some people here who will leave this meeting and go and tell the *boers* (police) that we don't want passes. I think we should stop the meeting so that we can assess the situation. But honestly we didn't want them (passes). But here in Kroonstad we didn't trust each other[473]

Indeed, what Selele feared happened. Not long after the meeting, Matseke Majoro was detained. In his interview with researchers from the Free State Provincial Archives, John Modise explained

> Matseki was the person who worked in town, but she also liked to help other people within the community. She worked closely with Reverend Mahabane and Mrs Mahabane. When Matseki was arrested, Reverend Mahabane was also arrested – on the same day. They arrested Reverend Mahabane first, and followed with Matseki. They were very active in politics[474]

Mahabane's political stance from the time he arrived in Kroonstad was moderate up until 1957. According to some of my interviewees, in 1957 he became actively involved in community

[470] Interview with Godfrey Oliphant
[471] Setiloane *The History,* p.139
[472] Interview with Selele
[473] Ibid.
[474] Interview with Mr K.J Modise (FSPA)

issues after his visit to Ghana in that year. In 1957 Ghana won its independence under Kwame Nkrumah. In his autobiography, Nelson Mandela notes the following about Nkruma's influence on South African activists

> … The emergence of the independent republic of Ghana in 1957 and its pan-africanist, anti-apartheid leader, Nkrumah, had alarmed the Nationalists and made them even more intent on clamping down on dissent at home[475]

"Baba" Jordan recalls that he was informed that Mahabane came back radicalised from Ghana. He explains

> The interesting history of a Methodist Church priest … Mahabane. We as kids used to call him *ou wit kop* (old white head), because his head was snow white … I remember something my elder cousin recalls now and then. My cousin said to me 'I was sitting is a service one Sunday morning and that was on the return of Z.R. Mahabane in 1957. He was invited by Kwame Nkrumah. In that sermon Mahabane said the message from Nkrumah for blacks in South Africa was they must get the boot of the white man off from their necks. Ja, that's what I heard[476]

Lindiwe Gladys Mwelase, who is related to Majoro, returned to Kroonstad after spending some time working in Johannesburg to find Majoro arrested. She recounts

> I went back home in 1956. And when I landed I found that my grandmother had just been arrested … They accused [her] of being too much influential about the pass resistance. That was after the women had returned from Pretoria to march against the pass laws. I asked the *people* and they told me that they burned passes and she stayed behind when others fled. [They burned] the passes down there at the Old Location, just behind the market[477]

However, in spite of this demonstration the government swiftly implemented its law of extending passes to women. Women in Winburg, in the Orange Free State, were the first to be issued with

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[475] Mandela, N. *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela* (South Africa, A Macdonald Purnell Book, 1994), p.224

[476] Interview with "Baba" Jordan

[477] Interview with Mwelase; It is highly unlikely that Majoro was arrested for the anti-pass protest in 1956 as Mwelase claims, for the reasons advanced above. Besides some of the residents of Kroonstad interviewed for this thesis recall that passes were burned in 1960 after the shooting of protesters in Sharpeville. See interviews with John Coangae and Mike "Baba" Jordan (Italics my emphasis)

passes in 1956.[478] In 1957 African women in Kroonstad were issued with passes as well. Motadinyane recalls

> Remember that we were forced to take passes. I took mine in 1957 I was working at the creche in Dorcas House. The municipality police came to our workplace and took us to the hall. When we arrived there they took us photographs. We were the first group of women to be given passes[479]

As had been the experience of their male counterparts, females also experienced the unpleasantness associated with passes. Motadinyane explains

> Then life became hard. Police would knock at our doors in the middle of the night, demanding to see our passes. In my case, when they arrived at my place and demanded to see my pass, I would tell them to show me theirs first[480]

The suppression of the anti-pass demonstrations marked the end of ANC's aboveground activities in Kroonstad black locations during this period. It would seem that the ANC, after it had decided to establish Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) and engage the government militarily, some of its leading figures in Kroonstad attempted to recruit members of the Green-White Gang to engage in acts of sabotage on behalf of MK. Gangs began forming countrywide in the late 1930s.[481] One of the earliest gangs in Alexandra during this period was the Tuta Ranch, which "robbed people particularly in the early mornings at the bus rank ..."[482] After the National Party (NP) ascended to power after the 1948 elections, having being voted into power mainly by the white *platteland* (rural Highveld/plateau) farmers, who were losing huge quantities of labour to industry in the towns, the semi-skilled Afrikaner workers who were threatened with job competition from blacks, and a section of white suburban residents who feared being swamped by black immigration to the towns,[483] it appeased these constituencies by promulgating laws which would ensure that, first, the white farmers were regularly supplied with labour, second, the mixing between blacks and whites in towns ceased, and, finally, that blacks did not pose a threat to the semi-skilled Afrikaners. The laws affected gangsters and their gangs. African males were obliged to carry passes all the time to prove their legality in the urban areas. Failure to do this led to immediate arrest, and sometimes to young men being sentenced to work on farms in Bethal, in the then Eastern Transvaal (today Mpumalanga Province).[484] Local authorities, through their

[478] UWL HLP A2010 'Women and Protest in South Africa, 1954-1981'
[479] Interview with Motadinyane
[480] Ibid.
[481] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* p.101
[482] Ibid.
[483] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* p.105
[484] See First, R. 'The Farm Labour Scandal', in *New Age,* 1947; *Drum, March* 1952

police, were entrusted with the responsibility of enforcing these laws. And their main targets were young men.

It was against this background that the Green-White Gang was established in the early 1950s. To understand the establishment and activities of this gang, it is important to revisit the career of Ditheko Josias "Makula" Molai, one of the few surviving members of the gang. This information is drawn from the interview with him.

Molai, who is better known as "Makula", was born in Marabastad in 1941, on the 12th of August. He spent part of his childhood in Germiston, where his parents lived. He claims that while in Germiston he befriended and grew up among Indian children. As a result he learnt to speak their language fluently. As a result when he returned to Kroonstad to live with his grandmother, he could not speak any of the vernacular languages spoken in the locations and this earned him the name "Makula" – a derogatory term for Indian. He explains: "I came back and lived with my grandmother. That's *when* I got the name "Makula" because I couldn't speak Sesotho but only Indian." He started his schooling at 'B' Location at a government school accommodated at the Anglican Church, "because Bantu United [School] was too small". He claims that life was satisfactory especially education-wise, but in 1952 or 1953 after he had proceeded to Bantu United to do Standard Three, he and some of the young boys from 'B' location formed themselves into a group and hung around the shops. They came to be known as the 'Green Berets' corner shop gang. It was more of a group than a gang then. During this period Molai and his friends, who were about 10 or 12 in number, were part of the baseball team called the Green-White, because of the team's uniform: white shirts and shorts, with green stripes. The members included people like David Gooie, John Sesana, Boy-boy Ponyane, who have passed away, and Choke Tlokotsi, and Sydney Mashoe, who are in Johannesburg.

Molai claims that over a period of time they noticed that the municipal police, derogatorily called *mampara* (stupid) were harassing the Basotho nationals who were living in "B" location – and they did not take kindly to this.[485] He remembers: "We noticed that the apartheid law was too harsh on the Lesotho people. We adored people from Lesotho, because every month-end they would receive their salaries, as well as their ration. And because their wives weren't familiar with the place they used to send us to do some errands for them, and they would give us that ration, like beans, samp, meat, and different kinds of vegetables. These people used to give us their groceries, because we assisted their families. We realised (concluded) that the harassment they received from the government have to stop." According to him, the police would arrest the Basotho when, for instance, they had visitors. Whether it was 10 at night or 12 they were supposed to first get the visitor's permit from the office, and if not so, they were arrested. If they were behind with rent payments or the so-called lodger's [permit], they were also arrested. Finally, those women made means of living by brewing African beer would attract police who

[485] This was probably in line with the apartheid policies, particularly the Abolition of Passes and Documents Act.

would ruin their business. For these reasons Molai and others started to group themselves against the law.

Molai confesses that it was not their intention to form a gang but they were forced to. This was because, as they were strategizing how they would assist the Basotho against the police, a group of people interfered with their plans (this was probably the rival gang, The Spoilers).[486] They felt they had no choice but to form a gang in order to protect themselves. He takes up the story

> There were those from other sections of the location who were against our idea of stopping the harassment from the police. Now they provoked us into becoming a gangster [sic], meaning we were now against community members and the police force. But our intention was not to kill, but just to make a point that we were able to kill if that's what it takes

The leader of the gang, Skapie Mofokeng, introduced them to a comic book about Spicemasher. The latter, according to Molai, fought crime but used tactics which appealed to the gang. He recalls: "I may say he worked hand-in-hand with the law to fight crime. He used to dress differently for his opponents not to notice him, and he would walk behind them without being noticed, and would target (attack) his opponents along the way. So, we acted in the same way – only difference was that they did not work hand-in-hand with the law. We used to send half of our members around and when the police confronted the group, we would come out and smash those police who remained behind. And by the time they realised that there was only four or five of them left, we would be done with them". During this period the gang fought with bricks. Molai recalls "We used bricks. We even got the name *klipgoeiers* (stone throwers). And we had learnt that from playing softball and baseball games. So, we never practiced softball or baseball, because we had no money to buy equipment".

Gradually the gang began acquiring guns by disarming the police. Molai remembers their fight with the police where they managed to capture a gun from one of the senior and the most feared policemen in Kroonstad. In his words "They (police) came to arrest African beer sellers as usual, and that's where the fight started. We started to stop the police. We overpowered them. One of them who was well known "Optel" - Mr. Van der Westhuyssen - we even took his pistol". The gang used these guns to fight the police.

[486] The Spoilers was a gang that originated in Alexandra Township in the late 1940s. After its reign of terror it was finally driven out of Alexandra by a group which came be to known as the Msomi gang in the mid-1950s. Members of the Spoilers are said to have scattered over the Reef and Natal. Some of them may have possibly taken refuge in Kroonstad. At this stage – prior to the construction of the N1 motorway – Kroonstad was the central stop station for anyone travelling to Cape Town, Natal, Bloemfontein and Johannesburg and vice versa. See Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* p.120

In 1955 all the members of the gang had stopped attending school. They were now focused on their gang activities. They began to stamp their authority in the location. They dictated to the members of the community what they could do and not do.[487] According to Molai,

> If we said there would be no train going to Heunningspruit for picnics in Easter, September long-weekends, new year, we meant no train. Our word was final. There would be no train. If they convinced us to allow the train to go to Heunning-spruit, we would also ride the train. But on arriving there, we would make the situation tense. So, there used to be no picnics and entertainment, because we stopped them. Because the community of Maokeng didn't show any interest in what we were doing

And those who refused to adhere to the gang's rules were punished. He continues

> But we didn't victimise the community around the location, but also we didn't want to be provoked. Because that was when we showed them what we were made of, if we were provoked. We didn't mind carrying a person and lifting him up high in the air and then threw him onto the tarred road and leave him there. He would have to figure out for himself what is it that he did to deserve such a punishment

The gang's activities affected the community in more than one way. Youngsters in the locations were forced to join gangs to defend themselves. The junior 'Green-Whites' and the junior Spoilers – a rival gang – were formed and they fought each other. Matsepe remembers

> So we in 'A' Location had to transverse all the way to school to get up there. And this is the time when there were gangs. But gangs not in the sense of murdering, killings and muggings. You had to belong to a particular group. We were the younger generation of Ma-Green-White [Gang], because the gang's name was 'Green-White'. And there were the Spoilers … But these were gangs to which you both belonged and fought. You know that sort of thing. It was not gangsters as you understand them. Shall we say groupings then?[488]

The 'Green-White's' activities reached even town. To avoid being harassed by police for passes, demonstrating that they were employed, members of the Green-White harassed whites in town, demanding, amongst others, stamps proving that they were employed. Molai remarks

[487] This seems to have been a common pattern among gangs. Bonner and Nieftagodien note that the Spoilers Gang, initially, robbed whites in town. But in 1951 changed and robbed everyone, including township residents. Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* p.116

[488] Interview with Matsepe (STHP)

> That Cross Street in town, we used to go from shop to shop and do as we pleased, and the shopkeeper must just shut up. If he attempted to run to the phone, he would find one of us sitting on the desk where the phone was. The police also used to collect loafers; those people who weren't working and throw them in the van. Our gang members used to collect all these rubber stamps from shops and we would stamp our ID's [Pass/Reference Book] to pretend as if we were employed. And when they wanted some Reference [Book] and asked us *Waar werk jy*? (Where do you work?) They would find a lot of stamps on our ID's: those from Dixies Trading Store, Ellerines, Ackermans, what, what. And after seeing the stamps on our ID's, they would leave. Otherwise we would become angry with them for being nosey[489]

Supporting Molai, Tebello "Blackie" Tumisi explains that the 'Green-White' refused to look for work as stipulated in the law. He remarks

> There were these guys called the 'Green-White'. There were gangs, the Spoilers, eh, the Caspers, and things like that. But the 'Green White' was the strongest one. It was the most feared gang around here. There was this thug gang of *Bra* Saki (probably Skapie). The 'Green White' used to play softball and lifted weights. We finished (primary school) in 1959, and some of them finished earlier, and others were already at high school. People used to go to the Pass Office. But because they were a gang they decided that they won't go there[490]

Just like other gangs in different areas, the 'Green-White' gang was finally smashed.[491] But before this, Molai claims, with a tinge of disappointment, that they were approached by the leaders of the ANC in Kroonstad to assist them in engaging in acts of sabotage on behalf of the organisation. Molai is unable to provide evidence in support of this claim.

It is not clear why the leadership of the ANC in Kroonstad approached a gang for assistance. The possible explanation could be that the leadership of the ANC in Kroonstad had over a period of time observed that the 'Green-Whites' were fearless and harbouring anger towards the white government. What is apparent is that the members of the 'Green-White 'did not join the ANC, but were prepared to assist the ANC for payment. Explaining how the ANC leadership in Kroonstad solicited their assistance, Molai remarked

[489] Molai also claims that their gang traveled outside of Kroonstad to places like Bloemfontein, Johannesburg, Ventersdorp under the guise of playing softball See interview with Molai

[490] Interview with Tebello "Blackie" Tumisi, Seeisoville, Kroonstad, 22 September 2009. Unemployed Africans were check at the Pass office for employment opportunities. Failure to do that led to arrest

[491] Bonner and Nieftagodien write "in 1959 the government launched a purge of youth gangs across the Witwatersrand apparently fearing their gradual politicization". See Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* p.122

> Even today, eh, it pains us because none of us are recognised by the ANC when we suffered so long; fighting the apartheid regime. Let me say a friend to Mr. Mandela, Mr. Boy Mofokeng used to go to the same school with Mr. Mandela, and Boy's brother was our boss. So, he's the one who told the old man about us and told him that we were good boys and that they could work with us, because they were looking for people like us. Then they came to us, Zula Thloloe and *Bra* Biza, whose surname I can't recall, to have a caucus meeting. *Bra* Biza was one of the bus conductors in Kroonstad. They recruited us to the party. But then we asked ourselves what would happen to our own name, if we joined the party? We didn't have the ANC membership cards. We only joined the struggle to oppos[e] the then government. By that time the ANC was very angry and said "We want to show these people that we will kill. We are not playing." And we told them they must pay us to do the job and we would do the job. They assured us the ANC would pay us. We said 'No. Cash in hand'. They used to order us to burn those petrol tanks situated there at Industria. Bear in mind that means to burn the whole town[492]

It does not seem that the gang and the ANC went ahead with the planned mission. Not long the gang was destroyed.

After this unsuccessful attempt by the ANC in Kroonstad to operate underground, the PAC followed and attempted to gain a political foothold in Kroonstad. Clear ideological differences emerged within the ANC following the formation of the ANCYL. On the one hand there was a distinct 'Africanist' group led by men such as Potlako Kitchener Leballo and Josia Madzunya,[493] which distrusted and abhorred the leading role played by the Communists and other white liberals in the African liberation struggle. They believed that this struggle should be organised and led by Africans themselves. The other group, in contrast, was rapidly shifting towards a multi-racial politics. It was willing to accommodate and form partnerships with the Communists and other non-African organisations in the fight for liberation. The tension reached its climax when the ANC invited the SAIC, Congress of Democrats (COD), a white liberal Party, and the South African Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO) to form a Congress Alliance. The 'Africanist' wing within the ANC criticised this move, resulting in its leading figures being expelled from the ANC. In 1955 the Congress Alliance adopted the Freedom Charter in Kliptown, outside Soweto, in Johannesburg. The Freedom Charter was touted as the principled document for a non-racial and inclusive South Africa. The 'Africanist' denounced it as a Communist-inspired document. But most importantly, the 'Africanist' rejected it because of the

[492] The Bra Bizza Molai is talking about should not be confused with Wilfred "Bra Bizza" Makhathe, who was an activists in the 1980s (see Chapter Five)
[493] See Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* pp.140-152

controversial preamble which read: "South Africa Shall Belong to All Who Live in It".[494] Simon Ramogale, who joined the PAC in the 1960s and was incarcerated on Robben Island for its activities between 1963 and 1966, recalls that the PAC's main rejection of the Freedom Charter was based on the argument that the land cannot belong to everyone; it belonged to Africans. In an interview, he explained

> The word 'Charterist' was from the PAC group using it as derogatory term for those people who were agreeing to the principles of the Freedom Charter. We used to say the land cannot belong to all who live in it; the land must belong to somebody. And then we had some other leaders within the PAC who said 'South Africa is not a prostitute that belongs to everybody who live in it. I mean, a prostitute belongs to everybody who's got money. And that influence … went down to the youth …[495]

In 1958 the 'Africanist' group within the ANC, including those who had been expelled, broke ties with the ANC. And in April 1959 this group constituted itself as the PAC, and elected Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe as president.

According to Lodge "in December 1959 both the ANC and PAC announced their plans for a campaign against the pass laws. The ANC ... proposed the 31 March. The PAC, on the other hand, decided to call for its campaign 10 days earlier.[496] It had planned to mobilise the masses to leave their passes at home and hand themselves over for arrest at the nearest police stations. Just before the PAC's demonstrations against the passes on 21 March 1960 meetings were held in Kroonstad by some PAC leadership, notably Nyakane Tsolo, to organise and recruit the people.[497] According to Lodge, Tsolo was the secretary for the Sharpeville PAC branch.[498] Godfrey Oliphant places Tsolo at the centre of the brawl that took place between the whites and police, on the one hand, and some members of the black community in Kroonstad. But, first, according to him it was teacher Ndamse who stirred the situation. He recalls

> It was in 1959 in Kroonstad. Can you imagine? We used to have teacher Ndamse. He just came back from America and he passionately spoke about the attitude of the whites. Because remember now we get handled by whites, even our entertainment. He passionately expressed his disappointment by the whites. We were a crowd there outside

[494] Ibid., p.142
[495] Interview with Simon Ramogale
[496] Lodge *Black Politics,* p.201
[497] PAC had begun to recruit in other places as well like in Langa, Cape Town, see Brown Maaba 'The PAC's war against the state, 1960-1963', *in South African Democracy Education Trust's (SADET) Road to Democracy in South Africa Vol 1* (Cape Town, Zebra Press, 2004), p.260
[498] Lodge *Black Politics,* p.210

> the theatre ... He came [and went] to the whites and said 'guys, what is happening? You are treating us like children'. Now remember the whites had the backing of the police. When they started shooting, I remained behind because one of my neighbours got shot not dead. [His name] is Tanta. And [Amon] Mahomane and my brother Botiki got involved and they were arrested[499]

It is possible that while in America Ndamse was influenced by the stance black people in America took against whites who were racist. In 1955, for example, Rosa Parks, the secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) Montgomery chapter, refused to move from her seat in the bus to make way for a white male passenger. She was arrested. The black people in Montgomery, led by the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., mobilised and boycotted the buses until the Montgomery City Liner bus company and the State of Alabama had ceased to enforce the policy of segregation in the buses.[500]

Godfrey Oliphant believes that the above incident was as a result of the influence of the members of the PAC. He explains

> In fact, they were mentioning it was the PAC which brought that, because there were guys who came in from Vereeniging. One of them was Mr Nyakane [Tsolo], who put [made] people to realise that they were being harassed by whites. So that feeling has been going around ... Mr Nyakane was the secretary of those guys from Vereeniging. Yes, they were mentioning at the time it was going to be an eruption of Robert Sobukwe, and that we must prepare ourselves, you know. [The] essential story – the pass. They used to go house-to-house, yes. And I was involved with him, because he was the brother in-law of one of [our] guys. Mr Nyakane was very good... in Sesotho-speaking

Due to lack of evidence, it is not clear when the residents of Kroonstad black locations took to the streets protesting against the passes, and if this protest was a result of Nyakane's visit. However, what is apparent is that some time in 1960 there were demonstrations in the locations, which resulted in some people being arrested. Mike "Baba" Jordan, who in 1960 was one of the people detained in Kroonstad remembers that, in addition to being labelled a *klipgoeier* (stone thrower) by the police, he was also charged for burning passes. He explains

> In 1960 I was 17 going for 18. I was on my way to school *but* I had to run back home because youngsters were ... spreading the information that if you are seen

[499] Interview with Godfrey Oliphant; in my conversation with Botikie Oliphant, he confirmed the incident. Conversation with Botikie Oliphant, Old Location, 11 December 2007

[500] *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, JR.* (ed.) Clayborne Varson (New York, Warner Books, 2001); view also *Boycott: Start Walking, Montgomery, Alabama 1955,* (Time Warner Entertainment Company, 2001)

> wearing a pair of jeans, which was called in those years ... *bogat*, without any question they will load you on a police truck as a troublemaker who is busy burning reference books. So my running back home didn't help me because the whole township, the Old Location ..., was surrounded by police and soldiers. I was taken out of the backyard of my grandmother ... Although I never had any bundle of *dompasses* in my hand to burn. I was just loaded[501]

Jordan spent three days at the Klipkraal Prison in town and was released after his uncle paid a fine for him.[502]

The police's harsh response - arresting and shooting people - did not immediately suppress the PAC's influence in Kroonstad. It would seem already by this time there were some people in Kroonstad who were actively working with the PAC, or had joined it. John Motsiri Coangae was of these. Coangae was born in Kroonstad in 1940. After completing his Standard Six at Bantu High, he proceeded to do his high school studies at Moroka Mission Institution, in Thaba 'Nchu, in 1957. It was at this school that he first became involved in protest politics – and this was over food. He recalls

> We only fought for food once. We only had meat twice a week: on Wednesdays and on Sundays. But there were days ... Dr James Moroka, who lived not far from the school, used to give us some fruits and would also sometimes donate a cow and we would have meat for more days. *For* samp we had to bring something like curried fat to eat with or else you would have it as it was, without salt. The people who organized that strike were influenced by students from other schools because other schools were on strike, except for Moroka. As we were chatting that night … about what we would say the following day the strike was about … And then the question again was … were we going to say the strike was about the kind of food we were fed or that the food was too little. There was no answer … They turned against us, saying we the senior students talked too much, referring to the Form 4s and 5s. Then they started chanting *shosholoza* (a song about a steam train). We marched to the great hall and things were burned. That is where those who spoke English well and were debating were made leaders, and I was one of them … with people like Ike Magashule from Gauteng and Sipho Koekoe. We were arrested and accused of causing the strike. That's when I left school. The punishment I got was that I couldn't attend any school in South Africa. I *was* In Form 5[503]

To join the PAC, Coangae claims to have been influenced by Peter Molotsi "who was attending school here (at Bantu High).[504] Molotsi was part of the group that broke away from the ANC to

[501] Interview with Mike "Baba" Jordan by Brown Maaba, for the SADET Oral History Project, Kroonstad, 3 March 2005
[502] Interview with Mike "Baba" Jordan, for the SAHA/*Sunday Times Heritage Project*
[503] Interview with Coangae
[504] Ibid.

form the PAC in 1959. It is possible that Molotsi when he visited his hometown, before he left the country to go into exile on 20 March 1960, met Coangae and his colleagues and influenced them. But another way in which Coangae and his friends began to know about the PAC was from newspapers. Coangae explains "we used to read *New Age*. PAC was formed during that time then we realised that the ANC was of no use to us ..."[505]



Robert Sobukwe, Potlako Leballo, Jacob Nyaose and Peter Molotsi
(Source: A2945/A.2, Gerhart Photographs, WHLP)

After the Sharpeville massacre on 21 March 1960, where 69 people were shot and killed and "at least 54 wounded"[506], mass detentions of the PAC leaders and supporters, and subsequently the banning of the PAC, the latter was to be revived in exile, particularly in Basotholand. Potlako Kitchener Leballo played an instrumental role in this regard. After he was released from prison

[505] Ibid.

[506] See Frankel, P. *An Ordinary Atrocity: Sharpeville and its Massacre* (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 2001), p.142. According to Frankel, 18 of the dead were women and children; Benjamin Pogrund estimates that 68 people were shot and killed and 186 were left wounded. Pogrund, B. *How Can Man Die Better: The Life of Robert Sobukwe* (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1990), p.134

(he was detained for leading the anti-pass campaign) and receiving a banning order confining him to a remote area of Natal, Leballo, who was born in Basotholand, successfully appealed to the South African government and was granted permission to leave the country on an exit permit.[507]He arrived in Maseru, Basotholand, in August 1962. Arianna Lissoni writes "By late 1962, the Presidential Council (under Leballo) had firmly established itself in Maseru, from where it set out on a vigorous campaign to regroup and build the PAC in South Africa".[508] Using couriers to communicate with members of the PAC in South Africa, the PAC leadership in Maseru summoned the branch leaders to Maseru in December 1962 and again in February and March 1963. "They were told", writes Lissoni, "to step up recruitment, with each branch having to enlist a target number of 1 000 members".[509] Testifying in the case against Isaac Mthimunye and others, PAC members in Pretoria, Keseth Spolani Mdluli/Mofokeng, who it later turned out that he was a police informer and the chairman of the Vaal branch of the PAC, recalled Leballo addressing the 1962 meeting with a revolver in his right hand

> Gxobose and PK Leballo addressed this meeting as the leaders of the PAC Gxobose first introduced Leballo to all the people who were in the meeting. Mr Leballo stood up and unloaded the revolver and put it on the table. ... He warned us. He said we now have to take an oath; we had to swear. We held our hand up ... and the we swore that we accept death penalty, should we be found guilty by the PAC, or its members of giving out information to press, to police ... Leballo continued to warn us that we are going to war ... Leballo also told us to g back to our branches and recruit for the organisation. He repeatedly made mention that he wanted every branch to have 1000 men by the year 1963[510]

Responding to this directive, Coangae and friends established a cell in Kroonstad. This cell, Congae recalls was made up of Kuli Molaba, Bomba Sesele, Kunki Borman, Setebele (could not remember his name), and himself.[511] The cell embarked on a recruitment campaign. According to Coangae, "during that time it was only to recruit membership".[512] However, the cell, or at least Coangae, developed networks with some members of the PAC in Lesotho and this proved fatal. He remembers: We went to play football in Maseru against Matlama. When we were there I took people around, because I already knew Maseru because my father worked there before; and we

[507] See Lissoni, A. 'The PAC in Basutoland, c.1962-1965', in *South African Historical Journal* (Hereafter: SAHJ), Vol.62, No. 1, 2010, p.58
[508] Ibid., p.62
[509] Ibid.
[510] Mathabatha, S. 'The PAC and POQO in Pretoria, 1958-1964', in *SADET The Road to Democracy in South Africa* (Cape Town, Zebra Press, 2004), p.313
[511] Ibid.
[512] Interview with Coangae

also used to visit there with school. So I had contacts there. One of my contacts was Sqwebu, from a camp in Maseru".[513]

Before long the police uncovered the cell's activity. This was after the letter that Congae had written to his contacts in Maseru informing them about their progress had been intercepted. He recalls

> Now the police intercepted the letter and replied to me and stamped it as if it was from that guy. And they put it in the postbox and told the owner of the firm (where he was working) to send me to fetch the letter. They had been following me all the time, without me knowing. In the letter I was just telling them about the progress here[514]

The situation came to a head when after reading the intercepted letter, which ordered him to meet his contacts from Lesotho at the train station en-route to Johannesburg. Coangae takes up the story

> One day in 1963, it was Easter Monday, Goodhope [Football Club] had *finished* playing against Transvaal Jumpers for the premiership. After the match I left the ground. But when I arrived there I was arrested. I spent three years on Robben Island[515]

Brown Bavusile Maaba notes that "by June 1963, about 3 246 PAC members had been arrested nationally ..."[516] The arrest and incarceration of Coangae was the final blow for the PAC's politics in Kroonstad, which also marked the end of black political activism there – albeit temporarily. The government's response had cowed many people. Following his release from Robben Island, Coangae stayed clear of politics, because nobody wanted to be associated with him. Instead he focused on football. He explains "I carried on playing football, because then people were afraid of whoever was from Robben Island. My old friends distanced themselves from me. It wasn't nice at all. I had to keep myself busy with something else.[517] However, in the early 1980s Coangae was to return to politics but this time he focused his energy on the government-created councils politics (see chapter four).

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[513] Ibid.
[514] Interview with Coangae; For a detailed account on how the PAC's couriers, carrying letters, were intercepted and arrested, see Lissoni 'The PAC', SAHJ
[515] Ibid.
[516] Maaba 'The Pac's war', p.295; also see Thomas Karis and Gwendolen Carter (eds.) *From Protest to Challenge: A documentary history of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1964,* Vol.4, p.47
[517] Ibid.



WHAT'S HAPPENED TO KROONSTAD SOCCER?

By Bulara Diphoto

FOOTBALL administrators, players and fans in Kroonstad have seen little to comfort them in the last three years.

Attendances have fallen off and many teams have died out. The survivors are no longer as impressive as they used to be.

Everybody seems to have a different explanation.

The Kroonstad chairman of the district Promotion League, Mr John Coangae, says: "Most local football administrators are self-seeking individuals. They delight in bickering.

"If only they were to speak less and stop dreaming, I am sure we can be represented in the NPSL. Kroonstad has the material to produce a professional side."

Suspended

But former member of the now suspended Kroonstad Football Association Mr Albert Moloi blames continued interference by Orange Free State Football Association in Kroonstad.

Local soccer would be put back a hundred years, he said, if Kroonstad could not run its affairs freely.

The secretary of the Free State Football Association, Mr Zeph Senkhane, does not agree with Mr Moloi. He says confusion is reigning in Kroonstad.

And the secretary of KFA, Mr Walter Mokhosi, says Kroonstad is full of destructive people who are always ready to oppose plans to improve the game.

Some people believe the suspended KFA, led by Mr A P Lefafa, has the brainpower to resurrect Kroonstad football. They feel the KFA was on the right path to improve the soccer scene before they clashed with OFSFA eighteen months ago.

The Interim Committee, which has since taken over the reigns through the order of Free State, have hardly run a league.

How are they going to choose teams for the promotion league now, when they do not know how they perform? Will they pick any team they favour, as they did with Golden Palace earlier this year and Good Hope the year before?

This mania for handpicking should come to an end. Teams should be promoted on merit.

It is only in this way that Kroonstad will be well represented in the promotion league and Kroonstad teams have a good chance of faring well.

Mr John Coangae, Kroonstad-based chairman of the district Promotion League.

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John Coangae, former Kroonstad's football administrator
(*Source:Post, 20 November 1977)*

This became a national phenomenon. Ex-Robben Island prisoners in other areas also went through this sad phase. Simon Ramogale, who was arrested in 1963 and sentenced to six years on Robben Island for the PAC activities in Thembisa and Pretoria, remembers that when he returned to Thembisa Township the residents, including some of his family members, ignored him. He explains

> Like I said that was the time when people were scared. When I came back from prison there were few people who were actually prepared to talk to me. That was the height of the security police. They would come to you – we've learnt about that now – and say 'that is a communist, you keep an eye on him'. You can't say, 'no', because if you say no then you are a target. So only a few people came to me and said 'Ramogale, tell us man, what's wrong? These guys say we must keep an eye on you. What is it that you did?' Then I would tell them the story. I mean my neighbours were approached by the security police and told to 'keep an eye on me' and they should give them a report. My uncle, who was a priest,

was scared of staying with me[518]

The period after the Sharpeville massacre was characterised by secrecy, because a feeling of distrust had developed amongst the people. Matsepe recalls "It was only selected people who remained focused in saying that in order that these things must continue to happen, you had to be secretive about it. Even the word underground did not exist then. In all instances it was 'do not talk' because it could lead to trouble".[519]

The next chapter explores the different entry points the residents of Kroonstad's black locations were (re)introduced to politics, following the repressive period of the 1960s.

Conclusion

From the late 1950s to 1963 Kroonstad's black politics were active – albeit briefly. First, women, ostensibly aligned to the African National Congress (ANC), mobilised other women in the township against the pass laws which had been extended to African women. This campaign was swiftly quelled following the detention of the leaders. And second, in 1960 the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) launched its Anti-Pass campaign. In Kroonstad, as elsewhere, Africans participated. Scores were later arrested and fined. The PAC was banned inside the country. It was revived in exile in Basotholand, where it took a resolution to establish internal structures in South Africa. In Kroonstad members of the PAC formed cells and began to recruit members. Again, this attempt was thwarted by the state when the key contact between the PAC in exile and the internal structure in Kroonstad was arrested and imprisoned. Before these two incidents, Kroonstad's black politics were quiescent and tranquil. The ANC's late appearance and its inactivity until the early 1950s, and the absence of radical bodies such as the Communist Party of South Africa, left a political void which was filled by other bodies.

In this chapter I have tried to demonstrate that Kroonstad's black politics between the period 1934 (the demise of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union) and the mid-1950s were influenced and shaped by the leading role of bodies such as the Native Administration Board (NAB), the Joint Council for Europeans and Natives (JCEN), Orange Free State African Teachers Association (OFSATA), and the Society of Young Africa (SOYA). These bodies, I argue, were not concerned about mass mobilisation and protests.

The NAB was created to bridge the growing schism between Africans living in the urban areas and the white local authorities in various black residential areas. It had no real power to make or influence decisions taken by the Town Councils. This caused the NAB to be loathed in the locations. An the fact that some of the advice the NAB got to the white local authorities were

[518] See Moloi 'Youth Politics', p.60
[519] Interview with Matsepe

rejected left an impression in the residents that the NAB had no powers to advance their interests. Although individual members of the community criticised and called for the resignation of the NAB, the community of Kroonstad's black locations did not take action against them. This was because some of the respected residents in the black locations, the teachers, served in the NAB. This gave some of the residents some hope that the "educated" people in the community, given enough space and support, would be able to advance their interests. But this was not to be.

At almost the same time as the NAB was functioning, the JCEN was established in Kroonstad. The JCEN's objective was to promote co-operation between Europeans and Natives, and to investigate and promote matters relating to welfare of the Natives, and to represent Native problem of trading rights to the government. The JCEN's role helped to stabilise the situation in the locations, and to stifle the resentment towards the government by the black members of the community who were denied equal opportunities as whites to trade in their residential settlements. Instead of mobilising and protesting black people placed their trust in the JCEN to represent their interests. However, in mid-1930s there were cracks showing in the JCEN. Black members of the JCEN resented the feeling that their white counterparts were controlling them and telling them what to do. On the other hand, the white members of the JCEN strongly felt that they it was their duty to remind black people of their place in society. In the early 1940s the JCEN in Kroonstad had stopped to function.

OFSATA took the leading role in organising in Kroonstad – but it only organised a particular constituency: teachers. It fought against the terrible working conditions and low payment of teachers. OFSATA's focus on teachers limited its scope of organising and mobilising. After some its grievances were met, OFSATA's militancy faded. In the 1950s when the government introduced Bantu Education, in Kroonstad the branch of OFSATA did not resist. This was because the leadership of OFSATA at this stage did not concern itself with the politics of resisting the government. OFSATA continued to function but its influence had diminished, even amongst the young and politically conscientised teachers who came from the recently established university colleges for blacks.

When the Congress Alliance, led by the ANC, launched the Defiance Campaign, in Kroonstad it was quiet. Instead at this stage another body was formed, the SOYA. The latter's politics were embedded in the politics of the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM). Again membership was mainly made up of teachers. Hence it has been described as "... enjoy[ing] a certain vogue in the early 1950s amongst the young and usually well educated men and women who attended its discussion groups.[520] SOYA was opposed the Defiance Campaign, because its members believed that it was suicidal to expose the masses in such a campaign which the state would brutally suppress. Instead, S OYA believed that the masses needed to be 'educated' first politically and thereafter they could be mobilised and engage in protest actions. Some of the

[520] Lodge *Black Politics,* p.87

members of SOYA in Kroonstad became disillusioned with the inactive role of SOYA and discussions. Some of the members of SOYA found employment on the surrounding farms and left Kroonstad. SOYA also ceased to function.

CHAPTER THREE

Kroonstad: Post-Sharpeville era, early 1960s to 1979

Introduction

After the Sharpeville massacre, on 30 March 1960 the government declared the state of emergency which resulted in mass arrests.[521] The following month on the 8th, under the Unlawful Organisations Act No.34 of the same year, the government banned the ANC and PAC, breaking the back of black political resistance in the country. Some political activists were forced to operate underground, and many more fled the country into exile, where they joined Umkhonto we Sizwe (the Spear of the Nation), the ANC's military wing, and the PAC's POQO, later renamed the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA). This turn of events caused the National Party (NP) government to believe that it had normalised the political situation in the country. This was further enhanced by the economic boom that followed. But in reality the political situation was farther from normal.[522]

This chapter explores the different entry points through which the residents of Kroonstad's black residential areas were introduced to politics, following the repressive period of the 1960s. I argue that it was through the Black Consciousness (BC)-oriented South African Student Organisation (SASO), the BC-influenced teachers, the Maokeng Student Art Club (MASAC), also BC-aligned; and the Christian-oriented Young Christian Workers (YCW), which is almost totally neglected in the literature.[523] Finally, it was through the BCM activist banished to Kroonstad. These played a crucial role in politicising the residents, especially students and young people in Maokeng and Brentpark. However, most significantly in Maokeng, unlike many other areas, many of the students and young people who were introduced to politics either through the BC inclined organisations or the Christian-oriented institutions in the 1970s did not continue their

[521] Some 18 000 people were arrested, and more than 11 000 of them were detained under the emergency regulations. Most were released within one or two months, but 400 were held in custody until the state of emergency was lifted. See, Fullard, M. 'State Repression in the 1960s', in SADET *The Road to Democracy,* Vol. 1, 1960-1970 (Cape Town, Zebra Press, 2004), p.344

[522] See, for example, Houston, G. 'The post-Rivonia ANC/SACP underground', in SADET *The Road to Democracy,* Vol. 1, 1960-1970 (Cape Town, Zebra Press, 2004). In this chapter, Houston illustrates the various attempts by the ANC and SACP, sometimes succeeding, in establishing underground cells which engaged in sabotage acts, conscientised the masses through their propaganda machinery, and "... facilitated the passage of ANC members who wanted to leave the country for education or military training", p.640

[523] Few authors have written about the YCW. See, for example, Inneke van Kessel '*Beyond Our Wildest Dreams': The United Democratic Front and the Transformation of South Africa* (Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 2000); Lekgoathi, S.P. 'The United Democratic Front, political resistance and local struggles in the Vaal and West Rand townships in the 1980s', in SADET *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 4, 1980–1990* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2010); Lowry, D. *20 Years in the labour movement: The Urban Training Project and Changes in South Africa, 1971-1991* (Johannesburg, Wadmore Publishing, 1999)

involvement in politics of resistance in the 1980s, at least not in Maokeng. Most of them avoided politics or left Maokeng and carried on with politics elsewhere. This helps partially to explain the reason Maokeng lagged behind politically in the 1980s (this issue is discussed fully in chapter five).

Two significant issues are raised in this chapter. First, it is the neglected issue of the spread of the 1976 student revolt outside of the Witwatersrand and other big cities like Cape Town and the Eastern Cape.[524] An attempt has been made to demonstrate the factors which caused the spread of the student revolt to some of the small towns in the Orange Free State, particularly in the northern Orange Free State. And second, Maokeng, in relation to student and youth politicisation, offers a fascinating local study which is at least partly reproduced elsewhere.

The 'lull' period

To effectively restrain black political resistance, the NP government enacted a barrage of laws, according to Madeleine Fullard "… to constrain both organizations and individuals during the 1960s."[525] She lists seven laws which the government passed between 1960 and 1967. These were: firstly the Unlawful Organisations Act, mentioned above. "Throughout the 1960s", Fullard notes, "the membership of an illegal organization would be the most common charge faced by thousands of ordinary members and supporters of the two organizations".[526] In 1961, the General Law Amendment Act, No.39, was enacted. It criminalized the organization of prohibited gatherings and created a presumption of guilt regarding intimidation charges".[527] This was followed by the General Law Amendment Act, No.76 (or the 'Sabotage Act') of 1962, which made sabotage an offence, "for which the penalties were the same as for treason, including death penalty".[528] In the following year the government enacted the General Law Amendment Act, No.37, commonly termed 'Ninety Day Law'. This authorised the detention of any person suspected of a political crime for a period of 90 days without access to a lawyer. According to Fullard "within the first eight months of the Act being enforced, 682 persons were detained".[529]

The remaining three laws included a Law which prohibited and penalized undergoing military training. The Criminal Procedure Amendment Act, No.96 – replacing the 'Ninety Day Law,' which doubled the period of detention to 180 days. "By 1968, Fullard writes, "almost 400 people

[524] According to Helena Pohlandt-McCormick, "within two months after June 16, violence had swept into 80 African communities, townships, and rural areas". Pohlandt-McCormick, H. "I saw a nightmare …": 'Doing Violence to memory – The Soweto Uprising, June 16, 1976'(USA, University of Minnesota, 1999), p.6
[525] Fullard 'State repression', p.342
[526] Ibid., p.344; The penalty for being a member of an illegal organisation was imprisonment for up to 10 years. See Magubane, B. et al. 'The turn to armed struggle' in SADET *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, *Volume 4*, *1980–1990* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2010), p.70
[527] Fullard 'State repression', p.345
[528] Ibid.
[529] Ibid.

had been detained under this law".[530]And finally, the Terrorism Act of 1967. It was built upon the provisions of the Sabotage Act and the detention laws. It authorized detention without trial for an indefinite period.[531] These laws, as could be expected, cowed many people. Tsiu Vincent Matsepe, who in 1967 was 19 years old, recalls that in the 1960s he was attending clandestine political meetings in Maokeng, and because of repression some of the people he interacted with in these meetings suddenly disappeared. He explains

> … With regard to meetings which were held one cannot see them as formal meetings in the sense that you would say agendas are being sent out and so on. It was occasions that you find yourself in, which [we]re in essence gatherings which were brought about without your knowledge … Such gatherings became fewer the more the repression there was and the more people [we]re afraid, and the more people [we]re suspicious of each other. And at the time *there were* those who would suddenly not be there in your midst … I remember Zula Tlholoe ... who must have also left the country during about that time and went into exile. We knew as children that he was one of the people who had left because of having to join the liberation struggle. It was not even called the liberation. It was 'I'm going to join the struggle against oppression'[532]

The government's draconian steps were further complemented by the economic boom of the 1960s. During this period many black people found employment and their focus shifted from politics to eking out a living.

At the close of the 1960s, a significant number of the residents of Kroonstad's black locations were employed. Setiloane writes "while in the 1930s and 1940s job opportunities were scarce and those Maokeng residents who were not teachers, ministers of churches or traders could only find employment at the railways, on roads, the milling company, in doing menial jobs in the white suburbs, in shops, and on the neighbouring farms".[533] However by the 1960s, Setiloane adds, "Kroonstad town had grown tremendously. There were more shops, more garages, more restaurants, more hotels and more suburbs".[534] In addition, he notes, "factories which were non-existent in the 1930s and 1940s had now sprung up. Job opportunities were numerous. People could also find employment in the police force, the prison department and at the municipal

[530] Ibid.,p.347
[531] Ibid.
[532] Interview with Tsiu Vincent Matsepe (LHPR), Welkom, 15 April 2008 (Italics my emphasis); In the previous chapter Ditheko Josias 'Magula' Molai described how Zula Thloloe and some of the members of the ANC in Kroonstad tried to recruit them, the Green White Gang, to participate in the sabotage acts. See interview with Molai
[533] Setiloane *The History,* p.138
[534] Ibid.

offices".[535] According to the Braby's Directory, between 1950 and 1951 about 85 trades and professions were practised in Kroonstad.[536] In the 1960s, these must have doubled as a result of the economic boom.

According to Bonner and Nieftagodien "the 1960s saw the biggest economic boom South Africa had ever known. Huge amounts of foreign investment flooded into the country propelling an annual rate of economic growth of 9.3%."[537] Bonner and Segal, in their study of Soweto, write "Companies such as Ford, Volkswagen, Colgate and Gillette either invested directly in South Africa for the fist time or massively expanded the scale of their operations. Cash registers jingled: boom time had arrived".[538] For Bonner and Segal, this precipitated the growth in wage earners per family. According to them these increased from 1.3 to 2.2 between 1956 and 1968.[539] Likewise for Jonathan Hyslop "the 1960s saw phenomenal increases in employment. In manufacturing, the number of employees of all races soared from 653 000 in 1960 to 1 069 000 in 1970".[540]

The economic boom contributed to the deadening political activity in Kroonstad's black locations. People turned their attention to finding employment in order to better their lives and their families. Not even the teachers at Bodibeng High School in the 1960s dared to venture into politics, excluding the exceptional few.[541] Marobo Jacob Ramotsoela, who was born in 1947 on a farm in Heuningspruit, completed his matric at Bodibeng High in 1969 and started teaching in 1972 as an assistant teacher, compares the way they were taught in the 1960s to the method he used to teach in the 1970s. He claims that in the 1970s he sometimes discussed politics with his students when he was teaching and this was something unheard of in the 1960s. He remarks

> I can do a little bit of comparison. It was a bit different from the way I was teaching, because when I started teaching I was conscientised. I knew that our kids needed the type of education I could give; not only education as far as a subject matter was concerned, but generally. I needed to tell them about politics. I used to tell them about the apartheid situation. Whereas, with us teaching was rote learning: you do

[535] Ibid.
[536] Braby's 1950-1951: Orange Free State and Kimberley Directory
[537] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathotus*, p.63
[538] Bonner and Segal *Soweto,* p.57
[539] Ibid.
[540] Hyslop, J. 'Schools, Unemployment and Youth: Origins and Significance of Student and Youth Movements, 1976-1987', in Bill Nasson and John Samuel (eds.) *Education: From Poverty to Liberty,* (Cape Town and Johannesburg, David Philip, 1990), p.81
[541] Economic boom might have contributed to most of the teachers avoiding politics. But it is important to note that, following the enactment of the Bantu Education Act, in 1955 a regulation was issued virtually forbidding teachers to voice their political views. "Teachers could be dismissed or demoted", writes Nozipho Diseko "for making public any unfavourable comments on government policy of matters relating to the Bantu Authorities, school boards and committees". Diseko, N. 'The Origins and Development of the South African Students' Movement (SASM): 1968-1976', in *Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol.18.No.1, March 1991,* P.47

> Mathematics, you move out. Another teacher comes in. He does Woodwork with you and then out. That type of thing. They could not say a single word about [Dr Hendrik] Verwoerd or Bantu Education[542]

Similarly, Tsiu (Oupa) Matsepe, who also completed his matric in 1969 at Bodibeng High, recalls that his parents Dorrington and Violet Matsepe, both teachers, were also wary of politics to the extent of trying to discourage him from studying law. He remembers "even the thought of studying law for me was like "No, no, no, *o tla tsoarwa* (you'll be arrested) just like [Nelson] Mandela. You must concentrate on education only".[543] Echoing Matsepe, Mpopetsi Dhlamini remembers that Dorrington Matsepe, who also dabbled in football administration, reprimanded him for involving himself in political activities. He explains

> There was a guy called Makoba Moleme from Bloemfontein. This guy, I remember in 1969, he conscientised us to form branches of the ANC. I was with Sampie Mohohlo. But *this* was short lived, because I don't know how these people knew that this guy was here. The Special Branch took us away. Now with me … because I was a man of football, these elderly people like [Dorrington] Matsepe were like "How come you involve yourself with all those things? You are such a young good boy. Forget about those things. This guy from Bloemfontein comes with nonsense here[544]

The attempt by Moleme, Dhlamini and Mohohlo to form the branch of the ANC in Kroonstad during this period deserves some explanation. It is likely that Moleme recruited Dhlamini and Mohohlo to form a cell (or an underground unit) and not a branch of the ANC – a point Dhlamini acknowledges.[545] An aboveground branch could have easily drawn the attention of members of the Security Branch (SB). During this period ANC members preferred to operate underground to conceal their activities.[546] This was after the security police had, initially, swooped on the ANC and MK activists in 1964 and 1965,[547] and again in May and June 1969. Writing about the second wave of arrests, Houston notes "A coordinated countrywide swoop began in the early hours of 12 May, and continued for almost two months, with activists and relatives of imprisoned political leaders being picked up in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Cradock and other small towns".[548] Although this swoop does

[542] Interview with Marobo Jacob Ramotsoela (LHPR), Kroonstad, 16 April 2008
[543] Interview with Matsepe (LHPR), Welkom, 15 April 2008
[544] Interview with Dhlamini (LHPR), Constantia, Maokeng, 14 April 2008; telephonic interview with Dhlamini, 30 May 2012
[545] Email communication, Mpopetsi Dhlamini, 4 June 2012
[546] After its banning in 1960, the ANC had set out to establish underground structures … instituted to implement the M-PLAN (Mandela Plan), as well as to form underground 'cells'…". Houston 'The post-Rivonia ANC/SACP', pp.603-4
[547] Houston 'The post-Rivonia ANC/SACP', pp.615-6
[548] Ibid., p.643

not seem to have hit parts of the Orange Free State, particularly Bloemfontein, activists there would have read about it in the national newspapers such as *The World.*[549] Therefore, they would have been very cautious not to expose themselves.

Dhlamini recalls that his friendship to Moleme dates back to 1952 when he was sent to Bloemfontein to study there. Four years later Dhlamini returned to Kroonstad, and the two friends were to meet again in 1965 when Dhlamini visited Bloemfontein. When they met they rekindled their friendship. This was further strengthened by Moleme's interests in Dhlamini's cousin, Deliwe, who was training to become a nurse at Pelonomi Hospital, in Bloemfontein. Dhlamini claims that at this stage Moleme already had established contacts with members of the ANC in Lesotho through his gambling trips to Lesotho[550]. According to Gregory Houston and Bernard Magubane, "the ANC had an unofficial presence in Lesotho from the early 1960s. Among the most prominent people based in Maseru at the time were Joe Matthews, Robert 'Bob' Matji, and Ezra Sigwela".[551] It is not clear who Moleme's direct contact in Lesotho was, but what is apparent is that at this stage the ANC in Lesotho, operating under difficult circumstances[552], turned Lesotho into a base to influence developments inside South Africa.[553] Under these circumstances, it is possible that members of the ANC in Lesotho during this period sought South Africans visiting Lesotho, first, to gather information about the political situation in the country and, second, to pass information and literature to them about the ANC and the struggle. Recalling the state of mind Moleme and his friends were in when he met them, Dhlamini had this to say

> They interacted with political exiles and came back highly influenced by the ANC's liberation politics. And literature was the order of the day[554]

Between 1965 and 1969 Moleme and Dhlamini kept communication lines open between them.[555] Feeling confident that he could trust Dhlamini, Moleme must have broached the idea of wanting to form an underground branch of the ANC to Dhlamini and requested him to identify potential and trustworthy members. Dhlamini recalls that Moleme arrived in Kroonstad and a meeting to

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[549] Ibid.,p.644
[550] Email communication, Dhlamini
[551] Houston, G. and Magubane, B. 'The ANC Politics Underground in the 1970s', in SADET *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, *Volume 2*, *1970–1980* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2006), p.420
[552] After Basotholand achieved independence in 1965 under Chief Lebua Jonathan's Basotholand National Party, the latter, through its alliance with the South African government, placed restrictions on the entry of South African refugees into Lesotho, and none were permitted to enter until 1973. See Houston and Magubane 'The ANC Politics', p.421; see also Gill *A Short History,* Chapter 6
[553] Houston and Magubane 'The ANC Politics', p.421
[554] Email communication, Dhlamini
[555] Dhlamini remembered that they exchanged addresses. This implies that they would write letters to each other. At this stage, not many people in the townships had telephones

plan the establishment of the branch was held with other people in Sampie Mohohlo's houses, in Seeisoville.[556] Seemingly Dhlamini and his colleagues held a few more meetings after the first meeting. But before they could start implementing their plan, members of the SB in Kroonstad already had the information about their intentions. Dhlamini remembers

> On the verge of establishing a branch, the Special Branch were on top of us. Besides being visited by a certain 'BOSS' agent by the name of Captain Khoathela, I was taken to Adami House, Special Branch offices in Kroonstad, for interrogation. I denied any involvement in underground politics, stating that our meetings were purely on YCW teachings[557]

Dhlamini believes that they were sold-out "… by some of our members".[558] It is difficult to confirm this claim without supporting evidence. But, as Tom Lodge observes "during the 1960s the police recruited an army of informers whose activities promoted a climate of fear and distrust, effectively paralyzing any political initiative amongst Africans", it is plausible indeed that some of the people who sat in the planning meetings passed the information on to the security police.[559] With Moleme back in Bloemfontein and Dhlamini now focusing his energy on the YCW, and later in 1972 leaving Kroonstad to attend at Tshiya Teachers' Training College in Qwaqwa, any plans to form an underground structure in Maokeng diminished.

It is not surprising that Moleme was instrumental in recruiting people in Kroonstad to form an underground branch of the ANC. In the 1960s Bloemfontein, unlike Kroonstad, had members of the ANC and MK. "Far more important *than others*, according to Twala and Seekings was Caleb Motshabi, who had joined the ANC in 1949, and in 1955 participated in the Congress of the People in Kliptown where the Freedom Charter was adopted. In 1961 he became the commander of MK in the [Orange] Free State but was arrested in 1963 and jailed for 12 years on Robben Island.[560] Again in 1969 an ANC underground cell formed by Albetina Sisulu and John Nkadimeng, both residents of Soweto, established contacts with ANC members in Natal, the [Orange] Free State and Western Cape by couriers.[561] The main objective was to facilitate the formation of other cells in these areas, which would be "… involved in a range of activities, such as distributing ANC and SACP leaflets, recruit people to carry out this task and maintain

[556] Email communication, Dhlamini; also see interview with Dhlamini (LHPR), Constantia, Maokeng, 14 April 2008
[557] Ibid. Dhlamini had joined the Young Christian Workers in Maokeng in 1965. See interview with Dhlamini, 14 April 2008; BOSS (Bureau of State Security), South Africa's co-ordinating security service created by John Vorster, Prime Minister from 1967 to 1978
[558] Email communication, Dhlamini
[559] See Lodge *Black Politics,* p.321
[560] Twala, C. and Seekings, J. 'Activist networks and political protest in the Free State', in SADET *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, *Volume 4*, *1980–1990* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2010), p.770
[561] Houston 'The post-Rivonia ANC/SACP', p.641

underground structures".[562]It is possible that Moleme was one of the people who were recruited to the ANC in the OFS through his interaction with activists such as Motshabi and/or members of the ANC who were in contact with the couriers linked to Sisulu and Nkadimeng. It is also plausible that he was tasked to recruit members in other towns in the OFS. The unsuccessful attempt to establish the ANC branch in Kroonstad promoted docility in the black townships.

The politically docile mood amongst certain black people seems to have been further entrenched by their improved earnings. It would seem that in the Witwatersrand and in other bigger urban towns elsewhere where new industries had been built African workers' income improved. Of importance, during this period the Verwoerd government increased minimum wage paid to Africans …[563] However, most significantly African workers' wage improvement was caused by the promotion of some of the African workers from unskilled jobs to semi-skilled jobs – jobs previously reserved for whites.[564] According to Owen Crankshaw, in his study of the changing relationship between racial and class divisions, "the period of unprecedented economic growth intensified the shortage of skilled white labour since the craft unions lacked the power to negotiate the improved conditions of employment that would draw in white apprentices". "They were placed", he adds, "under increasing pressure to concede the employment of Africans in skilled jobs …"[565] As Crankshaw, however, also points out that, notwithstanding this "promotion", African workers were employed "at much lower rates of pay".[566] Generally, the wage paid to the few African workers increased.

However, in spite of the economic boom not everyone benefitted equally. Consequently, this was to have a political reawakening effect on the African masses. For African workers who continued doing unskilled jobs, their pay remained, according to Bonner and Nieftagodien "dismally low".[567] And judging by the available statistics there was a significant number of Africans employed as unskilled labourers. Deborah Posel, in her study of influx control, notes that "by 1960 approximately 84% of the African workforce in manufacturing was unskilled."[568] It could be speculated here that the Free State and parts of the Transvaal possessed greater numbers of unskilled African workers. Crankshaw's research on the history of the South African building industry demonstrates the unwillingness of whites in the Free State and Transvaal to agree to open up skilled trades to Africans, but instead preferred to have them reserved for whites. According to him, the Minister of Labour authorized the Industrial Tribunal to investigate the

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[563] Bonner and Segal *Soweto,* p.57
[564] See Crankshaw, O. 'Race, Class and the Changing Division of Labour Under Apartheid' (University of the Witwatersrand, Ph.D Thesis, 1994), p.141; Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* p.63
[565] Ibid., p.518
[566] Ibid.
[567] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* p.63
[568] Posel, B. 'Influx Control and Urban Labour Markets', in *Apartheid's Genesis 1935-1962* (eds.) Philip Bonner, Peter Delius and Deborah Posel (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1993), p.416

feasibility of reserving the skilled trades for whites. Although this Tribunal found that there were deep divisions within the unions over the question of job reservation, it nonetheless made an important recommendation. In 1959 it recommended the reservation of all skilled work for whites in the Transvaal and OFS.[569]

In a small town like Kroonstad African workers' wages remained low. A superficial explanation would be the intransigent attitude of whites in the OFS, which kept African workers in unskilled jobs, with low pay. But of significance during this period is that Kroonstad does not seem to have developed into a fully industrial area. Instead, when going through the Braby's OFS and Northern Cape Directory (1959), it is clear that most of Kroonstad's businesses were service providers or suppliers, which did not require African workers with special trade or training. These included hotels, insurance companies, publishers and many more.[570] The few manufacturing factories included the J.C.I., an engineering company dealing specifically with steel; and the Premier Milling Company, which manufactured bread and flour.[571] The other manufacturing company in Kroonstad was Jeff and Company, a clothing factory, established around 1952.[572] Those who were not employed in the manufacturing sector, found work in a number of sprawling businesses, especially those owned by the Jewish community in Kroonstad. For example, Mpopetsi Dhlamini and Motshabi Rakgajane worked for Cyril Scheamidt's pharmacy from 1965 to 1971, and 1968 to 1969, respectively.[573] Others worked for furniture stores. James Nanyaane remembers that in the 1960s he worked for the ABC Furniture store and thereafter the Wynburg Furnitures.[574]

It was against this background that the low wages received by African workers in Kroonstad should be understood. For example, Anna Mampe Motshoeneng, who was born in Kroonstad in 1950, was employed as a general worker at K.G.I. in 1969 and earned R2.50 per month.[575] This is the category of workers that in the 1970s seriously felt the pinch of high cost of living. This was after their situation had worsened, following the economic decline caused by what Jeremy Seekings suggests was "... a combination of an international economic downswing following oil price rises and the chronic weaknesses specific to the South African economy."[576] The low wages and the rising inflation, which caused an increase in the average workers' cost of living,

[569] Crankshaw, O. 'Apartheid and Economic Growth: Craft Unions, Capital and the State in the South African Building Industry, 1945-1975', in *Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 16, No. 3, September 1990,* pp.514-23; Crankshaw notes that that in 1965 employers began undermining this recommendation and employed Africans in semi-skilled jobs. The government turned a blind eye to this.
[570] Braby's Orange Free State and Northern Cape Directory, 1959, pp.127-35
[571] Ibid.
[572] See Interview with Nanyaane
[573] Interview with Dhlamini; Pherudi *Who's Who,* p.34
[574] Interview with Nanyaane
[575] Pherudi *Who's Who,* p.51
[576] Seekings, J. 'Quiescence and the Transition to Confrontation: South African Townships, 1978-1984' (University of Oxford, Nuffield College, D. Phil thesis, 1990), p.47

caused the lowly paid workers to strike in the early 1970s.[577] According to Bonner and Nieftagodien "weekly wages in 1973 were still as low as R9.00 with semi-skilled labour receiving R12.00".[578] Hence when in 1970 the taxi operators in Kathorus proposed a fare increase from 10 cents to 15 cents a ride, residents became incensed to the point of threatening to change to using buses in spite of the inconvenience they would cost them.[579] In 1973 workers in Durban and in the East Rand, an industrial hub in the Rand in the 1960s, went on strike over low pay.[580]

The economic downswing also affected the black residents of Kroonstad. But for some like Leonard Butiboy Mafokosi, who in the 1980s became a leading figure in the council politics in Moakeng, their earnings increased. He explains

> I … started working at Smart Western (in 1976). Smart Western was a sister shop to Sales House … I was earning R22 per month. It was quite good money. I [then] worked at Jeff & Co. It was a clothing company. … I worked for about three months [and] my payment was R14 a week. After deductions I would get R12.83 cents[581]

At Jeff and Co, Mafokosi earned more than R50 per month, double what he received at Smart Western. Although never enough, but the workers whose earnings had improved as Mafokosi's had no reason to go on strike. This helps explain the low level of worker demonstrations in Kroonstad during this period. However, it was not all workers who were as content with their earnings as Mafokosi. Some of the lowly paid unskilled workers in Kroonstad felt the economic pinch. In 1977 the majority of black workers in Kroonstad are reported to have earned R50 or less "… for a hard month's work".[582] It was for this reason that in 1979 workers at the Union Steam Bakery led by Dennis Bloem organised a strike, demanding improved wages (more about this below).[583] It was only in 1980 that the management of the Bakery agreed to increase the workers' wages.[584] After this strike, it took another five years before the workers in Kroonstad mobilised and challenged their employers – only this time they were unionised. The chapter will

[577] See, for example, Sithole, J. and Ndlovu, S. 'The Revival of the Labour Movement, 1970-1980', in SADET *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, *Volume 2*, *1970–1980* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2006)
[578] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* p.63
[579] Ibid.
[580] In March 1973 workers at Abkins Steel I Germiston demanded a weekly wage increase of R1 to R2. Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* p.63
[581] Interview with Leonard Butiboy Mafokosi (LHPR), Letaba Farm, Kroonstad District, 15 January 2009
[582] *Weekend World, 10 July 1977*
[583] Interview with Dennis Bloem (LHPR), Sheraton Hotel, Pretoria, 14 January 2008; also see Pherudi *Who's Who,* pp.255-60.
[584] *Post, 26 July 1980*

now turn to the entry points the residents of Kroonstad's black residential areas used to enter into politics.

'Bantu' Universities and Student Politicisation

Most scholars have written about the Extension of University Education Act of 1959 and the effect it had on the education of black students.[585] Others, like Clive Glaser, have demonstrated the role played by the 'South African Student Organisation's drop-outs' in conscientising students in townships' high and secondary schools.[586] Most of the work on this organization and its influence on township politics have regrettably largely focused on major urban areas like the Rand, Western Cape, and Eastern Cape. Less work has been devoted to the history of this organization and the influence its members imparted in the Orange Free State, particularly in Maokeng, Kroonstad.[587]

Following the enactment of the Extension of University Education Act five university colleges affiliated to the University of South Africa (UNISA) were established.[588] These were the University of the North (better known as Turfloop University), which served the BaSotho, BaPedi, BaTswana, and VhaVenda, and VhaTsonga students; the University College of Zululand at Ngoye, in Natal, for the IsiZulu-speaking students. At the same time Coloured students were directed to the University of the Western Cape, in Bellville; and the University College in Durban was established for the Indian student.[589] It was against this background that some of the students who had completed their matriculation at Bodibeng High School headed for Turfloop University. The first group in 1963 included students like John Taje, Shadrack Kgotlagomang

[585] Beale, M. A. 'Apartheid and University Education, 1948-1970' (University of the Witwatersrand, Ph.D Thesis, 1998); Massey, D. *Under Protest: The Rise of Student Resistance at the University of Fort Hare* (Pretoria, Unisa Press, 2010); Badat, S. *Black Student Politics: Higher Education and Apartheid, From SASO to SANCO 1968-1990* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1999)

[586] Glaser, C. ' We must infiltrate the Tsotsis': School Politics and Youth Gangs in Soweto', in *Journal of Southern African Studies, Volume 24, Number 2, 1998;* Karis, T.G. and Gerhart, G. *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1990,* Volume 5, *Nadir and Resurgence, 1964-1979* (Pretoria, Unisa Press,1997); also see Lynda Schuster on the influence Onkgopotse Tiro had on Tsietsi Mashinini while teaching at Morris Isaacson High School. Schuster, L. *A Burning Hunger: One Family's Struggle Against Apartheid* (Cape Town, Jonathan, 2004), p.54

[587] See Moloi, T. 'Bodibeng High School: Black Consciousness Philosophy and Student Demonstration, 1940-1976', in *South African Historical Journal, Volume 63, Number 1, 2011*

[588] Massey *Under Protest,* Chapter Three. Massey argues that the ironically named Extension of University Education Act was in line with the recently promulgated Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act, which recognized eight distinct homelands on ethnic grounds … This view was succinctly expressed in the Minister of Bantu Education, W.A. Maree's, speech in June 1959 when he said the provision of separate universities had "a very close connection with all the other legislation of this government which deals with the development of the Bantu as separate national groups".

[589] See Hirson *Year of Fire,* p.53; *Turfloop Testimony: The Dilemma of a Black University in South Africa* (ed.) G.M. Nkondo (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1976), p.2

and Elias Rankoe.[590] Taje remembers that when they went to Turfloop they had received strict instruction from the principal that after completing their studies, they must return to take up teaching positions at Bodibeng. He recalls

> You must remember that at the time they didn't have qualified teachers to run the school. So after we passed matric, he (Setiloane) just told our parents that I would be sending these boys to university. They will qualify as teachers and come back and help us get the school going[591]

It was while at university that Taje and many other students were introduced to politics. Taje's first observed political protests at Turfloop in 1969 when Harry Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu (a leading figure in SASO) and several other students were expelled for leading a solidarity protest, demanding the re-admission of the expelled students at Fort Hare.[592] In 1968 Barney Pityana, Justice Moloto, and other students at Fort Hare requested the university to accord the University Christian Movement (UCM) recognition and university refused, about 500 students embarked on a non-violent strike. The university called in the police, seven students were arrested and convicted of malicious damage to property, and 22 others were kicked out as ring leaders.[593] It is unlikely that Taje played any significant role in this protest. But such a stance by students encouraged him to join the UCM and become involved in student politics. Mzamane, Maaba and Biko write "… various upheavals left students unsettled and irritated"[594] – and pushed many, even those who were politically naïve, into the politics of resistance.

Taje, more than his fellow students from Bodibeng High, was attracted to politics. He became exposed to the politics of the National Union of South African Student (NUSAS) and later the South African Student Organisation (SASO). However, he became devotedly involved in the University Christian Movement (UCM). He remarks

> … I know that when we got there and all of a sudden now you are exposed to politics and so on. It was student politics at the time. You know, you're complaining about

[590] Setiloane *The History,* p.160; Interview with Taje

[591] Ibid.; Nosipho Diseko notes that between 1961 and 1964 alone the proportion of secondary and high school African teachers with university education fell by 13.6% and throughout the 1970s this proportion was never to exceed 2.5%, and by 1978, 85.2% of the entire teaching profession in African schools was under-qualified. Diseko 'The Origins', p.48

[592] Mzamane, M.V., Maaba, B. and Biko, N. 'The Black Consciousness Movement', in SADET *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, *Volume 2*, *1970–1980* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2006), p.109; The university's responded by calling in the police who prevented 'unauthorised' people from entering the university. This action caused the emergence of a vociferous group of student leaders at Turfloop, which included Pandelani Nefolovhodwe and Abraham Ramothibi Tiro. The latter was to be expelled in 1972

[593] Ibid., p.109; The expelled students were allowed to return for exams but after assessing the situation they refused to sit for their examinations

[594] Ibid. For a detailed account about the numerous examples of victimization of students at the 'bush' colleges and protests against these by students, see Mzamane, Maaba and Biko 'The Black Consciousness'

> food. Later on NUSAS came … Now it started mobilizing. It was mostly fellows from Wits (University of the Witwatersrand), UNISA … Ultimately, these fellows, black fellows, also came: the SASO fellows. Ultimately, we decided as a student body that we were going to support SASO. Of course, we were still supporting NUSAS. I remember we used to have meetings and so on. Then there was the UCM. I was the chairman[595]

The University Christian Movement (UCM) was formed in 1967, following the disbandment of the Student Christian Association (SCM) in 1965. Although it was a multi-racial movement, UCM attracted a majority of blacks. Describing it in 1972, members of the UCM said

> The formation of the University Christian Movement in 1967 gave black students a greater chance of coming together. Because of its more radical stance, and also because at that stage it had not developed a 'bad' complexion politically in the eyes of the black campus authorities. UCM tended to attract more black students to its conferences, and this opened channels of communications amongst the black students[596]

Taje remembers that they used to discuss about apartheid. "How it affected us and what could be done about it? And how to contribute to student life politically …" "We'd [be] coming from Turfloop", he continues, "and then spend a weekend … discussing these issues under the cloak that we were a religious group. Sometimes we'd go down to the Natal's north coast."[597] However, the religious cover up had only a limited shelf life. "The police", Baruch Hirson notes, "kept the members under surveillance, halls of residence were raided periodically and leading members were held for interrogation". "Attempts were made", he adds, "by the authorities to discredit the organization, and in 1969 the UCM was banned on black campuses after only two years' activity."[598] It was probably at this point that Taje decided to end his participation, which marked the end of his student political activism. At the end of 1969, armed with his Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree, he returned to Kroonstad to take up a teaching post at Bodibeng High. In 1970 he was appointed vice-principal of the school.[599] He now focused his energy to the activities of OFSATA (Orange Free State African Teachers' Association), which later earned him the position of Assistant Secretary of the association.[600] There is no evidence to suggest that Taje made serious attempts to politicize students or any of the young people in Maokeng during this period. For him teaching his students was the primary objective. Besides, he noted in the

[595] Ibid. Taje was recruited to the UCM by Mrs Winnie Kgwari, wife of Professor W.W. Kgwari, the Rector of Turfloop University, and the first president of the Black People's Convention (BPC)
[596] Hirson *Year of Ash,* p.70
[597] Interview with Taje
[598] Hirson *Year of Fire,* p.71
[599] Interview with Taje
[600] Ibid.

interview, that the principal of the school expected nothing from his staff but to teach. In his words

> Well, we'll just make them [students] aware of what was happening at the university and what's happening in the country generally. … I think they were positive. They did ask questions here and there. But at the time … Do you know what sort of a person Setiloane was? He did not want nonsense. You just get into class and teach! But we *also* did not want this thing to go out and let the police know that we were discussing politics at school, because it was that time of the Special Branch. We just focused on the school on education[601]

Despite its banishment from black campuses, the UCM continued to exist until 1972 when it was finally disbanded. For Hirson, the reason for this can be found in the differences of opinion between black (largely also SASO members) and white members of the UCM. The former, according to him, began proposing literacy projects and were espousing the cause of Black Theology and this lay outside the orbit of the (white) founding members of the UCM (and many left the organization). By 1971, the polarization inside the organization was formalized when it was converted into a federation of projects, or 'interest groups'. For Whites, Hirson notes, there were White Consciousness and Women's Federation sections, for the Blacks, Black Consciousness and literacy projects.[602] In 1972, Winkie Direko, the President of the UCM, formally announced the disbandment of the organizations. She explained

> … the main reason [for disbanding] was the growth of Black Consciousness among the black members, and their consequent unwillingness to work within a multiracial organization. They no longer believed 'that multi-racialism is a viable strategy to bring about real change[603]

A year after the formation of the UCM another student formation had been established. This was the South African Students Organisation (SASO). The latter was formed in 1968 following disillusionment of some black students with NUSAS' leadership.[604] NUSAS had been formed in 1924 in order to unite all the university students of South Africa. Following the proscription of the ANC and PAC in 1960, and a slump into inactivity of their student wings, the African Student Association (ASA)[605] and African Student Union of South Africa (ASUSA),

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[601] Ibid. (Italics my emphasis)
[602] Hirson *Year of Fire*, p.73
[603] Ibid., p.83
[604] *Steve Biko: I write what I like* (South Africa, Picador Africa, 2004),p.3
[605] For a detailed account of the history of the ASA, see, for example, Geviseer, M *The Dream Deferred: Thabo Mbeki* (Cape Town and Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2007), pp.144-46; and for ASUSA, see Mathabatha, S. 'The Pac and POQO in Pretoria, 1958-1964', in *The Road to Democracy,* pp.311-18

respectively, black students were left with no alternative student bodies to join, except NUSAS. Lodge writes "in post-Sharpeville era the avowedly liberal NUSAS was one of the few remaining vehicles for multi-racial political activity".[606]

However, towards the end of the 1960s many black students became disenchanted with NUSAS leadership. They felt that the latter and the white members of NUSAS in general paid lip-service to the total destruction of the apartheid government, but also were content with the *status quo* because they benefited from it.[607]

The decision to finally split from NUSAS and form SASO was taken at the UCM conference in July 1968 at Stutterheim.[608] Amongst other things, SASO aimed to:

1. To crystallize the needs and aspirations of the non-white students and to seek to make known their grievances
2. To heighten the degree of contact not only amongst the non-white students but also amongst these and the rest of the South African student population, to make the non-white students accepted on their own terms as an integral part of the South African student community; and
3. To establish a solid identity amongst the non-white students and to ensure that these students are always treated with the dignity and respect they deserve[609]

On the issue of the term 'non-white' as a description, members of SASO felt it was inappropriate. Thus they came up with the term 'black' to identify themselves. Testifying in the SASO/BPC (Black People's Convention) trial, Steve Biko explained this issue as follows

> Students took a decision that they would no longer use the term 'non-white', nor allow it to be used as a description of them, because they saw it as a negation of their being. They were being stated as non-something, which implied that the standard was something and they were not that standard. They felt that a positive view of life commensurate with the build-up of one's dignity and confidence should be contained in positive description, and they replaced the term 'non-white' with the term 'black'[610]

[606] Lodge *Black Politics,* p.322
[607] For an in-depth account about the event leading to the breakaway of black students from NUSAS and the formation of SASO, see, for example, Woods, D. *Biko* (England, Penguin Book, 1979); Mzamane, Maaba and Biko 'The Black Consciousness'
[608] Woods *Biko*, p.157
[609] *Steve Biko: I write what I like* (South Africa, Picardo Africa, 2004), p.4
[610] Woods *Biko,* pp.170-1

This was based on the philosophy of Black Consciousness. Biko, who was elected the first president of SASO in July 1969, in a paper produced for the SASO leadership course, probably in December 1971, explained the BC philosophy as follows: "… Black Consciousness in essence …seeks to demonstrate the lie that black is an aberration from the 'normal' which is white".[611] In short, what the BC philosophy strived to achieve was to instill pride in black people. It was against this background that SASO developed the slogan 'I'm black and I'm proud'. Saleem Badat, likewise, writes "The positive doctrine that SASO proclaimed itself to uphold was the concept of Black Consciousness, which was defined as an 'attitude of mind, a way of life."[612]

It was during the formative years of SASO that the recently matriculated students at Bodibeng High were admitted to the 'Bantu' universities-colleges and their world-view was changed. When they arrived at Turfloop some of them joined SASO and began to engage in serious political discussions. They became adherents of the BC philosophy. Tsiu Matsepe remembers

> Then [in] 1969 I matriculated and decided to go to university. By the time we were at the end of high school there was this wind blowing … The wind of black power emerging in America and then the concept of Black Consciousness arises. At university if you talk ANC, you know there was going to be trouble. It spelled trouble for you to belong to the PAC. The one thing any informer could not do is to say you're being political if you are talking about 'blackness'. That is not a political concept; it is a cultural concept that says I am living out my 'blackness' to its fullness. And we would debate issues of black consciousness. And then life became exciting to me[613]

Jacob Ramotsoela, too, studied at Turfloop during this period. He remembers that his political awareness developed when he started attending the SASO meetings at university. He explains: "these meetings politicized us. They used to discuss very important political issues like this thing of whites ruling [i.e. administering] the university".[614] Matsepe, also, claims that through the BC philosophy he became psychologically liberated and thus began to take pride in being black. In the process, he began to challenge everything that denigrated his blackness like the song "Baa-Baa black sheep".[615] As university students they would ask: "Why would the sheep have to be black, because black is a negative term?"[616] 'Baa, baa black sheep' is a nursery rhyme, not intended to denigrate black people's blackness. But, like Matsepe alludes, the use of the term

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[611] Ibid., p.175

[612] Badat, S. *Black Student Politics: Higher Education and Apartheid, From SASO to SANCO 1968-1990* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1999), p. 89

[613] Interview with Matsepe, 28 March 2008

[614] Interview with Ramotsoela; The *Star, 16 May 1968,* reported that "three-quarters of the 109 academic staff at Turfloop are white …"

[615] http://www.kididdles.com/lyrics

[616] Interview with Matsepe

'black' was jealousy guarded by the BC-aligned students. They always questioned the form and context in which it was used. Another student to matriculate from Bodibeng High who was also influenced by the BC philosophy was Mekodi Arcilia Morailane. Although she started at university before the formation of SASO she was exposed to the BC philosophy in the early 1970s while studying at the University of Zululand. She was to play a crucial role leading to the student demonstration in Kroonstad in August 1976 (more about her role below).

Finally, Isaac Aubrey "Sakkie" Oliphant was the other student to be influenced by the BC philosophy. "Sakkie" Oliphant, unlike the others, was not a product of Bodibeng. His political career merit greater attention.

Oliphant was born in Marabastad in 1958, but grew up in Brentpark after his family had been removed to that area in 1959. Because he was classified Coloured he was not permitted to attend at Bodibeng but at Cairo Higher Primary. After passing his Standard Six there he went to Aliwal North at St. Josephs to further his studies. From there he completed his matric at William Prescott, in Kimberley, in 1971. For tertiary education he went to the University of the Western Cape (UWC), in the Western Cape. He recalls

> It was the only one that I could go to. UWC [was for] Coloureds. We were with Danny Jordan, this guy of the World Cup. We were together … [with] people like Reuben Hare, Johnny Issel[617]

Oliphants' introduction to the BC philosophy can be traced back to his dubious expulsion from UWC on academic grounds in 1973. This prevented him from going on to do his second year. He remembers

> I had 73 per cent which was high … I was aware how I had written my exams. I even convinced everybody. I only had to cover 33 percent (actually 27 per cent to make it 100 per cent) . That was the agreement. If you had 60 per cent, you needed to make up 40 per cent in your end of year exams. I was sure that I had passed. And according to the requirements, I did. We were going to 1973 now. I must go and do my second year. I told my parents that I'm going back because I hadn't received my results and those people were not responding. I took my belongings and went there. Only to find the 300 students who were in my course: B.A. Social Sciences, including Law they selected 100. And their criteria was the top guys. So, if somebody matched me and had a point more than me was allowed to go through. No more requirements that were written down on paper. We organized a big protest. By June … May actually that university was not functioning anymore[618]

[617] Interview with Isaac Aubrey "Sakkie" Oliphant (LHPR), Kroonstad, 28 October 2008.

This may have been true. But a more convincing explanation for the closure of the university is offered by Badat. The latter argues that after the expulsion of Onkgopotse Abram Tiro, a former SRC (Student Representative Council) president at Turfloop (more about this below), students at the UWC embarked on a boycott in solidarity with Tiro and other students at Turfloop who had been expelled for demanding Tiro's re-admission.[619] This caused tensions between the students and the university's administration, which was mainly white. Students boycotted lectures. Following the intervention by parents, students agreed to return to their lectures. Badat contends that "this was frequently followed by reprisals against students which took the form of suspensions, expulsions, loss of bursaries, and a ban on SASO".[620]

After his expulsion, Oliphant joined throngs of students who had been excluded from university. They protested their expulsion and, in the process, formulated more grievances. Oliphant remarks

> We started asking for support at the local level in Cape Town. Our demands were increasing by then. We were telling people we have grievances and the grievances [we]re 1) this is a university which was set aside for so-called Coloured people. Being so, it was not run by Coloured people. The Senate - everything about it[621]

The students at UWC demanded the appointment of a black rector. They reasoned this was because "it is an undisputed fact that the rector at a Black university has supreme power … to manipulate and gear the situation into whichever direction he desires".[622] As was the norm, students from other universities, including those who had been expelled for political reasons, converged at the UWC to find out what was happening and to offer their support. Oliphant remembers that it was during this period that he first made contact with some of the likeminded students

> Room 20 was Art students' room. It was the biggest room, accommodating us. Many things happened in Room 20. We were not having lectures in that room anymore, for many months. In that year that was when we met guys from other universities who were suffering from the same thing. People like Terror [Lekota] from Turfloop. People like Ratha [Mokgoatlheng]. People from universities like Fort Hare, Zululand. All those universities we came together. These guys were

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[618] Ibid.
[619] Badat *Black Student Politics,* p.117
[620] Ibid.
[621] Interview with "Sakkie" Oliphant
[622] The students' demand was victorious. In 1973 R.E. van der Ross, a coloured educationist, was appointed the new rector. See Badat *Black Student Politics,* pp.118-22

> interested to know what [wa]s happening[623]

It was more or less during this period that Oliphant was introduced to the works of Malcom X and other Black Consciousness oriented organizations based in the United States of America by American students on an exchange programme in South Africa.[624]
Oliphant then joined the students from the UWC who travelled across South Africa garnering support, especially amongst the coloured communities, ending up in Natal where he and his colleagues met Steve Biko. He explains

> Then one Sunday we met with Biko. We were busy briefing the guys about the fight and unrest at UWC. He was sitting at the corner ... look[ing] clumsy and like someone who was dizzy. But when he opened his mouth I could hear that this man was talking extreme sense. He reminded me of the American guys. And from thereon people like [Harry] Nengwekulu, [Themba] Sono made speeches[625]

When it finally dawned on Oliphant that his chances of being readmitted to the university were growing thinner, he returned to Kroonstad. In Kroonstad he connected with some of his peers who had been expelled from Turfloop like Matsepe. They formed a BC-aligned structure. He recalls

> When I was supposed to go back to Cape Town that's when [my mother] fought the biggest fight. She made sure that I did not go back. In the meantime, we were forming structures in Kroonstad. Everyone was back home … We had KROONSO, led by people like Oupa Matsepe. Kroonstad was now aware. Now we had students who could shout 'Black Power'. And we started to get all the literature. We'd get the whole book and photocopied it for dissemination for people to read. It was more American Black Panther Movement. We started imbibing these things. We started meeting in the old township. Places like Phomolong were quite small and still developing. The people that I regularly met with - and we did not meet daily; we didn't want to attract attention – Matsepe, Nanaile Lefafa, a powerful guy. He lives in Pretoria now. There were people like Lawrence. And [Holomo]Lebona, who used to be the mayor here[626]

Before the pro-Frelimo rallies to celebrate the independence of Mozambique from the Portuguese rule, Oliphant's participation in the BC activities had waned. He had been forced to take up employment at Boitumelo Hospital.[627] With Oliphant committed to his work and some of

[623] Interview with "Sakkie" Oliphant
[624] Ibid.
[625] Ibid.
[626] Ibid.
[627] Ibid.

the leading figures in KROONSO having to leave Kroonstad to further their studies elsewhere, particularly in the Rand, KROONSO was left moribund (see below).

The Tiro affair and expulsion of students

Towards the end of the 1960s Turfloop University was tranquil and quiescent despite the existence of the SASO branch on campus. This situation can attributed to Professor E.F. Potgieter's, the Rector, firm but cordial relationship with the students, particularly the SRC. This was evident when he forbade students from embarking on a solidarity strike action with the students at Fort Hare University in 1968. While at the same time encouraging discussions between himself and the university's SRC. This was confirmed by the SRC president-elect Petros Machaka. This prompted the *Star* to report "Professor Potgieter's open door *policy,* coupled with *his* personality is probably a chief reason why Turfloop shows no signs of disorder".[628] The situation changed following the resignation of Professor Potgieter on 30 June 1969, to take up an appointment as Commissioner-General in Gazankulu.[629]
In the interim the university had two rectors. First, it was Professor F.J. Engelbrecht, who took over briefly only to relinquish this position because of ill-health. He was replaced by Professor M.J. Louw. On 1 December 1969, Professor J.L. Boschoff assumed duty as rector.[630] Professor Boschoff was born in Utrecht, Natal, where he received his school education until he matriculated in 1933. He then enrolled with the Natal University College. On completing his training as a teacher, having passed the higher education diploma, he obtained the Master's (M.A.) degree in history in 1939.[631] In the same year he started teaching in various high schools in Natal until 1957. In between he served for 12 years on the executive committee of the Natalse Onderwysers-Unie – and for seven he was the chairman. In 1957 he was appointed Inspector of Bantu Education. He also served as a member of the council of the University of Natal. As Inspector he served for six years as a member of the examination board and was also chairman of the Afrikaans subject committee. In addition, he was also a member of the council of the Fort Hare University for many years.[632] Boschoff administered the university in a heavy-handed manner.

Students at Turfloop had been angered by two incidents. First, it was the government's proclamation of the university-colleges as automous. "Parliament promulgated the University of the North Act 47 of 1969", writes Abram Mawasha, "which came into effect on 1 January

[628] *The Star, 14 September 1968* (Italics my emphasis)
[629] Mawasha, A. L. 'Turfloop: Where an idea was expressed, hijacked and redeemed', in Mokubung Nkomo, Derrick Swartz and Botshelo Maja (eds.) *Within the Realm of Possibility: From Disadvantage to Development at the University of Fort Hare and the University of the North* (Cape Town, Human Sciences Research Council, 2006), P.71
[630] Ibid.
[631] *The Star, 1 October 1969*
[632] Ibid.

1970".[633] "The Act", he continues, "changed the status of the University College of the North to that of University of the North (UNIN), ending UNISA's ten-year academic trusteeship".[634] In spite of this, much of the *status quo* remained. Whites continued to control the university. For example, three quarters of the 109 academic staff were white.[635] Furthermore, in spite of the fully-fledged status accorded the university, the state maintained tight control over the institution. The university could not borrow money without the approval of the Minister.[636] This prompted the students to view the changes as cosmetic only. They contended that if the university belonged to blacks, it had to bear the stamp of black authority.[637]

And second, students were angered by the investiture of Dr W.W.W. Eiselen as the first chancellor of the university. According to Mawasha, on 1 May 1970 the University Council unanimously elected Dr Eiselen, then Commissioner-General of the Northern Sotho Ethnic Group as the chancellor.[638] But what probably angered the students the most was the Council's decision to elect Dr Eiselen who was directly responsible for the passage of the Bantu Education Act of 1953, which led to the implementation of the much-despised Bantu Education system.[639] To curb any protests by the students, the university banned protest - peaceful or violent - on campus.[640] This further fuelled the students' anger and frustration, especially at having decisions imposed on them by the rector and the Council. The situation came to a head in 1972.

In 1972 Turfloop University was closed, following a strike action by the students after the expulsion of Onkgopotse Tiro because of his politically-loaded speech at a graduation ceremony at the university on 29 April.[641] Tiro, a former SRC president and member of SASO, had been asked by the graduating class to represent them at the graduation ceremony.[642] To appreciate Tiro's speech, it is worth studying briefly his career. According to Butler "Tiro was no stranger to politics; indeed his short life was a compressed history of relentless political struggle".[643] He had been born on 9 November 1945 in a small village of Dinokana in the northwest of South Africa. He was forced to leave school at primary level following the strike against the imposition of passes on women. This caused Tiro to work as a child labourer on a manganese mine. He left Dinokana to continue his schooling in Soweto, but was arrested for failure to produce a pass. He

[633] Mawasha 'Turfloop', p.71
[634] Ibid.
[635] *Star, 16 May 1968*
[636] Ibid.
[637] *Turfloop Testimony,* p.4
[638] Mawasha 'Turfloop', p.71
[639] Ibid.; *Rand Daily Mail, 12 March 1971*
[640] *The Star, 16 February 1971*
[641] UWL HLP A2176 SASO Collection, 'Speech by Onkgopotse Tiro'
[642] Butler, A. *Cyril Ramaphosa* (Auckland Park, Jacana Media, 2007), p.46
[643] Ibid.

returned to the northwest and went to Mafikeng to finish his schooling. At university his life was dominated by debate and organization.[644]

When he took the podium to make his speech, Tiro, unlike the speakers the university usually invited to make presentations at the graduation ceremonies, who Ruel Khoza, a former student at Turfloop, described as "… custodians of the ideology of the time", launched a breathtaking attack on the university administration and the apartheid system in general.[645] On 2 May (1972) the all-white disciplinary committee expelled Tiro. It reasoned that Tiro was expelled because he "… chose a wrong occasion to give the type of speech he gave, and so embarrassed the authorities".[646] A student petition for his reinstatement was rejected and the students boycotted lectures. 1 146 students were expelled,[647] and others were suspended. Matsepe was among the expelled students. Ramotsoela was suspended. They both returned to their hometown, Kroonstad.[648]

In the early 1970s wholesale restructuring took place in the teaching staff of Bodibeng High. In 1972 Setiloane recorded the shortage of two teachers in the school's logbook.[649] Although the school has always generally striven to employ qualified teachers, like many other urban schools, they were now experiencing a shortage. "The shortage of teachers", Hyslop argues, "was partly created by the government's application of influx control to qualified people who would otherwise have accepted posts [in urban areas]."[650] For Nozipho Diseko, the ceiling on teachers' salaries was also a contributing factor. She argues "… by 1970 a male African secondary school teacher with a matriculation certificate and a teaching diploma received on average R145.00 per month, while his counterparts in the engineering and printing sectors were paid R228.00 and R268.00 per month respectively".[651] To overcome this problem, the principal and the school's committee of Bodibeng High employed some of its former students. It was against this background that Matsepe and Ramotsoela were employed at Bodibeng as assistant teachers. Matsepe taught General Science and Ramotsoela Mathematics.[652] Ramotsoela recalls

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[644] Ibid., pp.46-7

[645] UWL HLP A2176 (7.2) SASO Collection 'Speech by Onkgopotse Ramothibi Tiro'

[646] *Turfloop Testimony,* p.6

[647] Hirson *Year of Fire,* p.86; also see, Mzamane, Maaba, and Biko 'The Black Consciousness,' p.143

[648] Most of the students who were not admitted at Turfloop found employment as assistant teachers. Tiro, for example, became a full time organizer of SASO, but for a while taught History at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto. See, Schuster, L. *A Burning Hunger: One Family's Struggle Against Apartheid* (London, Jonathan Cape, 2004), p.54; Butler *Cyril,* p.48

[649] Bodibeng High School Logbook, 18.2.1972

[650] Hyslop, J. 'State Education Policy and the Social Reproduction of the Urban African Working Class: the case of the Southern Transvaal 1955-1976', *Journal of South African Studies,* 14, 3, (1988), pp.548-589

[651] Diseko also notes that female African secondary teachers were, on the other hand, paid a lowly R108.00 per month – almost the same as unskilled workers in printing and engineering sectors. Diseko 'The Origins', p.46

[652] The employment of university students either expelled or suspended was not peculiar to Bodibeng High, but was the norm in many other township schools' as well. For example, Tiro taught History for a while at Morris

> I got myself a part time job at Bodibeng. They knew me as a Mathematics student and they needed a Mathematics teacher … and a General Science teacher. So they knew I was around. So they sent somebody to come and fetch me to come and teach. During those days you would fill in the application forms …It was myself and Tsiu Matsepe[653]

The employment of the university students who had been expelled from university, or who had simply dropped out of university for political reasons, became a common practice for reasons advanced above. But in the Free State this practice seems to have been widespread. This could have been because not many qualified teachers wanted to teach in a region which was Afrikaner-dominated and relatively isolated from major urban centres in the country. Expelled students from the 'bush' colleges, however, accepted teaching positions in various schools in the Free State seemingly with the main objective of politicizing students and young people in the black townships. John Lewele Modisenyane, who was born in Vredefort but went for part of his high school at Manthatisi Secondary in Qwaqwa in 1971, recalls that in 1972 the students at Manthatisi rioted against bad food. For him, this was caused by the presence and influence of some of the expelled students from Turfloop University, who had taken up teaching positions at Manthatisi, such as teacher Mothibeli, a BC-adherent. He remarks

> In 1971. Yes, that's when I got to Manthatisi. Manthatisi was where we rose; it's where the protests started becoming very serious. You see, it was around the time of Abram Tiro's uprising – 1972. So, some of the students that had been expelled from Turfloop came to teach at our school. So, they brought that Black Consciousness spirit with them. One of them was Mr. Mothibeli from Bethlehem. When he came to our school he pumped us up with politics. I was one of the ring leaders there. We were rioting against bad food ... That it was not proper food and it was not cooked properly, and so on[654]

The rapidly growing influence of Black Consciousness, especially amongst the high and secondary school students, distressed many local – mainly white – authorities. In some areas such as Phiritona, in Heilbron, the superintendent, Van Assweging, refused to allow two students from Turfloop who had been offered teaching posts at Phiritona Secondary to stay in the township. Motlogeloa "Lazzy" Nkitsing, who was a senior student at the school in 1972, remembers

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Isaacson High. See Schuster, L. *A Burning Hunger: One Family Struggle Against Apartheid* (London, Jonathan Cape, 2004), p.54

[653] Interview with Ramotsoela

[654] Interview with John Lewele Modisenyane (LHPR), Kroonstad, 9 July 2008. For his involvement in the riots Modisenyane was arrested and detained for 90 days at the Harrismith Prison

> Remember then that there were always strikes at the University of the North by students. So some of the students, Thlapane and Sefuthela, arrived in Phiritona to take up teaching posts but the Superintendent refused them permission to stay here, claiming that would bring bad influence to the students and other people in the township. So he chased them away[655]

In Kroonstad, Ramotsoela and Matsepe were under constant police surveillance. Some of the students Matsepe taught recall that he was continuously taken to the police station for questioning. Theletsane Mokhele, who was in Matsepe's Form 2 class, remembers that although Matsepe taught them General Science he would also venture into History. He explains

> He taught us Science. But … from time to time steal a few minutes and teach us History. And we enjoyed it. Even though we knew that amongst ourselves there would be those who'd divulge what was said in the classroom. Because the next morning … before our long break or during long break the police would come to our school to arrest him. He would be gone for three days or so. But he would eventually come back. We were used to it[656]

Ramotsoela remembers that after he had started teaching at Bodibeng he was "visited" by the members of the SB. He remarks

> I was visited by one gentleman, Mr. Els, who told me that at the age of 18 he took an oath if a black man does nonsense he must shoot. Ja, he told me straight. I was renting a room. He came with a black detective. He was a detective, Special Branch. I remember on that day I was [listening] to The Voice of Zimbabwe … during the [Joshua] Nkomo and the Zimbabwean [War of Liberation]. I was still a young teacher then … I used to like it: "The people of Zimbabwe **v**ictory is such a good thing". You know, he told me something … and said if I listened to that again, they will come back. I was threatened by that. I couldn't listen to that any longer. I thought if I listened to this that man will come[657]

However, such intimidation did not curb the spread of the BC philosophy in the OFS. For instance, from the mid-to-late 1970s it was expanded by young people who had studied at tertiary institutions, including Turfloop, Fort Hare and Zululand Universities. Twala and Seekings note that, among others, Janie Mohapi from Bloemfontein studied at Turfloop from

[655] Interview with Motlogeloa "Lazzy" Nkitsing by Tshepo Moloi, for the Free State ANC Centenary project, Phiritona, Heilbron, 8 June 2011
[656] Interview with Theletsane Mokhele (LHPR), Constantia, Maokeng, 16 April 2008
[657] Interview with Ramotsoela

1976-1979, Max Makhubalo, also from Bloemfontein, studied at Fort Hare (1976-1978), Oupa Molema studied at the University of the North (Turfloop), 1974-1981, where he participated in SASO and then the AZASO (Azanian Students Organisation) … and was later recruited into the ANC. Finally, Fezile Dabi, a key activist in Tumahole, in Parys, studied at Fort Hare in the late 1970s.[658] The latter played a central role in conscientising some of the young people in Tumahole. After he was expelled from Fort Hare because he (and other students including Elias Ace Magashule, also from Tumahole) opposed the Ciskei's homeland government, returned home and helped to establish the Tumahole Student Organisation (TSO) – but before this they were instrumental in the establishment of the Parys Student Organisation, a BC-inclined organization (see below).[659] Jeremy Seekings writes "… TSO was concerned with drama productions and contests, held for fundraising as well as putting across political messages".[660] Recalling how the political message was spread to other young people in the township, Moalusi Andrew Majoro 'Aluta' Sebitlo, one of the young people who joined TSO in its early stages, remarks

> Before the unbanning of the ANC, I was part of the Tumahole Student Organisation. This organization was established by the likes of Fezile Dabi, Ace Magashule and others who were from tertiary institutions. I was still in high school doing Form 2 then. These leaders involved us in symposiums which highlighted the social evils of our community. We were also engaged in drama and stage plays. In the process of that we realized that there was more than what we had expected. These leaders indirectly involved us in the struggle. After such activities we would also spread the message to some of our friends about these stage plays, and that is how the message spread around Tumahole and into the neighbouring towns[661]

In the 1970s, although some of the school-going students received their political education either at church or from their parents at home[662], the role played by the BC-inspired teachers had a

[658] Twala and Seekings 'Activist networks', p.772

[659] Interview with Elias Ace Magashule by Moses Mzwandile Hadebe, for the ANC Oral History Project, n.d.; *SASPU National, March 1983, Vol.4, Number 1*

[660] Seekings 'Political Mobilisation in Tumahole, 1984-1985', in *Africa Perspective: Agrarian Struggles in South Africa – The Debate Continues, Vol.1 (7-8), 1989,* 107 ', p.113

[661] Twala and Seekings 'Activist networks', p.773

[662] For example, Samuel Ramaphosa, Cyril's father, a policeman and a respected member of his community in Chiawelo, Soweto, would tell the young Cyril stories about the words and exploits of Nelson Mandela. See Butler *Cyril,* p.8; Motlogeloa "Lazzy" Nkitsing claims that he first heard the word 'communist' at his Presbyterian Church, when the Reverend Poo's wife accused the defiant Amadodana (young men of God) group of being communists, because the group challenged the manner in which the Reverend was conducting the service. Interview with Nkitsing

lasting impact on some of the students.[663] This was particularly evident among the students at Bodibeng High School. Upon their arrival the new staff members, made up of young and BC-influenced teachers, made their presence felt. Critically, they broke the long observed boundaries between the teachers and students. Unlike in the 1940s, students at Bodibeng High in the 1950s and 1960s were discouraged from engaging their teachers politically. There was always fear of reprisal. Ramotsoela remembers that during his school days their principal, Mr Setiloane, was unapproachable. According to him"… You wouldn't come near the principal. He would tell you 'you were a child'. It was not nice. Even to see him, it was not nice."[664] Similarly David Lebethe, a Form 2 student at Bodibeng in 1972, adds "Our principal was not only strict to us, but was feared and respected by both the educated and uneducated. Every time he would appear, even if he was a distance away, you'd make sure that you don't cross his path. That's how he was".[665] The new generation of young and politically conscientised teachers, however, not only encouraged students to express themselves in the classroom, but also overtly introduced them to political issues.

Lebethe recalls that there was something different about the new teachers, especially those who joined the school following the Tiro expulsion. In his words

> My Form 2 in 1972 … it was around the same time that there was a national strike by black universities in the country. Your Turfloop, Ngoye or Zululand University. Now most of the students from those universities came to teach in black schools, and there were some who came to Bodibeng. One of which was Oupa Matsepe. Who else came to teach? Eh, … Sipho Koekoe, who is now late. … Over and above the task that they were there to perform, there was something striking about them, which is that they would wear … (pauses) wigs. Not the artificial wig, but, I mean, they wore your afro hair. … They were easy going themselves. And, you know, unlike the *sterk* (hardened) teachers, who would find it difficult to even correct [you], but with them it was always easier. And they would sacrifice a lot. They would not be working your strict office hours: from 07h00 to 14h00. They would be there until very late. Even come to night studies at times, Saturday studies at times; to come and assist some of us who were struggling with our subjects …Now that was something very striking about them[666]

[663] For example, David Lebethe after matriculating at Bodibeng High went to Johannesburg to further his studies at the University of the Witwatersrand. He eventually joined the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), and later elected to the organisation's executive committee

[664] Interview with Ramotsoale

[665] Interview with David Lebethe, for the 'Local Histories and Present Realities' Programme, Johannesburg, 23 April 2008

[666] Interview with Lebethe

Moreover Lebethe remembers that in his "one-on-one meetings with Matsepe he came to know more about the BC".[667]

And Mpopetsi Dhlamini, who joined the staff of Bodibeng High School in1974, working as a teacher-clerk, remembers the impact the new staff members – mostly from Turfloop – had on the learning environment at Bodibeng. He explains

> Let me just call [name] them. It was, eh, Sam Chabedi, Charles Kgotlagomang, eh, Taje from Turfloop. And then Mokete Rankoe, Sipho Koekoe, Rebecca Tlhagane. … Then Tshidi Mabote. And then *Oudag* you spoke to him – Ramotsoela. Well, there was a guy called Philip Hlatshwayo, but he was from Fort Hare; and then there was Oupa Matsepe. Remember some of them came after the time of Onkgopotse Tiro and these guys were political when they came around. Even their approach to us. Because, as I said, before Bodibeng was strict. No, not strict but it was disciplined. But these guys came with relaxed attitudes compared to the older teachers, who emphasized more on discipline (i.e. corporal punishment). Now these guys would emphasize children must just be relaxed. I mean, by way of discussions. But discipline still be there, you see[668]

However, there was more to Matsepe than attending to night studies. He used these to engage some of the students, particularly those in matric. In his words

> When I came back from university I was almost the age of some of the students who were there [at Bodibeng], and some of my friends were still students doing matric. Although, I was teaching Forms 1 and 2 I used to socialize with them … It was fun to come to a situation where we build up now towards a serious thought about the issues that came out of our membership as the South African Student Organisation, and the mission – specific mission – to inculcate into, at least, the matriculants already the notion of self-reliance, self-esteem, and all the important values that we have come up from our involvement in Black Theology and Black Consciousness as a whole. … I, myself, shared with the students at night studies. Because remember what was happening was that much as I was teaching, I still registered with UNISA. So I'd come to the night study classes and at times then [I'd] hang around with the boys who were doing matric and they'd ask: 'What is going on?' Then *Ke tla bahabodisa* (share political knowledge) in the process and give them addresses; tell them 'when you're in Johannesburg communicate with so and so; and when you leave do this and that. In an informal manner networking starts in those evening classes[669]

[667] Ibid.
[668] Interview with Dhlamini



Tsiu Vincent Matsepe in the early 1970s
(Source: T.V. Matsepe)

It was against this backdrop that some of the students at Bodibeng High gradually adopted a defiant and assertive behaviour. Like in many other black townships around the country in the early 1970s, some of the students at Bodibeng formed the branch of SASM in 1973.[670] It is not clear where the idea or influence for forming this branch emanated from. However, David Lebethe intimates that Matsepe could have been the force behind the formation of the SASM branch at Bodibeng. He claims, for example, that because of his close relationship with Matsepe every time there was a meeting of SAMS in Johannesburg he would know about it and would attend it. He explains

> I remember when I travelled to … what's that? Eh, Rothman's Cup, a football activity around there. But I would not end up at Orlando Stadium. I would end up in a house somewhere in Soweto, meeting with some other guys from Soweto. Ja, that's how it was[671]

Matsepe, on the other hand, credits KROONSO for the formation of SAMS at Bodibeng. He remembers: "You had to be at university to belong to SASO, but you didn't have to be at university to belong to SASM. So we created SASM. That's how SASM came about".[672] The

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[669] Interview with Matsepe, 15 April 2008
[670] For a detailed account about the role of SASM, see Diseko 'The Origins'; Interview with Enos Ngutshane with Tshepo Moloi, for the 'Hector Pietersen Museum and Memorial, in Ali Hlongwane, Sifiso Ndlovu and Mothobi Mutluatse (eds) *Soweto 76: Reflections on the Liberation Struggles, Commemorating the 30th Anniversary of June 16, 1976* (Johannesburg, Mutluatse Arts Heritage Trust, 2006). Ngutshane in 1976 was the secretary general of SASM at Naledi High School, Soweto
[671] Interview with Lebethe
[672] Interview with Matsepe, Welkom, 15 April 2008

role of SASO branches across the country in making steady advances to high and secondary school students with the aim of conscientising them is supported by Mzamane, Maaba and Biko. They write

> By early 1972, SASO branches catering for students in high schools were either in existence or in formation in far-flung places such as Umtata, Kimberley and Port Elizabeth in the Cape; Pietermaritzburg in Natal; Pretoria and Springs in the Transvaal; and Bloemfontein in the Orange Free State[673]

KROONSO was established in 1973 by members of SASO. This was after SASO had taken a resolution "to penetrate and conscientise the urban youth constituency beyond school."[674] Such SASO branches were established in many townships. For example, in Bloemfontein, the Bloemfontein Student Organisation (BSO) was established. White Mohapi, whose political activism dates back to 1977 during the student uprising in Bloemfontein, recalls that the BSO was mainly Black Consciousness oriented.[675] It is possible that BSO was established by SASO members such as Janie Mohapi, White's older brother, who, as noted above, was a student at Turfloop from 1976 to 1979 until he was expelled for political reasons.[676] White Mohapi argues that the BSO's role was to organize students "based on the problems they faced".[677]

Similarly, the Parys African Student Organisation (PASO) was formed in Tumahole, Parys. According to Seekings, PASO was established in December 1975 by young people who had studied in areas such as Welkom and Sebokeng.[678] Seekings contends that these young people used "… their experiences in schools in Welkom and Sebokeng as a basis for organizing on their return to Tumahole".[679] Members of PASO, as emphasised within the BC movement, used plays to conscientise students and other young people in Tumahole about the political situation in the country. Mzamane, Maaba and Biko write "the BCM was active in most spheres but in none

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[673] Mzamane, Maaba and Biko 'The Black Consciousness Movement', p.138

[674] UWL HLP A2176/5.5 SASO – Transvaal Region: Report to the 6th General Student Council, 1974; Glaser also alludes to this issue in his article 'We must infiltrate', p.311

[675] Interview with White Mohapi by Chitja Twala, for the SADET Oral History Project, Bloemfontein, 18 January 2008

[676] Ibid.; see also Twala and Seekings 'Activist networks', pp.770-1

[677] Mohapi notes that the BSO organized students mainly around Bantu Education and apartheid in general. Interview with White Mohapi

[678] Seekings, J. 'Political Mobilisation in Tumahole, 1984-1985', in Africa Perspective: Agrarian Struggles in South Africa – The debate continues, Vol.1, Numbers 7 and 8, 1989, p.111; The reason some of the young people in Tumahole had to attended school in Welkom and Sebokeng was because there were no Forms 4 and 5 in Phehellang Secondary School, in Tumahole, at the time. In 1973 Fezile Dabi was sent to study at Lebohang High School in Thabong, Welkom. And after 1977 or 1978 Elias Ace Magashule had to go to Sebokeng to complete his Forms 4 and 5 at Residentia State School. Van Wyk, C. *Fezile Dabi* (Gallo Manor, Awareness Publishing Group, 2010), p.25; Interview with Magashule by Hadebe

[679] Seekings 'Political Mobilisation', p.112

more vigorously or successfully than in the arts and culture".[680] According to them, "BC cultural workers were student leaders … They wrote and performed to 'conscientise' the people with whom they lived …"[681] A member of PASO who wrote the play 'Panga man' had the following to say about the message the play intended to disseminate: "The play was on crime. But in the closing part I tried to show that crime is just because one does it, but because of oppression and exploitation".[682] In spite of PASO's efforts to conscientise students and young people in Tumahole, a year after its founding it had ceased to exist, because "the more committed leaders temporarily left the township".[683]

There is no evidence to demonstrate that KROONSO was involved in community campaigns in the township in the same way as were other branches in other townships (including the abovementioned) and campuses. Elsewhere branches like the Durban West SASO and the University of the North SASO offered tuition and tutorials for matriculants – and in the process politicized the latter. In 1974 KROONSO was among the four branches declared defunct or inactive because "they have not been involved in any activities up to this point".[684]

When some of the branches of SASO began to flout, such as KROONSO, the task of recruiting and disseminating information about SASM was assumed by the National Youth Organisation (NAYO) and its regional branches such as the Transvaal Youth Organisation (TRAYO). For example, by mid-1973 the links that the SASM organizers in the Transvaal, particularly in Soweto, had forged with TRAYO, an affiliate of NAYO, formed in July 1973, assisted them to access areas in different parts of the country.[685] "National Youth Organisation members would convene", writes Diseko, "meetings of the local youth where SASM organizers would explain the aim and objectives of the organization after which discussions would follow".[686] This could have been one of the ways in which the students at Bodibeng were introduced to SASM.

SASM was established in 1968 (then named African Students' Movement – ASM) by a group of students who attended various Christian clubs in Soweto.[687] The main impetus for its establishment was the need to give a voice to student grievances, foremost amongst these being authoritarianism and corporal punishment. Glaser writes "one of the SASM's key concerns was to institute SRC's at schools to enable students to air their grievances and negotiate change".[688]

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[680] Mzamane, Maaba and Biko 'The Black Consciousness', p.141
[681] Ibid.
[682] Ibid.; According to Seekings, the period until 1977, amongst young people and students in Tumahole, there was little knowledge of BC, of organizations like the SASM and the Soweto Student Representative Council (SSRC)
[683] Ibid.
[684] UWL HLP A2176/5.5 SASO
[685] Ibid.
[686] Diseko 'The Origin', pp.58-9
[687] Glaser, C. 'We must infiltrate the Tsotsis': School Politics and Youth Gangs in Soweto, 1968-1976', in *Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 24, No.2, June 1998,* p.303
[688] Ibid., p.304

The contacts between SASM and SASO between 1971 and 1972 radicalised the organization substantially. Members of SASM became increasingly assertive in articulating their grievances. Mary Mxadana, who taught at Morris Isaacson High School during this period, remembered that "by 1974, they insisted on being thoroughly consulted on any issue that concerned them, from administrative decisions through to corporal punishment and school uniform".[689] The organization, according to Glaser, published a newsletter … that bluntly attacked apartheid. This inevitably exposed the organization to the Security Police. Between 1973 and 1974, especially in the wake of the Frelimo solidarity rallies, SASM was "battered by detentions".[690]

The branch of SASM at Bodibeng was formed amidst heightened security police repression focused on SASM and its members. But this branch was also faced with particular problems, which ultimately caused its demise. Its members were Lebethe, Papi Mogoje, Bulara Liphotho[691], Neo Sello, Prince Mahloane, Lesole Morobe, Lee Noge and Maepa Maredi.[692] From the onset the branch of SASM at Bodibeng was beset by a myriad of problems. Critically, it failed to mobilize the mass of students at school (David Lebethe, the branch's first and only chairman, recalls that their branch had less than 20 members). Worse still, the members lacked commitment. Lebethe remembers that [people] "like Mahloane were more into debating committee. I think he was the chairperson of the debating committee. Eh, Papi Mogoje was a softball liaison [officer]. So Wednesday was generally a day of practice for different sporting codes and people got caught up in these things".[693] Finally, the leadership was constantly harassed by the security personnel. As time went on, the problems became increasingly unbearable, especially police harassment. Some of the key figures lost interest and the branch ceased to exist.

However, the short existence of the branch of SASM at Bodibeng can also be contributed to KROONSO's inactivity. But more importantly, it can be argued that the internal problems besetting SASM, especially the Soweto branch, must have had a lasting impact on the Bodibeng SASM branch.[694] From 1973 until 1977 before it was banned SASM, especially in Soweto, was faced with internal problems which affected the way it functioned. First, it was discovered that SASM had been infiltrated by police informers. Members, some of whom were in the leadership

[689] Ibid., p.306
[690] Ibid.; for a detailed account about SASM, also see Diseko 'Origins'
[691] After completing school, Bulara Liphoto became a freelance journalist, reporting mainly about what was happening in Kroonstad. In an article titled 'God made the world, the devil made Kroonstad', he attracted the anger of the teachers, whom in the article he had criticized for being politically inactive. See *Weekend World*, *10 July 1977; Weekend World – Education Supplement, 14 August 1977*
[692] Interview with Lebethe
[693] Ibid.
[694] At this stage students at Bodibeng were avid readers of *The Rand Daily Mail* and *The Post* and might have come across information suggesting these problems. See interviews with Lebethe; Theletsane Mokhele

positions, were exposed as informers and expelled from the organization.[695] Second, some of the members of SASM were beginning to become critical of the BCM and its philosophy. They felt, *inter alia*, that the BCM's position on whites, particularly liberal whites, did not conform to reality. This was based on the view that there were some white people such as Beyers Naude and some of the journalists who were contributing to the liberation struggle financially and through other means.[696] Finally, SASM's most significant criticism of the BCM related to the question of the armed struggle. Some of the members of SASM argued that the BCM was unable to counter state repression against its members. "Its response", contends Diseko, "tended to consist primarily of harsh rhetoric and walk outs".[697] In the end, these forced some of the leading figures in SASM to forge links with the ANC – some even fleeing into exile to join the ANC and its military wing.

Before it collapsed, the Bodibeng branch of SASM embarked on one of its most important campaigns. True to the tradition of adherence to the BC stance, it organized a boycott of the visit to Kroonstad of Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi in 1973.[698] Buthelezi was seen by many in the BC as a sell-out, because of his pro-Bantustan position. In the June 1971 issue of the *SASO Newsletter,* Steve Biko turned to the problem of black leaders who operated within the framework of Apartheid. In this article, 'Fragmentation of Black Resistance', he … singled out Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, once 'regarded as the bastion of resistance to the institution of a territorial authority in Zululand, and accused him of having swayed many people's minds in favour of accepting Bantustans and the ethnic politics it represented".[699] Although the visit went ahead without any disturbance, and the students and teachers from Bodibeng packed the stadium to welcome Buthelezi, Lebethe and the members of his branch, and Matsepe, boycotted the event.[700]

A year later the president of SASO, Muntu Myeza, conceived an idea to celebrate the independence of Angola and Mozambique from Portuguese colonial rule. These came to be known as the Frelimo solidarity rallies, to be held in Durban and Turfloop on 25 September 1974. "To *black* students in South Africa, in particular", writes Mzamane, Maaba and Biko "*the*

[695] Diseko 'The Origin', p.59
[696] Ibid., p.60
[697] Ibid.
[698] Ibid.; also see Bodibeng High School Logbook, 22 October 1973
[699] Mzamane, Maaba and Biko 'The Black Consciousness, p.128
[700] Interview with Lebethe; Leonard Butiboy Mafokosi, who in 1973 was doing Form 1 at Bodibeng, attended Buthelezi's visit and remembers his address, ironically, emphasising the need for the students to be proud of themselves as black people. Mafokosi recalls "He was telling us that we were capable and we should not believe the mentality that these people were trying to implant in us: that white people are superior". Interview with Mafokosi

fall of the Portuguese rule heralded a new dawn".[701] They felt that if "Portuguese colonialism could be defeated, so could settle-colonialism in South Africa".[702] The government, through the Minister of Justice Jimmy Kruger, banned the planned rallies. But it was too late. Publicity had already gone out. In Durban large numbers of people gathered for the rally. The police responded by dispersing the crowd and arresting the leadership of SASO, including Myeza, Zithulele Cindi, Saths Cooper, Mosiuoa "Terror" Lekota, Aubrey Mokoape, Strini Moodley and Nkwenkwe Nkomo.[703]The state charged the latter with terrorism and they were tried in what came be known as the SASO Trial, which dragged on for 17 months. The SASO leaders were finally found guilty and sentenced to various lengths of prison terms in December 1976.[704]

In spite of this momentous event, Maokeng remained tranquil and quiescent. On the surface this could have been because the rallies planned took place in areas far away from Maokeng and its immediate environs. But more plausible reasons could have been the heightened repression on the SASO/BCM members by the security police[705]and the fact that the Frelimo rallies took place when some of the leading figures in the SASO/BCM in Maokeng were either committed to their employment or were avoiding exposing themselves to the police.[706] This affected the SASO/BCM activities.

Notwithstanding the sudden demise of the BC-oriented organization like the SASM, it could still be argued that its brief existence at Bodibeng helped radicalize some of the young black people in Kroonstad. This was evident when some of them began openly to defy their teachers. This signaled the advent of generational tensions. In 1975 a group of students in matric refused to be punished and boycotted the lessons. The school suspended them.[707] These included David Lebitse, Dennis Lekubung, Jordan Ranca, Philemon Magashule, John (Lewele) Modisenyane, William Molefi, Peter Mokone, Paulus Mosala, Petrus (Thami) Nkolonzi, and Jacob Ramotsehoa.[708] Modisenyane, who was in Form 5 and the main instigator of the incident, explained what happened

> When I refused to be hit in class, one of the teachers, the late Mr. Kgotlagomang, said he would not teach grown men in his class. He dragged me out of the classroom with my shirt, tearing it in the process. I took it off in front of the other learners and said: "You'll sew this shirt and return it back to me." After that I put it back on, took

[701] Mzamane, Maaba and Biko 'The Black Consciousness', p.142, Italics mine
[702] Ibid.
[703] Ibid.
[704] Ibid., p.146
[705] Ibid., pp.141-2
[706] See interviews with "Sakkie" Oliphant and Matsepe, for the SAHA/Sunday Times Heritage Project (hereafter STHP), Welkom, 28 March 2007
[707] Ibid.; also see Bodibeng High School Logbook, 22.9.75. I have a copy of this logbook in my possession
[708] Bodibeng High School Logbook, 18.9.1975

> my bag and shook my head; and when I walked down the stairs, the entire class followed me. We left - the entire matric class. The other one [student] was Thami Nkolonzi. We were about four who refused. They were my closest friends. I had already poisoned them. This was in '75. ... I realised that we were going to get into trouble, so I said we should go and sit in a classroom that was free [i.e. unoccupied] during that period. We went and sat there. The principal came to beg us. He started with his learners; the ones that had been at his school since Form 1, because I had done mine at Manthatisi (in Qwaqwa). Yes, *ntate* Setiloane, he called them with their names: "Dennis Lekubung, didn't I teach you in Form 1?" "You taught me, sir", Therefore, accept punishment." The boy agreed and stood on one side of the classroom. He took the learners that he had taught, one by one. People like Khothule Mphatsoe. He took them all one-by-one. Then I was left alone again. So, I had to follow them. Back to classl, we went. The principal did something stupid by not walking back with us, because he didn't want his teachers [i.e. staff] and other students think[ing] that he had begged us to come back. So when we turned around a corner I said: "What rubbish was this you're doing boys?" So, we turned around. We then went out of the school yard. It was Form 5. It was a critical time for exams and I was aware of the fact that the school would have to do something about the matric results ... The school decided to write letters to our parents. The letter was very simple: "Your child refuses to be disciplined at school. So, we are giving him so many days to get in order, after that we are removing him from the school register." Hey! Our parents came flying to speak to us: "My child, why would you do this when you are already so far ahead? Go back to school." We spent about two weeks away from school. Our parents took us back and we had to be punished ... We were told to dig out all the old tree stumps in the school yard[709]

There is no doubt that this open defiance by students emasculated the teachers of their traditional authority, and without it that they resorted to the 'divided and rule' mechanism, as Modisenyane's story demonstrates, but they generally tended to condemn students they perceived as 'trouble-makers' to failure in the future and avoided them. Modisenyane recalls that some of the teachers at Bodibeng opposed his admission to the school because they were aware of his history of political activism in Qwqwa. He remembers "They did not want me at all. They knew me. Even the late Mr. [Caiphus] Caluza would say: "Had we known about this devil, we would've stopped him from coming here".[710] Furthermore he recalls that when Setiloane, the most feared and revered principal of Bodibeng, realized that he was knowledgeable about the rules regarding punishment, he completely avoided him. He explains

> I had picked up some tricks from my previous school, because I had read a book

[709] Interview with Modisenyane
[710] Ibid.

> about how learners should be punished. So, I knew the school was supposed to record your offences and the method of punishment should be appropriate, and things like that. Yes, I knew things like that. The only thing that *ntate* Setiloane used to say was: "He's from a silly school, because he knows all his rights"[711]

The Bodibeng students' sudden change of behavior confirmed that there was a new calibre of teachers: young and highly politicized. And for some of the students at Bodibeng, who interacted with them, this was a turning point. The newly appointed teachers challenged everything their former teachers believed in. They avoided punishing students by means of caning them. They believed in talking to the students. This had a huge impact on the students. The latter adored and respected their new teachers. The teacher-student relationship changed. However, it was not all the teachers who had been to Turfloop, who did not believe in corporal punishment. Matsepe recalls that some of his colleagues like "Scara Kgotlagomang and Taje used the stick".[712]

Matsepe, more than his colleagues, tried from the onset to make it his mission, with every little chance he got, to introduce students to the BC philosophy. And his influence was most felt in the junior classes, particularly Forms 1s and 2s. Mokhele Petrose Theletsane, a Form 1 student at Bodibeng in 1975, remembers vividly how Matsepe introduced him to the ideas of BC. He remarks

> I did my Form 1 at Bodibeng in 1975. That's where I first met Mr Matsepe. Well, at that time he was still not qualified but taught us Science. And that's where I became politically conscious, because he used a simple thing like when we wrote our names on the [cover page] of the book like Mokhele Petrose Theletsane. He would call you and say *Hey, mampharoane hake o eme ba hobone bobejane* (Hey, fool stand up so that everyone can see you're a baboon). Then he would ask you what was the meaning of this? Referring to your English name. First time we didn't understand what was going on until he asked us where did we get our English names and their origins. Do we know the history behind those names? He started teaching us our own history. He explained to us what we must do. I don't think even the principal would have been happy to hear about that. You see … he would instruct us to remove our English names from our books. He would say *Hlakola nonsense eo mampharoane* (Remove that nonsense, fool). From Form 1 onwards all my books were written Mokhele Theletsane. That's why even today you

[711] Ibid.; Bafane Seripe, a former YCW organizer and student activist in Kagiso, west of Johannesburg, noted that "we were not supposed to get more than four lashes and teachers had to keep the record of all corporal punishment". See Lekgoathi, P.S. 'The United Democratic Front, Political resistance and local struggles in the Vaal and West Rand townships', in SADET *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* (Pretoria, Unisa Press, 2010), p.598

[712] Interview with Matsepe

see that I only use Mokhele Theletsane[713]

Echoing Mokhele, Masiza Mkhulu Nhlapo remembers:

> When I went to Bodibeng he (Matsepe) asked us our names. Then we would give him our names: I am Masiza Sherlock Nhlapo. He would tell you not to use Sherlock anymore, because he said "It is not my name, but it is a white people's name. It is a slave name." We could not understand why he said that name was a slave name; it was a slave name in which way? He told us that these names were given to us by white people, because they could not pronouns our real names. He would tell me not to use Sherlock anymore and to use Masiza and my surname only[714]

This way of conscientising students was pervasive. In Alexandra Township, Jaki Seroke who in in 1974 or 1975 was in Form 1, remembers that his class teacher, Cindy Redley, used the same *modus operandi* to make them aware of the political situation in the country. In his words

> I mean she used to tell us in class … She would just hold the session, and she would tell us about the stories of the Black Consciousness (BC) and Africanism; tell us to use our African names. She'd ask us in class 'What is your African name?' Use your African name. Are you not proud to be black - type of thing during class[715]

And finally, Tsepo Oliphant recalls that Matsepe would also remind the students about the important historical days in South Africa

> Oupa Matsepe. He was a teacher. *Oubuti* (elder brother) Oupa would remind us around March during the parade to say "Hey, people lost their lives because of the passes". Yes, during the parade. He would say it. We would cry during the parade all of us. And after his [Matsepe's] parade you'd feel like if you could meet a white man, you know ...[716]

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[713] Interview with Mokhele Petrose Theletsane (LHPR), Constantia, Kroonstad, 16 April 2008; also see interview with Mkhulu Nhlapo (LHPR), Johannesburg, 15 July 2008

[714] Interview with Masiza Sherlock Nhlapo

[715] Interview with Jaki Seroke by Tshepo Moloi, Illovo, Johannesburg, 25 August 2004. Personal collection

[716] Interview with Tsepo Oliphant, Kroonstad, 14 November 2007. In South Africa 21 March 1960 is remembered as the day when 69 people were shot and killed and scores of others injured in Sharpeville during the PAC's anti-pass campaign. Previously the day was known as Sharpeville Massacre day but in the post-independence South Africa it is known as Human Rights Day; interview with Greg Malebo, a student at Tembisa High School in the early 1970s, recalled that his History teacher, Ralph Mothiba, who had studied at Turfloop University and was a member of SASO, used to narrate to them about Kwame Nkruma, Patrice Lumumba and the African Unity. Interview with Greg Malebo by Tshepo Malebo by Tshepo Moloi, for the SADET Oral History Project, Hospital View, Tembisa, 14 October 2004

Instead of encouraging them physically to challenge whites, Matsepe pacified them and introduced them to other methods to express their anger. Tsepo Oliphant recalls that Matsepe helped them form an art club. He remarks:

> And he said to us, 'No, you don't need to *confront* a white man to express your anger. You said you're artists, paint. Do something about it. Paint. Express your anger through paintings. And if you want accommodation be at my place'. That's where we met everyday and we formed a team of artists: MASAC (Maokeng Student Art Club). Now we started being involved directly in politics. We painted everything[717]

In Thembisa Township, again, Thami Myele, a staunch supporter of the BC philosophy and a protégé of Wally Serote, used similar methods to recruit and conscientise students. But, unlike Matsepe, he also explicitly engaged the students in politics. Timothy Mabena, one of the students recruited by Myele in early 1970s in Thembisa, recalls

> There was a group of people who were from Alexandra who were staying in Difateng section. They approached a few students and informed them that they wanted to form a social club. This is where we were taught how to play chess. We would read and practise drama. We would also have discussions about the current issues. They also taught us to play tennis. I can still remember Thami Myele used to play tennis. They then introduced us to jazz and artists like Abdullah Ibrahim, Duke Ellington, Hugh Masekela, Herbie Hancock. Some of them had already completed their matric level and others were teachers. We realised later that some of them were involved in Black Consciousness Movement. Thami Myele, James Moleya, Ralph Mothiba, Obed Raphalla, Mazizi Mbuqe, and Mike Mthembu were some of the people who opened our eyes[718]

And Matilda Mabena, also a member of Thami's political circle, adds

> We would meet in different houses. Mostly we would meet at Thami Myele's place. Sometimes we would stay overnight. At this stage Thami was working as an artist [for the South African Committee for Higher Education]. We would sit there and listen to political debates. For example, they would ask why were black people supposed to carry passes and yet whites did not? They discussed the forced removals. Why black people attended schools which were of lesser standard to white schools in

[717] Interview with Tsepo Oliphant (Italics my emphasis)
[718] Interview with Timothy Mabena by Tshepo Moloi, for the South African History Archive's Tembisa Oral History and Photographic Ester Park, Kempton Park, 23 January 2011

> town? Those discussions made us aware that whites and blacks were living under different conditions[719]

At this time, the influence of the BC adherents in Kroonstad's black residential areas, in particular Maokeng, seems to have been matched only by the BC supporters living in townships in and around the Rand. In most of the Free State townships the BC influence appears to have really taken hold in the post-1976 period – and in the 1980s it had given way to the 'Charterists' politics.[720] The BSO in Bloemfontein, as noted above, was such a BC-oriented organization formed during this period to spread the BC philosophy.[721] But it did not last long because in October 1977 all the BC-aligned organizations were banned.

Matsepe, with the help of Pule Tom Mokuane, established MASAC. The main objective of the club was to politicize as many students as possible. Mokuane explains: "from the beginning our aim with Oupa [Matsepe] was to give them [students] latitude to express themselves … And then this freedom of expression we emphasized that they should not be afraid to express their views. Now that is where issues came up like social inequality: 'But why do we live like this?' And [Oupa] would come up with his own views and opinions".[722] Among the members of MASAC were Tsepo Oliphant, Masiza Mkhulu Nhlapo, Lephephelo Mosala and Chabeli Chabalala.[723] One of the high points of the art club was Chabalala's painting. Oliphant remembers that the latter drew a painting of a black hand strangling Prime Minister John Vorster. And this, he claims, was admired by all the students at school.[724] However, MASAC did not last long. Matsepe left and his departure from Kroonstad, Nhlapo believs "crippled" MASAC to the extent that it ceased to function.[725]

Soon the political influence infused on the students by teachers like Matsepe prompted the students to begin to question the *status quo* and, later, to challenge the school's authorities. Tsepo Oliphant recalls that they started questioning the blatant racial discrimination prevailing in Kroonstad. They questioned why their parents were forced to stand outside the shop owned by whites when buying (or told to use a separate entrance)? Why their parents were beaten when returning home from work at 9 o'clock (at night)?[726] And why the discriminatory laws did not

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[719] Ibid.; also see *Thami Mnyele and Medu: Art Ensemble Retrospective,* (eds.) Clive Kellner and Sergion-Albio Gonzalez (Johannesburg, Jacana, 2009), p.14

[720] See Twala, 'Resistance and conformity', pp.838-9;

[721] Interview with White Mohapi by Chitja Twala, for the SADET Oral History Project, Bloemfontein, 18 January 2008

[722] Interview with Tom Mokuane with Tshepo Moloi (LHPR), Constantia, Kroonstad, 18 April 2008

[723] Nhlapo and Lephephelo were the leaders during the 1976 demonstration and were detained for their role

[724] Interview with Tsepo Oliphant; see also interview with Nhlapo

[725] Interview with Nhlapo

[726] The local municipality had declared a curfew started from 9 o'clock at night. No black person was supposed to be in the streets except for those who had Special Permits.

affect everybody (i.e. whites).[727] Dirk de Hart, who was born in 1944 in Bloemfontein but moved to Kroonstad in 1949 with his parents, recalled the siren that signalled that blacks should leave town at night. According to him

> In the 1950s when we stayed in Marlherbe Street I remember there was a siren and this siren started at 8:45 and again at 9:00. It picked up speed very slowly – at a low pitch. It indicted that at 8:45 everything that was black must get out of town. There was a guy called "Optel". He took his work very seriously. And he had a black Station Wagon, we called Black Marias. At 9:00 he'd be here and police vehicles and they would start chasing up and down the streets. And any black that got caught was taken to the police station[728]

Although the politicisation of students mostly took place at the school, some of the parents also played a crucial role in introducing their children to politics. Masiza Mkhulu Nhlapo, a Form 2 student at Bodibeng in 1976 and one of the leaders of the demonstration that year, recalls how his mother, a teacher, took time off to discuss political issues with him. He remembers

> My mother was friends to this other elderly man who was a taxi driver. They liked talking about these people who were called terrorists saying that 'These people would come back and we are going to win this war.' I would ask myself about this war we are going to win 'How are we going to win it? Why should these people come back and fight?' My mother would then explain to me: 'You know, these people had to go to other countries in order to be trained to fight so that they could come back and fight for their country from the whites, because white people are not treating black people well.' I said why can't they just sit down and talk? She told me that there are ANC leaders who wanted to talk with these white people but they refused. And the leaders decided to take up arms and fight, because they could not have the talks[729]

Although parents were cautious not expose their children to politics or fear of police reprisal, few parents were instrumental in their children's politicization. Apart from some of the well-known parents such as Walter and Albertina Sisulu[730], the Moiloa's played an important role in conscientising their children. The Moiloa brother, Uhuru, Tizza and Busang, were inspired by their parents in Zeerust. In the 1970s and 1980s they themselves were involved in the local politics in Kagiso.[731] Other students were introduced to politics by their older siblings. White

[727] Interview with Oliphant
[728] Interview with Dirk de Hart by Tshepo Moloi, for the SAHA/*SUNDAY TIMES* oral history project, Kroonstad, 22 March 2007. "Optel" van der Wysthyssen was the notorious chief of the municipal police in the 1950s in the Kroonstad's black locations
[729] Interview with Nhlapo
[730] See Sisulu, E. *Walter and Albertina Sisulu: In our lifetime* (Claremont, David Philip Publishers, 2003)
[731] Lekgoathi 'The UDF in the Vaal Triangle', p.593

Mohapi, for example, confesses that he learned politics from his brother Janie. According to him "I took tune from the many things he was doing. He partly influenced my political understanding and political awareness".[732]

Morailane and the student demonstration

For Sifiso Ndlovu, to explain the student eruptions in 1976 it is important to understand the role of the Broederbond, the secret society behind Afrikaner ascendance in promoting the use of Afrikaans by the Bantu (Africans).[733] Citing Wilkins and Strydom, Ndlovu notes that the forcing of Africans to use Afrikaans was articulated in a secrete policy document of September 1968 titled 'Afrikaans as a Second Language for the Bantu'.[734]In their discussion of the importance of imposing Afrikaans on the Bantu, the Broederbond noted two considerable areas of progress, however, one of these is the most revealing: '… most right thinking Afrikaans speakers today address the Bantu in Afrikaans whenever they meet'.[735] In the early 1970s the government gradually enforced the use of Afrikaans as one of the two media of instruction, with English being the other one, at higher primary and secondary schools. In 1975 the Minister of Bantu Affairs, M.C. Botha, announced that the use of Afrikaans would be compulsory in half the school subjects from Standard 5 (today Grade 7) onwards.

From the onset, students found it very difficult to learn in Afrikaans. For example, as early as 1973 students at Thembisa High Schools were taught some of the subjects in Afrikaans and they could not cope. Michael "Figo" Madlala remembers

> In Thembisa students' concern over the use of Afrikaans began in 1973. In 1973 I was in Thembisa high doing my Form 1. My subjects were Maths, Arithmetic, History and Geography and Health Studies and Agriculture and Languages: Isizulu, English and Afrikaans. Other than the Afrikaans language the other subject which we were taught in

[732] Interview with White Mohapi

[733] For detailed accounts of the Soweto student revolt, see for example, Brooks, A. and Brickhill, J. *Whirlwind before the storm: The origins and development of the uprising in Soweto and the rest of South Africa from June to December 1976.* London, International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1980.
Hirson, *Year of Fire;* Kane-Berman, J. *Soweto: Black Demonstration, White Reaction* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1978); also see, Lodge, T. *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945* (Johannesburg, Raven Press, 1983), pp.330-32; also see Glaser, C. 'We must infiltrate the tsotsis: School Politics and Youth Gangs in Soweto, 1968-1976', in *Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol.24, No. 2, June 1998;* S.M. Ndlovu 'The Soweto Uprisings' in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa:* Vol. 2 (1970-1980), UNISA Press for the South African Democracy Education Trust, Pretoria, 2006); Bonner, P. 'The Soweto Uprising of June 1976', in *Turning Points in History: People, Places and Apartheid.* Book 5; Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16th of June 1976 to the 28th of February 1977, Vol. 1. – hereafter the Cillie Commission (Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand Government Publications, 1980)

[734] Ndlovu, S.M. 'The Soweto Uprising: Part 1, Soweto', in SADET, Vol.2, 1970-1980 (Pretoria, Unisa Press, 2006), p.324

[735] Ibid.

> Afrikaans was Agriculture. Agriculture was called *Die Landbou.* Teacher Molala taught us this subject. The first day in class he asked us 'W*at is die grond?'* (what is the soil?) How do you explain what soil is in Afrikaans? And communication was difficult because we had to respond in Afrikaans. [Someone] said '*Die grond is bietjie* things' (Soil is very small things). We could not explain *'wat is die grond?'* Then he read it out for us in the book what soil is in Afrikaans. But still So every time he asked us we could not understand what that was. [this question] we would repeat exactly what the text book was saying …[736]

Gandhi Malungane, who before June 16th was a student at Nghungunyane Junior Secondary School, in Soweto, corroborated Madlala's testimony:

> When everything started, when I came from my primary, I didn't like Afrikaans. … It was difficult. You see, Arithmetic and Afrikaans were very difficult subjects[737]

In similar vein, Dikeledi Motswene, a student at Ithute Junior Secondary School, in Soweto, added

> I was doing Mathematics in Afrikaans and it was difficult. … And we were doing this Arithmetic in Afrikaans and it was difficult[738]

Determined complaints by students forced the school's authorities to change to English. Madlala explains

> Well, we couldn't understand a thing. [So], we complained to say we don't understand this language. In fact there was a dismal failure rate in the first quarter such that it was clear that students didn't understand Afrikaans. We … said we wanted to change the subject. They changed the language from Afrikaans to English in 1973 after the first quarter. So we had to go and buy the English text books[739]

This, however, proved to be a temporary relief. From early 1976 onwards the DBE (Department of Bantu Education) intended to make it compulsory for some of the subjects to be taught in Afrikaans on a 50-50 basis with English. This was the main cause of the student uprising in

[736] Interview with Figo Madlala by Tshepo Moloi, for the SADET Oral History Project, Kempton Park, 7 September 2004

[737] Brink, E. at al. *It all started with a dog: Recollected 15 years later – Soweto 16 June 1976* (Cape Town, Kwela Books, 2001), p.17

[738] Ibid.

[739] Interview with Madlala

Soweto, and probably in other areas as well.[740] In addition to being a difficult language to use to learn other subjects, African students abhorred the language. They argued that Afrikaans was not an international language, therefore, it was not practical to learn it because it would not assist them outside of South Africa. But in Kroonstad, and certainly in many other townships in the Free State, Afrikaans was not the cause of the revolts. In Maokeng, as will be shown below, the influence of the BC-inclined teachers was the main impetus.

For example, in Bothaville, in the northern Orange Free State, the revolt began on 3 July 1976.[741] This was after a provincial traffic inspector and two police reservists stopped a film show for about 300 black persons before the end of the performance because, they argued, the appropriate entertainment tax had not been paid.[742] The crowd of 300 strong responded by attacking the Bantu Affairs Administration Board (BAAB) offices and a beer hall – symbols of apartheid. The damage totaled about R16 456. According to the Cillie Commission "a number of rioters were arrested and charged".[743] On 20 July, Tumahole was on fire. African students in one of the school burned a class-room.[744] The Cillie Commission does not provide reasons for this action.[745] Recent research and oral testimonies reveal that solidarity with the students in Soweto was the main impetus for the eruptions in some of the areas in the OFS. Magashule, who was already exposed to PASO and whose class in 1976 was the last Standard 6 at the school, recalls

> In 1976 … I was doing Standard 6. We were doing our studies in Afrikaans. That's when I became more active because of that event … The influence of Soweto in our schools 'Away with Afrikaans'. I know the school in Parys where I was it was burned down and some of the students were arrested[746]

Magashule's interview suggests that the students at Tumahole revolted in solidarity with their counter-parts in Soweto certainly.

It was not long before the revolt had spread to Thabong, in Welkom. During the nights of 9 to 10 August, a cupboard containing textbooks was set on fire at the Hlololhelo Community School, and R400 damages were caused. The Commission noted "no … relevant details were submitted … in connection with this matter".[747] In Vrederfort the revolt began on 5 November. It was

[740] Sifiso Ndlovu argues in his book that by May 17 the Form 2s at his school, Phefeni Junior Secondary, in Soweto, were boycotting classes because of Afrikaans. See Ndlovu, S.M. *The Soweto Uprisings: Counter-memories of June 1976* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1998), pp.3-7
[741] Cillie Commission, p.77
[742] Ibid.
[743] Ibid.
[744] Seekings 'Political Mobilisation', p.112
[745] Cillie Commission, p.215
[746] Interview with Magashule
[747] Cillie Commission, p.215

alleged that black men, Matsoane and Mogorosi, incited the black inhabitants to public violence. The latter set the local school on fire the following day.[748]

The student revolts spread throughout the Free State and finally reached Phiritona, a small and quiet township outside Heilbron. Since the student demonstration in 1972, when students at Phiritona Secondary called a class boycott for two days following Superintendent Van Assweging's allegation that the male students who attended night study had spilled the buckets full of night soil in the street[749], the township had not experienced any protests. Youth organizations such as the Young African Christian Association (YACA) steered clear of political issues. Despite this, there had been some discomfort amongst the students, particularly those who were politically enlightened like Mongezi Radebe, about the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. But what seems to have been more disconcerting for the students at Phiritona Secondary was the feeling of being treated as beggars. Radebe explains

> In Heilbron, for instance, textbooks that were used for History, Geography and Maths … were written in Afrikaans and they were not new textbooks. They were from a local white school – old books that were to be burned. They were dumped at our school for our consumption …[750]

Buoyed up by the happenings in Soweto and their feeling of discontent about the situation in their school, students at Phiritona responded by attacking and burning their school.[751]

And for students at Bodibeng High Afrikaans was not an issue, as already noted. However, this does not imply that they liked and enjoyed it – at least not all of them. After taking over as principal in 1962, Steel Setiloane made it compulsory for students to speak English and Afrikaans at school. The languages were used alternately on a weekly basis, with English alternating with Afrikaans.[752] Khotso Sesele, who was doing Form 1 at Bodibeng in 1975, remembers that they were forced to use only these languages during school hours and failure to do so meant punishment and "punishment was going to clean the school on Saturday".[753] As a result, students at Bodibeng developed the capacity to communicate in Afrikaans. Some of them even excelled in the language. Tsepo Oliphant remembers one of these as Pius. He remarks: "There was this guy Pius. Oh! Pius… he was good in Afrikaans. He used to translate English to Afrikaans, or translate Afrikaans to English. Ja, he was very good."[754]

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[748] Ibid., p.216
[749] Interview with Nkitsing
[750] Cillie Commission
[751] Interview with Mongezi Radebe by by B.M. Makhubalo, for the SADET Oral History Project, Bloemfontein, 20 January 2006
[752] See Setiloane *The History,* pp.132-3
[753] Interview with Khotso Sesele, Kroonstad, 13 April 2008
[754] Interview with Tsepo Oliphant

A further factor lessening the burden of Afrikaans on students was the fact that Bodibeng had teachers who were proficient in Afrikaans. Theletsane Mokhele recalls: "They were very good, particularly those who taught us Accountancy. It was Jackie Phalatse … He was a Motswana. Sometimes when he was absent it would be Philip Hlatshwayo. [He] was so good in Afrikaans. He even had an Honours [Degree] in Afrikaans. At some stage he was an interpreter at court, and then here [in Kroonstad] it was only Afrikaans".[755] Taje, who was the vice principal of the school in 1976, claims that even though they had teachers who could teach in Afrikaans, the school, in a form of protest, opted to apply to be exempted from teaching half the subjects in Afrikaans. He explains

> I think it was a sense of protest, because we had fellows who could teach in Afrikaans. But then we didn't want to. … So I think we did very little subjects in Afrikaans, because we would always say we don't have teachers who can teach in Afrikaans Secondly, we were doing J.M.B. (Joint Matriculation Board examinations), so we were preparing these children for exams in English. And there's no room for Afrikaans …We would teach subjects like Maths in Afrikaans[756]

When the Form 1s and 2s at Phefeni Junior Secondary School embarked on a class boycott in May 1976 and, ultimately, participating in the 16th June demonstrations against the use of Afrikaans in half the subjects, students at Bodibeng continued studying as normal.[757] But an explosion was waiting to happen. Just like the students in Soweto, students at Bodibeng needed a spark. This was provided by Mekodi Arcilia Morailane, a Science teacher.

Morailane was born in Bloemfontein in1946 and arrived in Kroonstad when she was five. After completing her matric at Bantu High School in 1965, she enrolled in a number of universities, a subject she felt not particularly important to discuss in the interview. One of the universities she attended was the University of Natal in the mid-1960s, at its Wentworth Campus. She remembers "… At Wentworth that's where there were lots of activities – political activities – in our campus. That's where I became aware of politics. We were together with Steve Biko.[758] Morailane recalls that in 1967 Steve Biko wrote an invitation to the students to attend a meeting. This was probably to discuss the imminent break-away from NUSAS. In her words:

> Now at some point, I think towards the end of the year, Steve Biko wrote an invitation, inviting the students. You see, they wanted to break away from, eh

[755] Interview with Mokhele
[756] Interview with Taje
[757] For a detailed account of the class boycott by the students at Phefeni Junior Secondary School, in Soweto, see Ndlovu *The Soweto Uprisings*
[758] Interview with Morailane, 16 July 2008

> ... I have forgotten it. But it didn't include blacks … Yes, NUSAS. NUSAS didn't serve the interests of the black students. So when Steve Biko and others wrote that invitation they wanted to form a black movement. Now I've forgotten what it was[759]

In 1974 Morailane was admitted at the University of Zululand, after a short stint at Turfloop University. In her words "I can still remember at Ngoye that's where political activity was alive. When I arrived it was during that time when that person was killed by a letter bomb (i.e. Onkgopotse Tiro).[760] After completing her Bachelor of Sciences (B.Sc) degree Morailane, joined the staff of Bodibeng High at the beginning of 1976.[761] She brought her political awareness with her to Bodibeng. Because of this, she did not stand idle when she felt the need to "educate" students about politics.

The students at Bodibeng took to the streets on 24 August 1976.[762] According to my interviewees, who were doing Form 2 at the time at Bodibeng, the students were instigated by what Morailane had said in their classes. Nhlapo, one of the student leaders to be arrested first, explains

> In 1976 [Ms] Morailane was teaching me. She had a hidden influence; it was not open. But I can't blame her because you could be arrested and you would be taken away. Listen to what she said "You are failing my tests, but you attend everyday. What about Soweto students who are unable to attend. I think they only attend two days and they pass tests." You could hear that this person is taking you somewhere, but she is not direct. She wanted to be on the safe side, you see. In Soweto it had already started. After the end of our class, me and Makhema - he is late now - I asked him "Did you hear what Ms. Morailane said? Yes, she is right." But she did not really mean that", Makhema replied. "Yes, I know she did not mean that," I said[763]

Joseph "Fifi" Nkomo makes the same point

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[759] Ibid.; According to Morailane she kept the invitation and in later years this was to be used as evidence against her, following the student demonstration in Maokeng.

[760] Ibid.; Onkgopotse Tiro was killed in exile, in Botswana, by a letter bomb. See *A Blues for Tiro,* a documentary film about the life and times of Tiro. The documentary was produced by Steve Mokwena

[761] Ibid.;Bodibeng High School Logbook, 27. 1. 1976. I have a copy of this logbook in my possession

[762] Cillie Commission, p.178; Court Records *Die Staat teen Arcillia Mekodi Morailane, in die Hooggeregshof van Suid Afrika Oranje Vrystaat Provinsiale Afdeling, 222/26.* I am indebted to Mr Langs Petersen, a court clerk at the Bloemfontein High Court for sending me the copy of the charges laid against Morailane. I have this copy in my possession

[763] Interview with Nhlapo

> … When our *mistress* (lady teacher) told us *retsereane, redutse* …[we're foolish and just sitting and doing nothing]. Truly speaking she said that to us in class. She said *retsereane, redutse bana ba bang ke bale baloana* [You fools, you're sitting here, doing nothing when other students are out there fighting]. When she came in she was in that mood. You could see that she was hurting. She didn't even put her books on the table. She was hurting. She came in and said 'You're sitting here doing nothing, what's wrong with you. Are you that foolish?' We looked at each and we said '*Banna is waar.* She was being honest. I mean, people were dying and we were hiding in our classrooms. And they are fighting against what is also affecting us. But we were not doing anything, just sitting there folding our arms[764]

From Nkomo's testimony we can deduce that students at Bodibeng were aware about what Morailane was referring to when she admonished them for being docile. At this stage students at Bodibeng read newspapers as part of their academic development. Joseph Litabe, who in 1976 was in Form 2, recalls that the principal, Setiloane

> encouraged us to read newspapers daily. Some of the newspapers that we used to read, before *The Post,* I think it was *The World,* and then *The Post.* By reading these newspapers we would, as students, come up with our own topics to discuss. We would discuss daily events that were happening[765]

Morailane remembers this incident differently. She admits that she, indeed, made her feelings known to her students about what was happening in Soweto, in particular, but certainly in the Free State as well. Then she decided to "educate" her students about solidarity for them to show their support to the students in Soweto. She recalls that after overhearing some of the students from her school complaining that they had read in the newspaper that students from Soweto had threatened to come to Kroonstad to beat them because they had failed to support them, she felt obliged to "educate" her Form 2 students about solidarity. She explains "I decided that let me teach these children about solidarity, because that's what they could do to express to the kids in Soweto. Otherwise there was no way that they could assist them. … So I told these children that "You must know there is something called solidarity. Solidarity is like when you sympathize. You see, when one family in the location has lost one of its family members other members of the community visit that family to console that family." She moved from one class to the other articulating the same message. Sometimes she went beyond her advice about solidarity. In her words: "I remember I spoke in the Form 2G class … But I can't remember exactly what I said to

[764] Nkomo who was also in Morailane's class remembers the latter indirectly urging them to demonstrate. See Interview with Joseph "Fifi" Nkomo(LHPR), 14 April 2008; also see interview with Sesele (transcript 1 0f 2)
[765] Interview with Joseph Litabe by Tshepo Moloi, for the South African History Archive/*Sunday Times* Oral History Project, Kroonstad, 24 January 2007

them. Oh, I said 'I mean you could run around and ...' But you [must] remember that I'm a teacher so I couldn't say to them they must break down beerhalls and so on. I was just letting them know that it was possible for them to do something … but must be careful that they are not arrested. Yes, I said that! But I said it a little."[766]

Morailane's message seems to have seriously prodded the Form 2s to take action. Some of the students hastily decided to do so. However, lack of experience is evident in the planning and execution of what followed. The idea of a demonstration was not properly communicated to all the students at Bodibeng. Only a few male students were privy to the information about the planned demonstration (this is because the demonstration was discussed during night study);[767] students in senior classes like Form 4s and 5s were not involved in the plans; and the leaders do not seem to have a clear idea what they wanted to achieve, except to express solidarity with the students in Soweto. Nkomo claims that during their discussions it was agreed that the school should not be burned but only government property. He recalls

> Ja, we discussed it. We said "Gentlemen, we're not going to destroy our school. We must only burn the municipality's buildings, because tomorrow we'll have to go back to school." Indeed, it was our intention to go back to school the following day. Unfortunately, we were detained the very same night[768]

Lawrence Prince Tlokotsi, one of the leaders, makes a similar point:

> You must remember that during those days the inspectors like (Reginald) Cingo supported the previous government to oppress us. So, when we left night study we decided to go to the Seeisovile Hall, because that's where their offices were. We wanted to destroy them. But I must say our strike was not organised. We went to the hall and pelted the inspectors' offices with stones. From there we went to the beerhalls[769]

On the 24th of August after night study students at Bodibeng converged in the school yard, outside their classrooms, and started singing *Ntho ena ke masaoana* (This thing is nonsense!), and marched in the direction of the police station and the community hall. On their way some began pelting the police station and the hall, and other government buildings with stones.[770]

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[766] Interview with Arcilia Makodi Morailane (LHPR), Siyathemba, Balfour (Mpumalanga), 16 July 2008 and 3 July 2009

[767] Night study was only attended by male students and not female students, see Setiloane *The History,* p.133

[768] Interview with Nkomo

[769] Interview with Lawrence Prince Tlokotsi by students from Bodibeng High School, for the SAHA/Sunday Times Oral History Project, 2008 (hereafter STHP). This interview can be accessed from the SAHA's STHP

[770] Interview with Nhlapo. This song is one of the old Sesotho folk songs. It is about a woman who complains that her husband always asks her where she has been. Finally, the woman retorts *ntho ena ke masaoana,* meaning this is nonsense; also see interview with Litabe and Nkomo

Sesele describing the march recalled

> I would say we started by throwing stones at the school, but not too many stones. We then proceeded to the hall. Some were chanting, and some were just making noise, as we were walking. There was this certain song which goes like this *Ahe, ahe, ahe, ntho ena ke masaoana* (Hey, hey, hey, this thing is nonsense). We chanted it like that repeatedly. I can't remember well, but if my memory serves me well, we came across a certain car between Phuleng School and the stadium. It was either a teacher in the car or… But we did certainly meet someone who was also targeted. And that person ran away but was never chased. We then carried on. And when we approached the police station we stoned a Simba Chips bakkie. We were many. ... And at that time it was only the night study group. Okay, I would say maybe it was a group of more than 200 to 300 who were involved. We never burned anything along the way. We only damaged some windows[771]

Having heard and read about the student demonstrations in Soweto and elsewhere, the security personnel in Kroonstad was in no mood to tolerate any student disturbances. They called in reinforcement. Lawrence Prince Tlokotsi, who was one of the leaders of the demonstration, recalls "So the government called in soldiers. And there were the municipal police, which were called *mampara* (stupid). And there was also SAP (South African Police). The government's intention was to restrain the demonstration before it could explode like in Gauteng.[772] They rounded up all the leaders and swiftly crushed the demonstration. Nkomo remembers that he was arrested on the very same night of the demonstration at his home. He recalls that the police came to his home and asked: *Wie loop die skool daar by Bodibeng?* (Who attends school at Bodibeng?). And that is how he was arrested. Nhlapo was also arrested in his home and because of this he strongly believes they were sold out. He explains: "I was at my home. So they had information as to who was involved. Do you understand that violence was not happening at that section where my home was; it was at Phomolong and Seeisoville. Why would the police be at our section? Obviously they were tipped off."[773]

It is difficult to substantiate this claim without supporting evidence. But it is possible that the police, particularly the Special Branch, had students working for it at Bodibeng. Khotso Sesele who was arrested days after the night of the demonstration remembers that during interrogation

[771] Interview with Sesele; The Cillie Commission estimated that there were about 80 students involved in the march. See, Cillie Commission, pp.178 and 187; The number estimated by the Cillie Commission seems too low, taking into account that the number of boys at Bodibeng High in 1974 were more than 400 and in 1977 were 407. It is possible therefore that in 1976 the number might have been the same as the above. If most of the boys attending Forms 1 to 3 participated in the march, the number might have been slightly higher.

[772] Interview with Lawrence Prince Tlokotsi , for the 'SAHA/Sunday Times Oral History School's Project, 2008. The interview can be accessed from SAHA's STHP

[773] Interview with Nhlapo

at Adami House[774] he noticed a name of a fellow student who was the police's informer in the list of the people the SB was searching for. He takes up the story

> After those people were arrested there was a moment where people were picked up one by one for interrogation. When I heard that I was being "hunted" by the police and I wanted to save myself the embarrassment of being collected from school … I decided to … not attend some studies so that they can fetch me from home. And they definitely arrived on that day. So during interrogation I was sitting there and Captain Ronald was sitting over there and this side was Mr. Mofokeng, who was interpreting what Captain Ronald was saying. Now unfortunately for them there was a board with the name of who the informer was and a list of names of people who were "hunted" which Captain Roland had put in front of him … I realized there was a name on top of the list followed by names of people who were … already arrested.

After interrogation, Captain Roland attempted to recruit Sesele

> He then told me that they needed my help. I said no problem. He then ordered this Guy (Mr Mofokeng) to take me home. So, the same year, just towards the end of the year, in our class during night studies, as we were standing near the chalkboard writing some stuff, I saw a blue card with a police badge in his (a student residing next to Mr Mofokeng's house) pocket. I firstly ignored it. Then I gave it a second glance and saw his name and number written. I then took it and ran away as he tried to chase me. I returned it to him and said to him "I told you, you are a sell-out" [775]

Among those arrested were Masiza Mkhulu Nhlapo, Joseph "Fifi" Nkomo, Alfred Morwenyaane – who has since died - Mokhele Theletsane, Prince Tlokotsi, Papi Hasego, and Ben.[776]

The police were not convinced that the students had organized the demonstration on their own; rather they strongly suspected that there were agitators who used the students. Nkomo remembers that during interrogation the police would ask: 'Truly speaking, who influenced you to do this thing and why?' It was not long before some of the students broke down during interrogation and mentioned Morailane's name. Morailane was picked up from school and detained under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act of 1967.[777] She was charged with sabotage, which carried a prison sentence of five years. Remembering the day she was arrested – after the police had picked her up from school - Morailane remarks

[774] Adami House was the head Quarters of the Special Branch police in Kroonstad
[775] Interview with Sesele
[776] Ibid.; interview with Nhlapo
[777] Interview with Morailane

> When we left the school they drove us (she was arrested together with some of the students) to Adami House.[778] There was OK Bazaar and Adami House was at the top of that building. When I arrived there they told me that I was … By the way what was Joe Slovo? A Communist, and I was bringing politics to school. … There was a man who was asking questions. He said to me 'You are political. What did you say to those children?'[779]

Morailane was then detained. Not long after she was taken back to her house to search for banned material that could be used against her in court. She continues

> When I was in Kroonstad at the *nuwe tronk* (new prison) members of the CID (Crime Investigation Department) came to fetch me from prison and took me to my home to look for materials. I think they were searching for any material that they could use against me. As they were searching they came across that pamphlet I received at Wentworth – the Steve Biko pamphlet. And they said *Ja, ons het jou gese moes* (Yes, we told you that you're a communist[780]

After spending time in detention, undergoing long spells of interrogation, and continuous threats made by police who warned her *batho ha ba sahlola ba hobona* (people will never see you again), Morailane's case was finally transferred to the Bloemfontein High Court. The police compelled the students to become state witnesses. But this strategy backfired. In court, the students informed Judge T.M. Steyn that the police had forced them into falsifying or distorting the truth in their affidavits.[781] Theletsane, the key state witness, claims that the security police made a last attempt at the court to try and encourage him to lie on the stand in order to implicate Morailane. But once again they were unsuccessful. Theletsane explains what happened

> Before I forget. The first day I went to court around 09h30. They (police) took me and when I went inside we kept turning and taking the stairs. I did not know where we were going. We then reached the second floor and it was the prosecutor's office, who told me that this case was dependent on me; their success was on my shoulders. He added that if I were to assist them they would be able to help me to a certain extent. I told them to stop it if they did not want to be embarrassed, because I would tell the judge what had happened and I will show him where they have taken me, which

[778] Adami House was the head Quarters of the Special Branch police in Kroonstad
[779] Interview with Morailane
[780] Ibid. Morailane had received the pamphlet while studying at the University of Natal, Wentworth Campus, in the mid-1960s. It was distributed by Steve Biko and his colleagues. It was inviting students t a meeting. It is possible that this was the meeting to discuss the breakaway from NUSAS.
[781] Cillie Commission, p.187; also see *Weekend World, 28 November 1976*

was the prosecutor's office. They apologised[782]

Without the cooperation of the key witness, the state failed to prove that Morailane had influenced the students to demonstrate. As a result Morailane was not found guilty and was acquitted. She returned to school on 1 December 1976. But because of continued police surveillance, she finally left Kroonstad and went to teach at Tseki High in Qwaqwa.[783] After working there for a year, she was forced to relocate because of police harassment. Members of the CID visited her home and tried to recruit her to spy for them. When she refused they threatened her. She explains: "They said if you refuse to work for us, you must know that anytime and everytime these children engage in political activities, breaking government buildings and looting, you'd be the first one to be picked up. I said it's fine".[784] The same pattern continued in Sebokeng where she was now teaching at State School and living with her husband, Mr Mokoena. She was again forced to resign. Finally, she went to teach at Letare Senior Secondary School in Soweto. Again she was strongly warned against agitating students. She remembers "The principal informed me that a certain white man wanted to talk to me. This white man said 'should there be riots in Soweto, we're going to arrest you'. I asked why? And he responded 'It's because you are aware of the situation in the country'".[785] Morailane taught at the same school until she retired.

Morailane was not the only one harassed by the security police. Some of the students, especially those perceived as the ring-leaders, were under constant surveillance by the security police. Nkomo remembers that after Morailane's case police kept a close watch on them. He remarks

> That woman won the case. And that was the end of the case. We came back home. But I'll tell you this, every night they'd be watching us. They'd follow us around. Did you see our toilet outside? You know every time I went to the toilet at night I'd find a police vehicle parked outside my house. I knew and I was used to it. They also drove past our school[786]

Ill-treatment at school by some of the teachers and total isolation by the members of the community forced some of the students either to abandon their studies or to leave Kroonstad and further their studies elsewhere. Nkomo stopped his studies because of the bad treatment he received at school. He explains

> I can still remember at some point we were asked to write a composition. I decided

[782] Interview with Theletsane
[783] Interview with Morailane; Bodibeng High School Logbook, 1.12.1976
[784] Interview with Morailane
[785] Ibid.; See also interviews with Nhlapo, Tlokotsi and Nkomo
[786] Interview with Nkomo

> to write about my experiences with the whole issue of riots and detention. I wrote about how we were arrested, and how the police treated us. And our teacher Mr Molefe said he was not surprised at all. He hated me ever since that day. He was teaching me English. He didn't even mark my composition. Instead, he threw it back at me. Ja, *bra* Abbey! We're not on speaking terms – he's dead now. You know, I feel very bad when I think that I couldn't continue with my studies to become a teacher, because most of these students have forgotten about our role[787]

Nhlapo, on the other hand, felt isolated and uncomfortable about continuing to study and about living in Kroonstad after the case. He left for Qwaqwa. According to him

> None of the community members liked a person who was involved in politics at that time. Everyone was afraid at that time, especially in a small town like Kroonstad. Everyone was afraid to associate with us. They did not want to be closer to us. Do you know what made people afraid? It was because white people would kill you at that time. Yes, it was just that we were lucky not to have been murdered … I was still at Bodibeng but the situation was bad. I no longer enjoyed to be in Kroonstad. I asked my mother to move me somewhere. Then I went to Qwaqwa. In Qwaqwa I got arrested immediately when I arrived there because the police were already there[788]

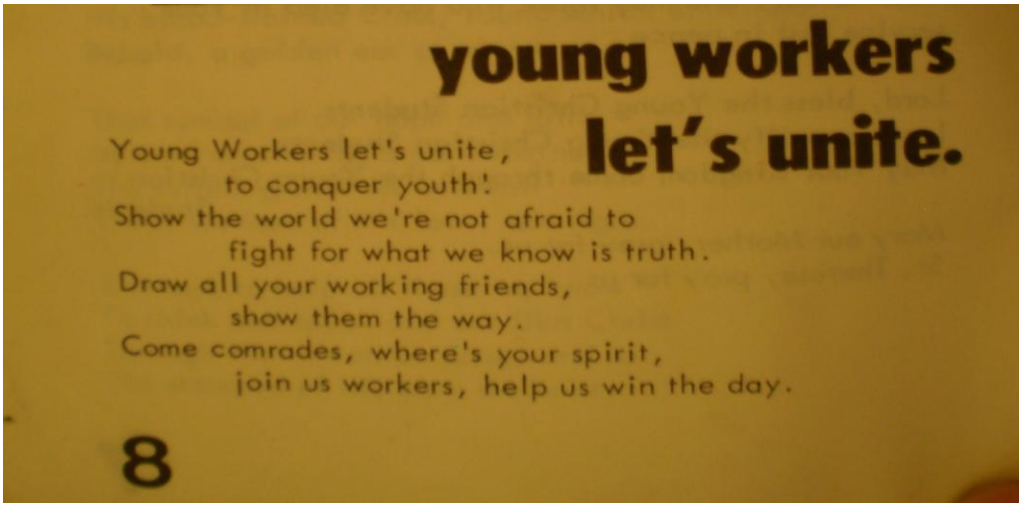
Police harassment and the forced relocation of students who had internalized the BC ideas did not only deprive Maokeng of leaders who could help conscientise and mobilise the "community" in the early 1980s, but this seems also to have forced the residents of Maokeng to docility. In fact, Bulara Diphoto, in his hard-hitting report, criticized the black residents of Kroonstad for this situation. Diphoto argued that he was displeased by the situation he observed in Kroonstad when he returned from Soweto where he was impressed by a show of solidarity amongst the residents during the memorial service for the student uprisings. He blamed the lack of organizations "which cater for the welfare of the community".[789] And for him, this had pushed people to drinking and each individual keeping his/her grievances to themselves. "People go about in large groups on an intoxicating spree…"[790]In conclusion, he lamented "sometimes a get a notion that God made the world – but the devil made Kroonstad".[791]

But this situation changed – albeit temporarily – after some of the young people in the township revived the Young Christian Workers (YCW). Although a Christian-based and worker-focused

[787] Ibid.
[788] Interview with Nhlapo
[789] The only organizations at the time in Kroonstad's black residential areas were church movements, Lesedi La Malapa (Light of Households), Young Women Christian Association and the Urban Bantu Council. *Weekend World, 10 July 1977*
[790] Ibid.
[791] Ibid.

organization, towards the end of the 1970s the members of the branch of the YCW in Kroonstad made a radical shift and seriously considered confronting the government militarily. This galvanized the "community" and radicalized some of the young people in the township.

The Young Christian Workers, post 1976



YCW's song from the New Songbook *(Source: Peace Modikoe-Tsotetsi)*

In 1977 the YCW was revived. For a structure that has played a significant role in conscientising young people in various townships, the YCW has received little scholarly attention in the literature. Few scholars have researched it and produced scholarly work.[792] The YCW was founded in Belgium in 1923 by Cardinal Cardijn.[793] Its aim was to bring hope to the young people of the working class; that life is worth living after all, that things can change, and that the Church of Christ is with them in their struggle to get jobs and proper wages, and proper housing, and decent level of education.[794] In South Africa, Donovan Lowry notes that, the YCW was established by Eric Tyacke "as a working-class and largely coloured and black movement, but it had subsequently developed as a youth movement without a strong class affiliation".[795] It was

[792] Ineke van Kessel *"Beyond Our Wildest Dreams": The United Democratic Front and the Transformation of South Africa* (Charlottesville and London, 2000); Lekgoathi 'The United Democratic Front, pp.587-610; Donovan Lowry, *20 Years in the labour movement: The Urban Training Project and Changed in South Africa, 1971-1991* (Johannesburg, Wadmore Publishing, 1999)

[793] The date when the YCW was exactly founded is contested. In the booklet about how to start to YCW section, it is stated that it was founded in 1912. *How to start a YCW Section: Young Christian Workers South Africa* (Johannesburg, Young Christian Workers, 1960), p.5

[794] UWL HLP A2675 (Folder 978) 'EcuNews Bulletin 21/1978' Karis-Gehart Collection, Political documents

[795] Lowry, D. *20 Years,* p.177; In South Africa, the YCW seems to have been established earlier than 1960. Jane Hlongwane, who, on various times, held top positions in the organization recalled in an interview that she joined the YCW in 1959. See http://saycwstruggle.blogspot.com/ Accessed, 11.02.2012

emphasis on young people who joined the YCW in South Africa that the YCW's purpose was to "give an education based on the events of daily life".[796] As will be show below, young people in the YCW were trained, among other things, to be sympathetic to the needs of the community.

In Maokeng, the YCW seemed to have been in existence since the 1960s. Mpopetsi Dhlamini joined it in 1965 as a new young worker. Because of hardships at home Dhlamini was forced to leave school at the end of 1964 to look for employment and found it at the Schmiedt Pharmacy.[797] Even though Dhlamini was not a member of the Roman Catholic Church, which had strong links with the YCW, he was allowed to join the organization under Father Taole, who was the presiding Minister in Maokeng. He recalls that Father Taole used a simple method of recruiting young people into the organization. "He used to get young guys and workers", Dhlamini remembers, "who would during the day [be in] scouts and they would come in the evening as if it's a recreational club, where now we are dancing, others were playing karate. And then on Wednesday - now talks about politics".[798] He recalls that people like Mosiuoa "Terror" Lekota and Lebona Holomo were members of the scouts but would also attend these gatherings.[799] Lebone Holomo, who was born in Kroonstad and raised in the Catholic Church, corroborates Dhlamini's testimony

> We used to hold discussion groups here. And then we used to have youth clubs, debating groups, soccer … We used to mix with Mpopetsi and others. They were senior to us, and through that he will tell you about the young … what, what movement. Oh, Young Christian Workers[800]

Seemingly it was the YCW's position to use a moderate strategy to recruit young people, and later on to engage them in serious political discussions or in challenging prevailing injustices. Jane Hlongwane, who was born in 1935 in the then Western Native Township, in Johannesburg, remembered that after joining the branch of the YCW at Moroka, where her family had been forcibly removed in the 1950s, she was introduced to dancing. She explained: "other actions were also carried out by the YCW outside of the workplace. There was, of course, some social events where each of us could invite our friends to come and participate. Most of us learnt there how to dance to the waltz or quickstep rhythm".[801] But the members of the YCW's Moroka branch soon challenged the restaurants in the city centre for their undignified service towards their black customers. Hlongwane recalled that these restaurants "did not provide tables, chairs and spoons to the customers, forcing them to stand and use their fingers when eating".[802]

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[796] *How to start a YCW,* p.7
[797] Interview with Dhlamini, 24 November 2006
[798] Ibid.
[799] Also interview with Lebone Holomo (LHPR), Seeisoville, Kroonstad, 29 October 2008
[800] Ibid.
[801] Interview with Jane Hlongwane
[802] Ibid.

Hlongwane's YCW branch reported this matter to the Health Department. According to Hlongwane "this abuse of human dignity was discontinued when the Health Department took action".[803] Probably because of her active involvement in the YCW, Hlongwane was elected to the position of regional president – a position she held until 1963.[804]

In similar vein, before long the activities of the YCW branch in Kroonstad also became overtly political. Father Taole invited people like Reverend Z.R. Mahabane and Mr Ruzwani from Swaziland to give political talks to the young members of the YCW. According to Dhlamini "after SASO had been formed some of its leading members like Dr Selele used to attend the YCW's meetings in Maokeng".[805] Young people were also introduced to political material. He recalls: "Interestingly enough that's where I got to know about Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' video, because it was banned at the time".[806] In addition, members of the YCW were exposed to other young workers from the African continent. Dhlamini recalls their trip to Durban:

> There was a guy we met there with Maitse Mokhere, Father Taole, and a certain lady called Christina Kalane. We were traveling in a Volkswagen. So we were representing these guys (YCW). And when we arrived there we found people from Swaziland and from the then South West Africa - students. Some were workers. So we would come and sit and have discussions and everything[807]

But perhaps most importantly the YCW also discussed the plight and rights of the young workers. Dhlamini continues:

> Young Christian Workers - it was very interesting. I mean you couldn't just say anything it's politics. Today when you analyze what we used to do in the Young Christian Workers it was a question of these unions. … It was addressing things like Christians who are working and working into what? Working to tower against what? Against the regime - the apartheid regime. So it was preparing us that when, as workers, you must be aware of your rights, you see. But as you know that things (people) were submissive, you couldn't just say trade union what, what …[808]

In spite of these seemingly lively discussions, there is no evidence to suggest that members of the YCW in Maokeng made any concerted efforts to challenge the government. However, their political discussions soon attracted unwanted attention from the police and other senior members

[803] Ibid.
[804] Ibid.
[805] Interview with Dhlamini
[806] Ibid.
[807] Ibid.
[808] Ibid.

of the church, and this spelt the end of the YCW's activities in Maokeng – albeit temporarily. In 1967 Father Taole was transferred to Phiritona, Heilbron, and members of the YCW began to be harassed by the police. Dhlamini remembers and further explains how the YCW's activities were banned from the church:

> Immediately after Father Taole left here, then we started being harassed by these SBs. … He invited us to Heilbron. We went to Heilbron trying to conscientise people there for a while, you see. Mostly we were discussing the political set up in South Africa. So, from there I went into football ... Then came a guy called Father John. Now with Father John, in our first meeting he found that most of us were not Roman Catholic people. That's number one. Secondly, this guy realized that, no, no, what we were talking about in that meeting everything was not only religious. He found that we were talking politics, too. So what happened he banned (i.e. stopped) that thing[809]

In 1972 Dhlamini also left Kroonstad to further his studies at Tshiya Teachers' Training College, in Qwaqwa. While at Tshiya he joined SASO.[810]



Back, L-R: Chippa Morobela and Mpopetsi Jonas Dhlamini

[809] Ibid. In fact it was Father Joseph Falkiner and not Father John. Falkiner was the Chaplain for the Transvaal and OFS Region of the YCW. See, UWL HLP A2675 (Folder 978) 'Political Documents': EcuNews Bulletin 21/1978
[810] Interview with Dhlamini, 14 April 2008

Seated: Molifi Kobue, at Tshiya Teachers' Training College, Qwaqwa.
(*Source: Mpopetsi Dhlamini)*

It took ten years before the YCW could be revived in Maokeng. It was only in 1977 that a branch of the YCW was re-established in Maokeng. Peace Modikoe (now Tsotetsi), the only female member of the organization and founder member, recalls:

> Father Joseph Falkiner was the one who came and taught us about it and how it worked. It was actually introduced in church. Well, because I have always been active, the Father nominated me [and others] to attend a course. It was at Hillside, in Durban. It was myself, Peter Theletsane and Martin Kau. And the other three were from Welkom. We left on Friday … The people who led that course were people like Father Falkiner and Phelane Makgane. That's where we were taught about the movement: how it works and that we should know our rights, and how to fight for our rights[811]

Unlike other branches of the YCW in other townships, the branch of the YCW in Maokeng limited its attention solely to worker-related issues. It avoided addressing issues affecting the "community" and steered clear from student and civic matters (it was for this reason that opposition councillors in the community council assumed the leadership position in civic matters – see chapter four). This was to work against its members later when they attempted to recruit more members to the organisation. Conversely, in places like Kagiso, the members of the YCW were involved in the campaign against rent increases in the township; they also participated in student matters. As a result, Lekgoathi argues that "the YCW was able to attract a large contingent of young people not only in Kagiso but also from the neighbouring township of Munsieville".[812]

On their return from the course at Hillside, inspired, Modikoe and her colleague formed the branch of YCW in Maokeng.[813] "When I arrived in my parish", Modikoe remembers, "I requested the Father to make an announcement that young workers should come forward, though I wasn't a young worker then. That's how it became known. We used to meet there in church".[814] Again, having a non-worker at the forefront of the fight for the rights of the workers disadvantaged the YCW in Maokeng. Although no readily available statistics could be found about the membership of the branch of the YCW in Maokeng, it is unlikely that it had a large

[811] Interview with Peace Modikoe by Tshepo Moloi (LHPR), Dagbreek, Welkom, 25 October 2009
[812] Lekgoathi 'The UDF in the Vaal Triangle', p.592
[813] Other branches of the YCW were formed in places like Kagiso in the West Rand and in KwaThema, in the East Rand. For a detailed role of the YCW in Kagiso, see Lekgoathi 'The United Democratic Front', pp.587-610; According to Lowry, the YCW branch in KwaThema was the strongest in the 1970s, See Lowry *20 Years,* p.170
[814] Interview with Modikoe

contingent of followers. This was evident when the core leadership of the YCW was detained, the branch ceased to function (more about this below).

In the initial stages, the YCW in Maokeng comprised only members of the Roman Catholic Church. Their message to the young workers was clear: "they must not allow exploitation such as working unpaid over time and not to think that they were expected to do so, meanwhile it was wrong; do not work during lunchtime; and do not work during holidays without pay … Go and conscientise fellow workers".[815] But perhaps more importantly it was the concepts of 'See, Judge, and Act' in their message that was most persuasive. Jane Hlongwane explained that the 'See' concept helped the young people to enquire, hear and notice what was happening at work, home, church and around them. And through the 'Judge', the young people were encouraged to try and debate issues without prejudice. Finally, through the 'Act' concept the young people were introduced to trade unionism, but most significantly were encouraged to be action-orientated.[816]

But later the branch of the YCW in Maokeng opened its membership to non-Catholics. One of the branch's recruits was Mongezi Radebe. Radebe's association with this branch is discussed in detail below. But it is suffice here to note that he was a member of the Apostolic Church in Zion. In the interview with Frederikse, Radebe claimed that he was attracted to the branch of the YCW in Maokeng because their discussions did not revolved around religion. He explained

> "Whenever we were there, bible wouldn't be discussed at all. And there were no church rituals that were conducted…. Because I was not Roman Catholic. I was always Zionist[817]

Apart from Radebe, there is no evidence to suggest that the branch of the YCW in Maokeng was able to attract more members who were non-Catholics. Moreover, due to its lack of interest in the "community" related matters, the branch of the YCW in Kroonstad was unsuccessful in attracting more members, especially those who were non-Catholic. To conscientise young people in the catholic Church, this branch used cultural plays and poetry. Ntai Alfred Matube, who was born in 1947 and in 1977 was a member of the Roman Catholic Church in Maokeng, recalls that in addition to inviting youth from other Catholic Churches in the surrounding environ to perform poetry, the members of the YCW in Maokeng also staged a play depicting the social injustice prevailing in the country. Remembering the play, Matube remarks

> There was this *play* where they showed how mineworkers lived. One would buy

[815] Ibid.
[816] Interview with Hlongwane
[817] Interview with Radebe

> cigarette with R10 and would not even get change. Another one would buy cigarette with R15 there. [In the play] it was a white person's shop. These people were shouted at when they went to buy: 'The price has changed'. There was no stable price. So in that *play* it was a matter of the Young Christian Workers going to the shop to buy … Then they found that 'Yes, it is the truth'. Another one went back to the organisation and asked: 'What can we do to change that?' Then they said 'We have to go and challenge the shop owner'. Now in the play they beat the shop owner. It looked as if it was real, but it was just a play[818]

Matube claims that this play was used by the state in the case against the members of the branch of the YCW in Kroonstad to demonstrate that they were conscientising young black people to rise against the government[819] (see below)

In contrast, engaging in civic matters popularized and legitimized the branch of the YCW in Kagiso. For example, when the community council decided to increase rent, the members of the YCW branch there embarked on a house-to- house campaign, also visiting the homes of ordinary policemen, informing them about the imminent rent increase and how to resist it.[820] According to Lekhoathi, the branch of the YCW in Kagiso held rotational meetings in the homes of members and this "ensure[d] that the parents supported the youths' initiatives".[821] It came as no surprise when some of the members of the YCW played prominent roles in the formation of the civic and student organizations in Kagiso.

Bafana Seripe, who had worked as an organizer of the YCW in the Western Cape for 18 months, was instrumental in strategizing the *modus operandi* for the new civic organization. He introduced the concept of door-to-door campaign and the use of media in organizing people.[822] Similarly, some of the members of the YCW played a significant role in the formation of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS). One such member was Nomvula Mkhize (now Mokonyane), the current premier of Gauteng Province.[823]It was not surprising when Lawrence Ntlokoa, one of the leading figures in the YCW, was elected into the executive of the Kagiso Residents Organisation (KRO), a civic organisation.[824] The branch of the YCW in Kagiso was also distinct because it operated in cells. Seripe explained

> … When I joined the Young Christian Workers did not have big groups. It basically

[818] Interview with Ntai Alfred Matube (LHPR), Kroonstad, 25 September 2009 (Italics my emphasis)
[819] Ibid.
[820] See Lekhoathi 'The United Democratic Front', p.592
[821] Ibid.
[822] Ibid., p.591
[823] Ibid.
[824] Ibid.

> operated in small cells. So you would find in a group between ten and 20 people. And as the group grew larger then we would form another group, say for example you get more than five or six groups in the same area. But the idea was that we wanted everybody to engage the issues, everybody to participate in the meetings – that is why the groups were smaller …[825]

Indeed the idea might have been to encourage every member of the cell to participate in the debates and discussions. But it could be argued that the use of cells was also another form of protecting the branch from being summarily destroyed if the leadership was to be detained or constantly harassed by the police.

Conversely, the branch of the YCW in Kroonstad experienced difficulties in attracting large numbers to its branch. Apart from the fact that this branch focused solely on a single issue: workers' rights, it also included in its leadership non-workers. Few of its leading figures were employed such as Joseph Dikotsi and Mpho Makae. Makae was employed at Spoornet, and Thabo Pieterson worked for the South African Defence Force (SADF). But Peter Thelatsane and Peace Modikoe were still students.[826] Modikoe concedes that it was doubly challenging for them to convince young workers to join them: "Some would tell you that you were not even employed; you are still a learner", she remembers.[827] However, that did not deter them. Modikoe adds "But you had to convince them that 'Well, it's true I'm not employed, but I could see and I knew what's happening".[828] This does not seem to have convinced many people to join the YCW in Kroonstad.

Just as in the 1960s, the branch of the YCW in Kroonstad in the 1970s also attracted police attention. Modikoe believes that this was prompted by informers within their midst. Just before the mass arrest of the whole leadership, some of the members of the YCW were beginning to shift their focus away from discussions and only recruiting young workers. They were now seriously considering turning to the armed struggle. It is possible that some of the members of the YCW who strongly felt it was time to fight fire with fire had been influenced by the media reports about the skirmishes between the ANC military wing's, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) – The spear of the nation – and the police, particularly the Goch Street shooting, in Johannesburg. In 1977 the MK Central Operational Headquarters established the Transvaal Urban Machinery (TUM) in Maputo. This was headed by Charles Ramusi and Siphiwe 'Gebuza' Nyanda. In mid-1977 the TUM infiltrated George 'Lucky' Mazibuko, Monty Motaung and 19-year old Solomon Mahlangu inside the country to "… divert police attention from the stone-throwing youths in

[825] Ibid.
[826] Theletsane was studying at Mphohadi Teachers Training College and Modikoe was doing her Junior Certificate (today's Grade Eight) at Bodibeng High
[827] Interview with Modikoe
[828] Ibid.

Soweto".[829] The plan went wrong and Motloung and Mahlangu were arrested. Mazibuko, on the other hand, managed to escape and returned to Swaziland. As a result of heavy beatings by the police, Motloung was later declared unfit to stand trial. Mahlangu was found guilty of treason and was hanged on 6 April 1979 at Pretoria Central Prison.[830]

The details about the plan to engage in military action by the members of the YCW were divulged during the trial involving members of the YCW in Kroonstad in 1979. The state attempted to demonstrate that this was not a Christian organization but a terrorist organization, intending to bring it down by violent means.

Modikoe observes that the idea to shift to military action was seriously considered after the members of the YCW were angered following the detention and torture of one their members Mongezi Radebe.[831] Radebe was born in 1957 in Phiritona, Heilbron. While growing up in Phiritona he was exposed to politics. First, it was through the history of the ANC told to him by granny Mankele (possibly MaMokhele), who had been banished to Phiritona. In the interview with Julie Frederikse, Radebe recalled:

> … In that township we had some granny called Mankele, who used to help us. For instance, mend our clothing, give us some old clothing, and she used to tell us a lot about black history … When I was at secondary level I started understanding that she – from explanations – [was] a member of the ANC and she knew people like Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada, Albert Luthuli – she was working with them[832]

Not long after he joined YACA (Young African Christian Association), and became its branch organizer.[833] In 1975 he resigned from YACA because he felt that it was not political enough. He remembered: "Well, the leadership was trying to limit it just to church and simple community projects such as help yourself project, teaching the young ones in the townships to be self-

[829] According to Johannes Rasegatla, who was charged with preparing the group psychologically, the group was sent back inside the country to divert the police from shooting the youth who would be commemorating the second anniversary of June 16. See Houston and Magubane 'The ANC's Armed Struggle', Chapter 9

[830] Ibid., 478-80

[831] Modikoe claims that she raised the idea and it was supported by all the members. See interview with Modikoe; on 2 June 1978, John Taje, principal of Bodibeng, wrote the following in the logbook: "Japie Ramoji, Benjamin Zothwane and Joseph Radebe detained. The latter released; comes to school in a confused state and taken to hospital for treatment. It is possible that the Joseph is the same person as Mongezi. See interview with Jacob Ramarobo Ramotsoela, who was a teacher at Bodibeng at the time, and remembers this incident as recorded by Taje in the logbook.

[832] UWL AL 2460 (Box A31) Julie Frederikse Collection, South African History Archives (hereafter SAHA) - Interview with Mongezi Radebe by Julie Frederikse

[833] Ibid.; Mongezi repeated this in the interview with B.M. Makhubu, for the SADET's Oral History project, Bloemfontein, 20 January 2006. I am indebted to Dr Chitja Twala for bringing this interview to my attention

responsible and respect elders … But we were more interested in politics and we felt that it was not political enough".[834]

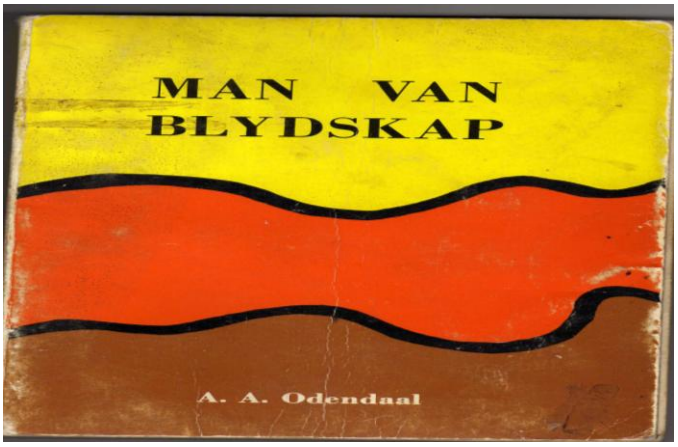
In 1977 after completing his Junior Certificate (J.C., or todays' Grade 10), he moved to Kroonstad to continue with his studies at Bodibeng High. "I went to Kroonstad to do the JMB and that's where I came into contact with the Young Christian Workers and I joined it. That's where I learned a little bit about trade unionism".[835] Radebe recalled that what attracted him to the YCW was its slogan "See, Judge, Act".[836] This prompted the YWC, and Radebe in particular, to be involved in community development. He remarked:

> For instance, I started being aware of the need to do something about the lack of shelters for commuters in the township, because you would find on rainy days a lot of people waiting for buses there and no shelter being provided by bus companies. And then we would be thinking in terms of erecting shelters there. We would also be concerned about those elderly people who've got no one to look after them – who lived alone in their houses and yards being dirty …[837]

While at school, doing matric, he was detained twice. Fanela Nkambule, who was doing Form 2 in 1978, believes that Radebe was detained after he had addressed students, inciting them to boycott a prescribed Afrikaans textbook titled *Man van Blyskap* by A.A. Ondendaal. Nkambule explains

> And that time in our school we were reading one book written by Mr. [Andre] Odendaal. The book was entitled *Man van blyskap*. Now Mongezi Radebe wanted to instigate us so that we should not accept this book, because that Odendaal, the author of the book, was a minister of religion from the N.G. Kerk. Some of the ideas which were written in that book, eh, were ideas that was showing that a black person is very inferior. And the following day we saw the security police arriving and Mongezi Radebe was handcuffed[838]

[834] Ibid.
[835] Ibid.
[836] Interview with Radebe by Frederikse
[837] Ibid.
[838] Interview with Fanela Nkambule (LHPR), Kroonstad, 28 October 2008; also see interview with Mokhele Theletsane



Prescribed Afrikaans in 1977 at Bodibeng High
(Source: Pule Yster Moino)

From oral testimonies with former students at Bodibeng it seems this textbook was used before 1978. According to Theletsane, who in 1976 was in Form 2, remembers that in that year they used it as a prescribed textbook. It was at this stage that students began questioning the objective of Odendaal's message in the book. Theletsane, who was the previous year a student of Matsepe, the BC-aligned teacher and a member of MASAC, describes the textbook as degrading black people. He explains

> We used to read a book called *Man van blydskap.* This was an Afrikaans book that we read in Form 2. *Blydskap* in English means happiness. It was written by Pastor Odendaal … a professor at Lefika. Lefika was a Theological school in Qwaqwa. They taught Ministers for the N.G. Kerk. He had written this book. And you'd be surprised because the teacher who taught Afrikaans used to be very happy when we read this book. He was an old person named Mr. Sekgwe. I, as a child, felt that this book was insulting us. According to this book, Malefu sold liquor. She was a shebeen queen. But he [Pastor Odendaal] used language like *Malefu was 'n hoer vrou. Eenige man wat daar so wel slaap, kon so maar maklik daarso gaan slap. Malefu sal altyt vrede wees met eenige man wat net haar slaap.* That was the language he used. And to us it was an insult – and it was an insult to black people. It was diminishing our integrity as black people[839]

Seemingly this view had become widespread amongst the school-going students using this textbook. This was evident when an article appeared in the newspapers defending and trying to discourage students from discarding the textbook. Modisenyane, who was at this time working for the Department of Bantu Education (DBE) in Odendaalsrus, recalls

[839] Interview with Theletsane

> Yes, it was in '76 I was working at Odendaalsrus as the school board secretary. Then a letter appeared in the *Weekend World* that said "We the students of Odendaalsrus supported *Die Man van Blydskap*, because it had been written by Odendaal". As you can imagine when the students saw this they got very angry, because they did not make that statement. Even today we don't know who wrote that letter[840]

Modisenyane, concurs with Theletsane, and went further to argue that the textbook taught students to be docile. He remarks

> The book taught you to be obedient and not to fight for your rights. You must be a *Man van blydskap* - you must be a good and happy man. But the students realised that it encouraged them to be subservient[841]

There is no evidence that the book *Man van blydskap* encouraged students to be docile, but perhaps the reason African students rejected this book was because it portrayed Belina Tsukulu, an African woman, as a prostitute.[842]

The detention and torture of Radebe was the turning point for the YCW in Maokeng. According to Modikoe

> The issue of bombs was once discussed, but it was during the time when Mongezi had been tortured, because it made us very angry and we started planning to plant bombs… Plus the fact that [Thabo] Pietersen was working for the defence force … so we planned that he should place the bombs in their barracks to destroy their ammunition in order to unable them from coming to the township. This was the discussion[843]

Notwithstanding the fact that none amongst the members of the YCW had received formal training in the use of explosives, except for Makae who could make a petrol bomb, the male members of the YCW went ahead and tested the petrol bombs on a farm outside Kroonstad. However nothing practical came out of this and the discussions. Not long the whole leadership was detained, interrogated and tortured.[844]It is not clear how the police found out about the branch's plans. It is possible, though, as in the case of the students in 1976, that the members of the branch of the YCW in Kroonstad were also sold out. Modikoe recalls that she was detained

[840] Interview with Modisenyane
[841] Ibid.
[842] Odendaal, A.A. *Man van Blydskap* (Bloemfontein, N.G. Sendingpers, 1976), pp.29-30. I am indebted to Malebone Rapoo, for translating this book from Afrikaans to English
[843] Interview with Modikoe; The main reason they wanted to target the defence force was because every time there were riots like in August 1976 soldiers would be called in to deal with the protestors.
[844] UWL HLP A2675 (Folder 978) 'Political Documents'; also see Interview with Modikoe

in the early hours of the morning in her home and spent almost the whole month in detention. She explains

> When I was arrested … On that Sunday afternoon I was from the youth club. I went home to prepare my school uniform. We then went to bed. Round about half past one in the morning my sister heard a knock and suddenly there were torches on the windows and doors, of which I expected because of the Mongezi [Radebe] issue. Ag! It was also during the time when police were arresting people for lodger's [permit] and unpaid radio license. They thought police were looking out for such things. They mentioned that they were looking for me. And my mother asked what for. And they told her not to ask many questions. It was cold in winter. They then started searching. Eventually, they told me they wanted the YCW material and I told them I didn't have the material[845]

Modikoe was to find out that the whole leadership of the YCW had been arrested. She adds

> Then as I was about to put on my watch, they told me not to put a watch. I told them I wanted to check what time they had picked me up and what time they were going to return me. So, they took me away. There's a place up there next to OK in Kroonstad called Adami House. That's where the Special Branch was based. They put me in a room and as I was sitting there in that room, I noticed someone passing by and I identified him as Petersen. They then took us to a bigger room. And when we got there, we found Dikotsi, Tledima and Peter Theletsane, who was the last person to be arrested[846]

According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report

> Alfred Raymond Thabo Pietersen, of the Young Christian Workers, in June 1978 was detained by the Security Branch in Bloemfontein and taken to Adami House where he was questioned about the activities of his organization and was tortured. He was later taken to a police station in Vredefort where he was again tortured. In December of the same year, Pietersen was detained again in Bloemfontein and tortured by means of electric shocks[847]

The detained members of the YCW were separated and sent to different police stations where they were held. This was possibly to frustrate them and prevent them from influencing each other in relation to the case. Modikoe was transferred to Heilbron Police Station where she was

[845] Interview with Modikoe
[846] Ibid.
[847] UWL Government Publications, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report, Volume 3, October 1998 (Cape Town, Juta), p.341

detained. Later she was removed to Steynsrus Police Station. In the end the members of the YCW appeared in court on charges of sabotage. The rest of the group was not found guilty and was acquitted, except for two members. These were Mpho Petros Makae and Mosiuoa Jacob Tledima. This became a serious issue within the Roman Catholic Church to the extent that their trial was included in the agenda at the Southern African Catholic Bishops conference in Pretoria on 2 February 1979.[848] When the judgment was passed four days later the two were found guilty, charged and sentenced, for conspiring to commit sabotage. The state alleged that they planned to blow up the Kroonstad power station, a military camp, the magistrate's court, a police station, an office of the Security Branch and other buildings during a general strike of black workers. They were sentenced to five years.[849] This marked the end of the YCW in Maokeng. The following year, Modikoe left Kroonstad to continue her schooling in Lesotho where she stayed until 1981. Martin Kau, on the other hand, dissociated himself from the YCW and its activities.[850]

In spite of the state's success in defeating the branch of the YCW in Maokeng, the latter's activities were able to arouse a political interest in some of the members of the "community". Matube was one such person. He explains

> People that were arrested there were Mpho [Peterose] Makae, another one was [Jacob Mosiuoa] Tlelima. I was always attending the trial of this case. That's where I heard the horrific things about the government … Such things made me feel that indeed black people needed to change. So that such things could stop. That thing made me interested[851]

Although the interest in politics remained an idea, it was only in 1985 that it was turned into action when students took to the streets (see chapter six).

Finally, some of the individuals in Kroonstad entered into politics and the struggle for liberation through their interaction with other political activists. Dennis Bloem is a case in point. He was born in 'A' Location, in the Old Location, in 1953. At the age of five he moved to Brentpark, a Coloured designated area, with his grandmother Betty Petrus. After completing his schooling, he found work at the Union Steam Bakery as an apprentice confectioner.[852] It was while working at the Bakery that in 1977 he began to interact with Michael "Baba" Jordan. Jordan was born in 'A' Location in 1942. As already noted in the previous chapter, in 1960 during the state of emergency he was detained with the other 300 people in Kroonstad for "wearing a bogad" – a

[848] *Rand Daily Mail, 3 February 1979*
[849] Ibid.; also see interview with Alfred Matube (LHPR), 25 September 2009
[850] Interview with Modikoe
[851] Interview with Matube; In 1980 some of the students at Bodibeng were writing slogans on the chalkboard, urging other students to boycott classes and night studies. See Bodibeng High School Logbook, 30 July 1980
[852] Interview with Bloem

pair of jeans.[853] After he was released he left Kroonstad and went to stay in Alexandra Township. It was in Alexandra that he befriended Bokwe Mafuna, Mongane Wally Serote, Vukile Mthethwa, Frank Nkonyana, and later Mosibudi Mangena. This led him to joining the BCM.[854] Moreover, he joined Molefe Pheto's group, Mehloti Black Theatre, and in 1973 he was recruited to the Black People's Convention (BPC) where he served in the committee of labour.[855] Jordan recalls that Mehloti Black Theatre's main objective was to conscientise black people to fight for their rights. The group underscored this by refusing to perform in white suburbs, preferring to perform in townships. "Those in the suburbs", recalls Jordan, "who wanted to see Mehloti perform *had* to come to Alexandra or to go to the DOCC (Donaldson Orlando Community Centre), or to go to Hunter's Hall in Katlehong"[856] During his period of activism in the BCM he was detained twice under Section 6 of Terrorism Act, first in 1975 and again in 1977. Furthermore, in 1977 he was served with a five year banning order, restricting him to Brentpark, in Kroonstad.[857] In Brentpark he stayed with Bloem. Bloem recalls: "… in 1977 "Baba" Jordan, he's my cousin, was banned to Kroonstad. The security police took him to my granny's place; that is from my father's side. Then life was not nice at my granny's place. Then he came to stay with me and that further opened my eyes."[858]

[853] nterview with Michael "Baba" Jordan by Brown Maaba, for the SADET Oral History Project, Kroonstad, 3 March 2005; also see *Post, 24 January 1979*

[854] Interview with Jordan with Maaba, 3 March 2005; also see interview with Jordan by Tshepo Moloi (STHP), 24 November 2006

[855] *Post, 24 January 1979*

[856] Interview with Jordan by Gift Poli and Ace Nyaleke, for the Free State ANC Centenary Project, Brentpark, n.d.; also see M. Pheto *And Night Fell: Memoirs of a Political Prisoner in South Africa* (London, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1983)

[857] Interview with Jordan; *Post, 24 January 1979*

[858] Interview with Bloem



Mike "Baba" Jordan in Kroonstad after he was banned
(Source: Post, 24 January 1979)

At this stage, Bloem was apolitical and focused on his work. According to Isaac "Sakkie" Oliphant, "I used to struggle to talk sense to this guy, to say why are you always content with the little that you receive from these whites?"[859] However, the situation changed immediately he started living with Jordan. Bloem recalls: "We used to talk for very long time at night when I'm from work. And he was telling me about life in general; what happened in Soweto. He was a leader in the 1976 uprisings. He was working for … the South African Council of Churches (SACC) then. … My meeting with him really opened my eyes."[860] Bloem's oral testimony demonstrates one the limitations of oral history; that of, exaggeration. It is true that in 1976 when the student uprising broke-out in Soweto, Jordan was in Johannesburg and active in the BC movement. But he was not a leader of the uprising nor was he in any way instrumental in inciting them. Jordan recalls that in 1976 he was employed by the South African Council of Churches (SACC) in their Braamfontein Offices and his contact with the leaders of the uprising was when Tebello Motapanyane and Raymond Ramapepe, leading figures in the South African Student

[859] Interview with Isaac Oliphant; In 1973 Oliphant was expelled from the University of the Western Cape and thereafter he linked up with some of the members of the BCM like Steve Biko. See interview with Oliphant, 28 October 2008

[860] Interview with Bloem; Actually Jordan was not a leader during the 1976 student uprisings – he was not at school at the time. But through his work at the SACC, he had close contact with some of the student leaders.

Movement, came to his office to request donations – money he believes was used to purchase material to make pamphlets used on the day of the demonstration[861]. It is possible that Bloem places Jordan at the centre of the student uprising, arguably a turning point in South Africa's political history, to legitimize his role in the struggle and professional careers. At the time of the interview, Bloem was an ANC Member of Parliament and the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services in the national parliament.[862] Such information that he was introduced to politics by a leader of the student uprising would undoubtedly guarantee him indefinite respect from his offspring and his colleagues. An unsuspecting researcher/scholar would use such information without testing it against other sources. It is therefore imperative to verify oral testimonies before using them.

It was not long after Bloem had received political lessons from Jordan that he put to use his political knowledge. In December 1979 he organized a strike action at the Bakery, complaining about low wages and working conditions. Remembering how he organized the strike, he remarked proudly

> I spoke individually to them (workers), … to say, 'No, this man (owner) is making millions of rands.' And I said, 'We can bring him down to pay us more.' You know he paid us 10 cents then for an hour overtime. I started with R7.50 per week; and that was now the highest salary. This old man, *ntate* Kleinboy, was getting R5.50. .. And I said, no. And I organised them. The Sunday we planned with them [that] I will meet them at the Post Office in Phomolong. I had a Ford bakkie. And by five o'clock or six o'clock in the afternoon all of them were there – the workers. … We explained it this way: we're going to take the nightshift away, and then in the morning when the dayshift starts at five, then from four o'clock we are going to block the gate. All of us we're going to town to protest there so that these people must join us. The entire nightshift I met them there at the Post Office in Phomolong and I transported them to my house in Brentpark. All of them slept there that night. Four o'clock I took the van and transported them to town … And at five o'clock all of us were there and the strike went on for three days. The third day then the Security Branch came there - the very same guys who were watching *ntate* Baba - and arrested me. They said that I'm the leader and I have organised this. Then they took me to a farm called Heuningspruit Police Station. They detained me there for seven days before I appeared before court. But there was interrogation in the seven days[863]

[861] Conversation with "Baba" Jordan

[862] In March 2009 Bloem resigned from the ANC and joined the Congress of the People (COPE), which was launched in 2008. Pherudi *Who's Who,* pp.255-61

[863] Interview with Bloem; In the 1980s Bloem was aligned with the United Democratic Front's (UDF) in Kroonstad

The strike action was partially successful. The Bakery could not supply bread to its clients in Kroonstad and the mines in Welkom. In Bloem's words "For three days we shut that bakery."[864]In contrast, Isaac "Sakkie Oliphant remembers the strike differently. According to him, the strike lasted a day and it was broken by the police when they arrested the striking workers. Then the company hired scab labour to work.[865] In spite of the outcome, it is clear that Kroonstad was shaken by the strike action organized by Bloem and his co-workers at the Union Steam Bakery. This resulted in Kroonstad being placed under the strict control of the security police. For instance, in 1980 Kroonstad was amongst a number of other townships served with a ban on political meetings of more than 10 people.[866] This was a serious blow to any further attempts to organize. Notwithstanding, the strike failed to win the workers their demands. It was only in 1980 after another strike action by the workers that the management of the Union Steam Bakery agreed to issue the workers with a 10 per cent increase to their wages.[867]

At the end of the 1970s, the local municipality and the state in general, in their attempt to restore law and order in the once-tranquil and quiescent Kroonstad's black locations, changed tactics. They no longer relied solely on using force to quell political resistance. They planned to win the 'hearts and minds' of the residents, especially the younger generation. They organized camps for young people still at school. At these camps young people were indoctrinated by the members of the South African Defence Force (SADF). Nkambule remembers

> One other thing which was used during this time were camps. These camps were organized to indoctrinate the Standard 7s (Form 2), before they could get to matric. It would be a group of boys, accompanied by one teacher into the veld. In that veld we would find that we were having instructors; and these instructors were members of the SADF. Girls would be organized separately. We were taught that communism was not right. We were told by white people in the presence of our teacher[868]

This tactic seemed to have achieved its objective in Kroonstad – albeit temporarily. Maokeng was to erupt again in 1985 (see chapter five). Before then, the opposition councillors within the community council led resistance against the governing councillors. Chapter four will examine the roles of community and town councils in Maokeng and the Management Committee in Brentpark.

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[864] Ibid.
[865] Interview with "Sakkie" Oliphant
[866] *Post, 28 August 1980*
[867] Again Bloem was detained, together with Jakob Lephuthing, Anthony Louw, Isaac Tshehle and Job, see *Post, 26 July 1980*
[868] Interview with Nkambule

Conclusion

After the Sharpeville massacre, the National Party government enacted a battery of repressive laws. This, coupled with the economic boom, cowed many black people. Those who remained active in politics were forced to function underground. The majority of people instead focused their energies in trying to find employment to eke out a living for themselves and their families. It was not long before the situation would change. New entry points were created to introduce black people to politics. First, it was through the newly established university-colleges for black students. It was in these institutions that many young black students joined the South African Students Organisation (SASO) and became adherents of the Black Consciousness (BC) philosophy.

At the beginning of the 1970s the majority of these students were expelled and others were suspended from their university-colleges mainly for political reasons. A significant number of them were employed as teachers in various high and secondary schools across the country, including Maokeng Township. At Bodibeng High some of these teachers used their position to conscientise students. They instilled in them a BC philosophy, which encouraged the students to be proud of being black. For students, this dispelled the notion of white superiority. Firstly, the students at Bodibeng established the branch of the South African Student Movement (SASM) and, secondly, the Maokeng Student Art Club (MASAC). The central spine of these bodies was the BC philosophy. Consequently, when the students in Soweto rose against the imposition of Afrikaans as one of the two media of instruction, the previously timid students in Maokeng also demonstrated in solidarity with the students in Soweto and elsewhere in the country. Although this demonstration was swiftly curtailed by the police, a seed of resistance had been sown in the young black people in Kroonstad.

The other group of young people entered politics through their involvement in church, particularly the Roman Catholic Church. It was in this church that these young people joined the Young Christian Workers (YCW). The YCW's role was to recruit and give support to the young workers. Furthermore, the YCW conscientised young black people through the politically-loaded stage plays. These activities drew the attention of the police. The leading figures in the YCW were detained and tortured. This forced the members of the YCW to begin to question the role of organization in fighting apartheid. They concluded that apartheid could not be defeat solely by engaging in passive resistance. They decided to use military tactics. The leading figures in the YCW were all detained before they could implement their tactic. They were charged and tried. In the end, the rest were acquitted except for two. This ended the role of the YCW in Kroonstad.

Finally, it was through a banned activist that Dennis Bloem was introduced to politics. Buoyed up by the political knowledge he received from his cousin, Michael "Baba" Jordan, an ardent member of the BC movement, Bloem mobilized and organized a strike action at his workplace,

demanding better payment. Although the strike was swiftly halted by the police but it left an indelible mark in the minds of the black workers in Kroonstad. At the beginning of 1980 workers at the Union Steam Bakery organized successful strikes, demanding better payment.

These entry points into politics assisted political activists such as Bloem, "Sakkie" Oliphant, Khotso Sesele, Lewele Modisenyane, and many more in the 1980s to lead the mobilization of the "community" and protests.[869] Similarly, Mongezi Radebe, for example, benefitted from his association with the YCW. In the 1980s he became a trade unionist, organizing for CCAWUSA (Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union of South Africa).[870]

[869] See interviews with Bloem, Oliphant, Sesele, Modisenyane (LHPR)

[870] Interview with Radebe with Julie Frederikse; see also Twala and Seekings 'Activist networks'; CCAWUSA was later changed to SACCAWU (South African Catering, Commercial and Allied Workers Union)

CHAPTER FOUR

Kroonstad's black local council politics, 1977-1989

Introduction

The 1973 black workers' strike in Durban and the 1976 student revolt, which started in Soweto but soon spread to many other townships across the country, as noted in the previous chapter, aroused "the anger related to deep-rooted grievances over housing, transport, influx control, liquor, crime, corruption, and complete denial of meaningful political rights"[871] for Africans. Moreover, the total condemnation both nationally and internationally of the government's brutal response especially to the student revolt[872], coupled with suggestions from business to government, particularly from the Transvaal Chamber of Industries arguing "... that it was essential to recognise the permanence of the urban black in contrast to viewing him as a temporary sojourner",[873] forced the NP government to introduce reforms, particularly in relation to black local government.[874] In 1977 the government introduced the Community Councils, and in 1982 upgraded them to either Town or Village Councils, under the Black Local Authorities (BLA) Act. Meanwhile for the Coloured communities, the government had earlier introduced Management Committees in the early 1960s.[875] However, these institutions had limited powers, and, most worryingly, they were forced to be financially self-reliant. Inevitably, this caused tensions between these institutions and the communities they were supposed to serve. This was particularly evident in the African townships under the Town Councils in the mid-1980s. For example, these institutions' failure to provide the basic social services to their respective communities and their reliance on increasing rent and service charges placed them in an exposed position. Communities, initially, led by civic organisations and, later, by students, youth, women and trade union organisations, opposed and challenged them, and in a number of townships they were forced to dissolve.

This chapter attempts to demonstrate that the Kroonstad Community Council (KCC) and the Town Council of Maokeng (TCM), in contrast to other councils in many other townships across the country, did not experience protests by members of their community whose main objective was forcing them ultimately to dissolve – at least not until 1989. This does not imply, however, that certain sections of the "community" did not oppose or challenge these Councils. They did.

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[871] Brooks and Brickhill, *Whirlwind,* p.274

[872] Lynda Schuster estimates that by the end of the third day of student revolt in Soweto nearly 200 people had died and thousands of others were wounded. See Schuster, L. *A Burning Hunger,* p.76; According to the Cillie Commission, cited by Ndlovu, by the end of February 1977 the official death toll stood at 575: 496 Africans, 75 Coloured, two whites, and two Indian. See Ndlovu 'The Soweto Uprising', p.350

[873] Brooks and Brickhill *Whirlwind*, p.293

[874] Also see Lodge *Black Politics,* p.336

[875] See Nieftagodien, M.N. 'The Implementation of Urban Apartheid on the East Rand, 1948-1973: The Role of Local Government and Local Resistance' (University of the Witwatersrand PhD Thesis, 2001), pp263-5

But these lacked wider "community" support. It was for this reason that they were always unsuccessful. The Councils, including the Management Committee (Manco), for Coloureds in Brentpark, remained at the helm of the administration of their townships for their full terms. In fact, the TCM (renamed City Council of Maokeng in 1989) and the Brentpark's Manco were only finally dissolved following the introduction of the Transitional Local Council (TLC), which administered the three areas: Maokeng, Brentpark and town until the first democratic local government elections in November 1995. The main reason the TCM and the Manco in Brentpark remained in power for their full terms, I contend, was because they satisfied their communities' social needs, especially those of the adults' (rate payers), and made concerted efforts to keep the rent and service charges at a minimum level. But most importantly, and this largely applied to the TCM, they interceded with state officials on behalf of their communities over various issues.

In 1989 the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), a formal alliance between the United Democratic Front (UDF)[876] and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) was established, and it pushed for radical changes. From the onset the MDM embarked on a defiance campaign, during which, amongst other things, all the government-created structures were defied and subjected to protests. It was against this background that the TCM was explicitly opposed and even called to dissolve. Although this chapter will focus more on the situation in Maokeng, it will also allude to events in Brentpark.

According to Seekings, "during 1978 and 1984 there was considerable popular discontent over a range of local issues: rent increases, evictions, the lack of development, and unresponsive councillors".[877] This was certainly true of residents in many of the townships in the PWV and elsewhere. In Maokeng, by contrast, during this period, because of lack of such pressing social issues, save for a proposed rent increase in 1977, residents remained unorganised and therefore less hostile to the Council and its councillors. Any challenge to the latter came from the opposition parties in the Council.

After the elections of the Town Councils under the BLA Act of 1982, opposition to these Councils and the councillors became intense and violent. "During 1984 politics in townships on the East Rand, Vaal Triangle and Pretoria underwent the transition from quiescence to confrontation", writes Seekings.[878] Struggles over rents and education proliferated. For Seekings "these were initially little different to struggles of previous years, but they were increasingly

[876] The UDF, made up of affiliates, was launched in August 1983 at Mitchell's Plain, Cape Town. It was formed, initially, to co-ordinate opposition to the National Party (NP) government's reforms, particularly the introduction of the 'Tri-cameral Parliament', which provided racially segregated representation in central government for Coloured and Indian as well as white South Africans, but excluded the African majority. See Seekings *UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa, 1983-1991, Cape Town, David Philip, 2000*

[877] Seekings 'Quiescence', p.106

[878] Ibid., p.217

distinguished by their number, concurrence, intensity, deepening politicisation, and finally violence".[879] These struggles were mainly against the Town Councils and the councillors. Thus Seekings asserts that "during 1984 ... protests arose out of not just the inability of the township councillors to redress grievances (especially rent increases) adequately, but also the councils' responsibility for the grievances." "Councillors", he observes, "were the focus of discontent."[880] In Maokeng, conversely, protests were not directed against the Town Council until 1989.

This chapter will show that, unlike other townships, Maokeng did not experience mobilisation and protests against the Kroonstad Community Council (KCC) and the Town Council of Maokeng (TCM), in the case of the latter at least until 1989. This was largely due to the fact that in Maokeng during the 1977-1983 period there was no civic organisation to mobilise the residents against the KCC, which in turn was because there were no pressing socio-economic problems experienced by other communities elsewhere. Similarly, between 1985 and 1988 the 'progressive' structures which had since been established focused their energies on opposing the central government. In other words, the politics of the local activists in Maokeng during this period were national in character rather than local.[881]

Three reasons can be cited for the different turn of events in Maokeng Township. First, the councillors serving in the KCC, which was established in 1977, to borrow a phrase from Jeremy Seekings "... provided residents with one channel through which they could raise and resolve certain limited problems".[882] Specifically, these councillors challenged some of the unpopular decisions taken by the Northern Orange Free State Bantu Administration Board (NOFBAB) on behalf of the community. But more importantly, during the administration of the KCC resistance against the governing councillors was mainly led by the opposition party councillors working in the KCC. Second, the TCM, which took over the administration of the township in 1984, was led by an astute and charismatic politician, Caswell Koekoe. Under his leadership the TCM was able to provide the residents with the necessary social services such as houses, tarred and well-maintained roads, without increasing rent and service charges (or at least keeping them at a minimum level compared to other townships). More significantly, Koekoe's TCM continued in the tradition of the KCC, taking up conciliatory and arbitration roles. And finally, the absence of a civic association (Seeisoville Civic Association, in 1992 renamed the South African National

[879] Ibid.

[880] Seekings 'Quiescence', p.37

[881] From 1979 in many townships across the country residents began to mobilize and organize themselves against the Community Council, and later Town Council's decision to raise rent and service charges without consultation but, most importantly, without any visible indication where the rent and service charges money was used for in the townships. Townships' infrastructure remained debilitated and at worst non-existent. See Seekings, 'Quiescence'; Van Kessel, I. "Beyond our wildest dreams": The United Democratic Front and the Transformation of South Africa (United States of America, The University Press of Virginia, 2000), Siyotula, N.G. 'Thembisa Rent Boycott' (Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand, Honours Dissertation, 1989), Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus*

[882] Seekings, 'Quiescence', p.69

Civic Association, was only formed in 1990/91), and the late arrival of trade unions (they only became active from 1985) perpetuated the TCM's stay in power for two full terms.

Most significantly, what particularly distinguished the TCM from other Councils across the country was that it was the governing councillors, especially its chairman Koekoe, and not the opposition party councillors in the TCM who mediated and interceded with the central government's officials on behalf of the residents, and who occasionally flouted the government's policy governing Africans living in the urban areas. In other townships this role was played by the independent opposition councillors or opposition parties within the Council. Seekings, and Bonner and Nieftagodien in their studies describe such councillors as 'popular conservatives' or 'dissident councillors'.[883] For instance, for Seekings Shadrack Sinaba from Daveyton, in the East Rand, was a 'dissident councillor', because of the populist line he adopted within the Council.[884] Sinaba, who represented residents in the informal settlements (or squatters), opposed and challenged the East Rand Administration Board's (ERAB) and the Council's decision to demolish shacks belonging to the poor and homeless people in the township.[885] Bonner and Nieftagodien, on the other hand, point out that Jacob Khoali of the Katlehong Action Committee was also a populist conservative figure in the Katlehong Council in the early 1980s. According to them, in 1985 he threatened to resign if the Council implemented rent increases. Furthermore, he was also involved in organising a public meeting to oppose the rent increases at which calls were made for councillors to resign.[886]

This raises the question of whether one can plot a significantly different trajectory in small towns and whether Kroonstad is representation or unrepresentative.

Community Council, 1977 to 1983

During the period 1977 to 1983 – just before the BLA's elections – Maokeng's council politics were no different from other townships in the country. For instance, the Kroonstad Community Council (KCC) had limited powers, was under the supervision of white officials in the NOFBAB, who imposed unpopular decisions on it to implement, and most importantly mediated in domestic disputes. In Maokeng, however, unlike in other townships, the residents did not organise themselves into a fully-fledged civic organisation to oppose the KCC even after the latter had endorsed a rent increase by the NOFBAB. The only challenge against the KCC came from the opposition party within the Council (in 1980 the latter was assisted by the Committee of

[883] Seekings 'Quiescence', pp.110-127; Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* pp.98-102
[884] Seekings 'Quiescence', p.111
[885] Ibid., p.114; also see Sapire, H. 'Politics and Protest in Shack Settlements of the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging Region, South Africa, 1980-1990', in *Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol.18, No.3, 1992*
[886] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* pp.98-9

12 who had been elected by the residents of Marabastad to fight the rent increase).[887] Conversely, in Lingelihle, Cradock, in the Eastern Cape, the councillors in the Cradock Community Council (CCC), which came into being in 1978, were attacked in 1980 by the members of the Masakhane (IsiXhosa for 'Let us help each other') organisation for failing repeatedly to fulfil its promises of, for example, constructing and building schools.[888] Similarly, in 1981 the Kagiso (later renamed Krugersdorp) Residents' Organisation (KRO) was formed in response to rent increases in Kagiso, in the West Rand.[889] And in 1982 some of the Natal townships like Klaarwater, in Pinetown, and Sobantu residents' organisations were formed specifically to fight against rent increases.[890]

Finally, in other areas such as those in parts of the then Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vaal (PWV) region (today's part of the Gauteng Province), because of the growth of massive manufacturing industries experienced a rapid expansion of African population, which needed to be accommodated and provided with the necessary social services. When the townships' Development Boards and Councils failed to meet these requirements many of the immigrants were forced to settle in the growing informal settlements within some of the townships. The threat to forcibly remove or demolish these settlements caused the formation of representatives or committee structures which, according to Hilary Sapire, "arose in virtually all settlements".[891] These representatives or committee structures' functions included "co-ordinating defence, providing basic resources and ensuring social order"[892] in the shack settlements. Moreover, they negotiated with the local authorities.[893] Before 1980, Sapire argues that shack dwellers avoided joining together with 'progressive' structures in the townships "and were less overtly confrontational towards the state ..."[894] This was largely because of their precarious presence in the urban area. Because they lacked legal rights to be in the urban areas, shack dwellers were forced to lead a clandestine existence. "Engagement in overt confrontation (popularly supported by the 'progressive' structures) or political activity would have invited exposure to hundreds of these vulnerable men and women", writes Sapire.[895] In contrast, because of Kroonstad's limited manufacturing industries, black residential areas did not experience a growing number of work seekers. It was for this reason that Maokeng enjoyed the absence of shack (or informal)

[887] *Post, 18 March 1980*
[888] Ibid., pp.151-6
[889] Seekings 'Quiescence', p.148; also see Lekgoathi, S.P. 'The United Democratic Front, political resistance and local struggles in the Vaal and West Rand townships in the 1980s', in SADET *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, *Volume 4 (1980–1990)* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2010)
[890] Hughes, H. and Grest, J. 'The Local State', in *South African Review I: Some Foundations, New Facades* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1983), p.128; The first major extra-state civic organization to be established was the Soweto Civic Association (SCA), formerly known as the 'Committee of Ten'. See Seekings 'Quiescence' p.147
[891] Sapire 'Politics and Protest', 682
[892] Ibid.
[893] Ibid.
[894] Ibid., p.689
[895] Ibid.

settlements. In 1990 some of the 'progressive' activists attempted to mobilise the residents to invade a vacant land and erect shacks there. This attempt was, however, swiftly halted by Koekoe and his council.

To explain why Maokeng was different it is important to first understand the national politics and the impact it had on the local level.

Bernard Magubane writes that from the late 1950s the National Party government embarked on the road to 'high apartheid', "because of the perceived failure of its previous policies to stem the tide of African urbanization and limit dependence of the 'white' economy on African labour".[896] The key objective of the government's policies during this period of 'high apartheid' was to "... shut off all further African immigration to the towns and channel all new investment in black communities into the African homelands", according to Bonner and Nieftagodien.[897] From that point on, Africans were no longer differentiated as 'detribalised' (urbanised) and 'tribalised' (rural), but were now classified as members of specific ethnic groups in accordance with the Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959. Furthermore, the promotion of 'homelands' resulted in massive reallocation of resources from urban areas to the reserves.[898] "As a result", argues Magubane, "African urban townships suffered from neglect and entered a spiral of socio-economic decline in the late 1960s".[899] One of the measures the government utilised to discourage Africans from migrating to the urban areas with the intention of living there permanently was by withholding all kinds of infrastructure and other resources such as housing.[900]

Again, in 1967, Africans living in the urban areas were debarred from purchasing houses as they were regarded as temporary sojourners.[901] If they wished to purchase a house they could do so in their homeland. Seekings writes "from 1968 until the late 1970s housing development in townships outside of the Bantustans had been subject to severe restrictions and very few new houses were built".[902] According to the Progress Report, Thembisa Housing Section, for example, in February 1969 a total of 161 houses had been completed during the course of that

[896] Magubane, B. 'Introduction: The political context', in SADET *The Road to Democracy,* Vol. 1, 1960-1970 (Cape Town, Zebra Press, 2004, p.39

[897] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* p.184

[898] The government had assigned each Administration Board the responsibility to raise money for development in a particular homeland. Lebowa, for example, was assigned to the East Rand Administration Board (ERAB). From 1973 a huge slice of ERAB's slender revenues were diverted to building houses in Lebowakgomo, the capital of Lebowa. See Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* p.60

[899] Magubane 'Introduction', p.40

[900] See Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* p.88

[901] Magubane 'Introduction', p.49

[902] Seekings 'Quiescence', p.55

month.[903] And "between 1973 and 1979 fewer than 7000 houses were built on the East Rand".[904] At this stage the government focused its efforts on two issues: tightening influx control especially over African women and building single-sex hostels to accommodate the rapidly growing number of Africans employed in the urban areas.[905] In spite of this Africans obstinately swelled the towns and cities' population in search of employment[906], causing congestion particularly in townships closer to towns that were host to expanding manufacturing industries. The government's efforts to expel or turn residents into temporary sojourners were undermined by the capitalized manufacturing industries' heavy reliance on a semi-skilled and permanent workforce rather than a cheap migrant workforce. By contrast, because of the fewer numbers of industrialized manufacturing undertakings in Kroonstad, Maokeng, as noted above, did not experience an exponential population increase. For instance, in 1982 Maokeng's population stood at 64 000 blacks and in 1988 67 000. Thembisa Township, in the East Rand, on the other hand, which was established in 1957 already by 1969 had a population that was estimated to be about 66 214.[907]

As a consequence, Maokeng did not experience a severe shortage of housing – as was the case in other areas. Similarly, lack of infrastructure common in many townships in the then PVW region seems to not have been a problem in Maokeng either. As a result there were no squatters in the township. Tsiu Matsepe, for example, does not remember the existence of shack settlements in the township to accommodate people living there. He explains

> What is interesting is that if one had to compare my area with the derelict area of today, the phenomenon of shacks was not really there. It would be small houses built with bricks, [but] somewhere else, you know, it would be corrugated iron. And, I think, generally Kroonstad even today must have developed in that way, because the phenomenon of shared buildings does not exist. You can find shacks anywhere in most of the townships in South Africa but you don't get shack buildings like in Soweto or any other place[908]

[903] UWL HLP A1934/C12.2 Thembisa, April 1969, 'East Rand Administration Board'

[904] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* p.88

[905] To minimize the influx of African women into urban areas, the government enacted the Bantu Laws Amendment Act of 1964. See Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* pp.184-91

[906] For example Bonner and Nieftagodien point out that in 1970 the official population of Kathorus (Katlehong, Thokoza and Vosloorus) stood at 151 000: Katlehong (95 751), Thokoza (25 673), and Vosloorus (29 689). Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* p.88

[907] UWL HLP A1934/C12.2 Thembisa, April 1969 'East Rand Administration Board Statistics submitted for the information of the committee in January 1969'

[908] Interview with Tsiu Matsepe by Tshepo Moloi (STHP), Welkom, 28 March 2007

To deal with the acute housing shortage in Maokeng, for example, the local authorities, in the mid-1970s developed Constantia Park and LTA.[909] This soaked, albeit temporarily, the pressure of homelessness in the township.[910]

Factors that served as an impetus in other townships for residents to mobilise and organise against the Community Councils (for example, the Soweto Civic Association formed in September 1979 to oppose rent increases, the Mamelodi Action Committee formed two years later for the same reason[911]) did not exist in Maokeng. According to Seekings, "civic organisations *established at this stage* challenged the councils, but neither sought to win control nor substitute themselves for the council".[912] "Their role", Seekings adds "was to provide an alternative institutional channel through which grievances could be raised, and to serve as a watchdog over the councils".[913] These were different from conservative extra-state associations such as the Thokoza Progressive Association (TPA), which was formed in 1980. The TPA's opposition was aimed at substituting the governing council.[914] The chapter will now turn to the role played by the KCC in Maokeng.

In 1977 the government promulgated the Community Councils Act, which allowed for the devolution of specific powers from the Administration Boards to the new councils, subject to ministerial approval."[915] Initially, specific powers and duties devolved to the Urban Bantu Councils – predecessors to the Community Councils - included making recommendations to the authorities concerned and controlling the keeping of dogs and the imposition of a levy for keeping dogs, and the promotion of sound community development.[916] At this stage the residents in different townships were content with the Councils and councillors because of their modest roles did not encourage corruption. However, after the *Verligtes* (enlightened people) in the ruling party begin to regain some authority in the government in the post-1976 student uprisings, the Councils' role was transformed. This was after the new Minister of Bantu Affairs (renamed Plural Relations and Development, and later Co-operation and Development), Dr Piet Koornhof, made it clear that he would devolve upon the Community Councils far greater powers

[909] Both Constantia and LTA (so named after the construction company) were built in 1977. According to Pherudi, LTA comprised of the loan houses and Constantia Park were the normal four-roomed houses. Pherudi *The History,* p.104

[910] In 1980 there was an estimated need for 6000 homes. *Post, 1 April 1980*

[911] Seekings 'Quiescence', pp.147-8

[912] Ibid., p.147

[913] Ibid.

[914] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* p.102

[915] Ibid.*,* p.96; The Minister of the Department of Co-operation and Development had absolute control over every aspect of the functioning of community councils. From the decision to set the machinery in motion to establish a council, to granting it functions to perform, to regulating the order of business as its meetings, to dissolving it if in the 'public interest' to do so. See Hughes and Grest 'The Local State', p.124

[916] Seidman, J. *Facelift Apartheid: South Africa after Soweto* (London, International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1980), p.16

than his predecessor had apparently contemplated.[917] The most important powers vested on individual council could now include:

- to allocate and administer accommodation for migrant labourers and family accommodation for persons qualifying under Section 10 of the Black (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act for such housing in urban areas;

- to approve building plans for private dwellings and to prevent the illegal occupation and buildings of dwellings;

- to allocate trading sites and to maintain essential services such as water supply, refuse removal and sewerage and roads within the townships[918]

It was after this that allegations of corruption against some of the community councillors began to spread in the townships.[919] Seekings argues that there remained important limits in practice to the Council's power. "Firstly", he notes, "Administration Board officials retained much of their authority, whether within the Boards or seconded to the new councils – and many of these were opposed to the reforms." Hennie Ludick, who started working for the Community Council in Maokeng as an assistant manager in late 1981, for example, recalls that the Vaal-Orange Administration Board (VOAB), which was established following the amalgamation between NOFBAB and the Vaal Triangle, refused to transfer some of the assets which legally belonged to the Kroonstad Community Council (KCC). He explains

> Although at that stage there was still a certain fight that was on. I remember so well we expected from the Orange-Vaal to transfer all the assets to the council, because for one or other reason they kept some of the information. They kept some of the financial investments. Because once you're a new municipality, they have to transfer what belongs to us. You remember there was a brewery here. We used to make Bantu beer. And we argued that that brewery was part and parcel of Maokeng. They have to transfer that … Eventually it was done. But it was a hell of a fight[920]

"Secondly", Seekings asserts, "that councils controlled too few resources to be able to make the more important decisions."[921] Financially, the community councils relied on allocations from the Department of Co-operation and Development's (CAD) annual budget.[922] These dimished rather than grew. According to Hughes and Grest, "although the CAD budget vote for 1982 was 10%

[917] Ibid., p.18
[918] Bekker and Humphrey, *From Control,* pp.99-100; also see Seekings, 'Quiescence', p.57
[919] Seekings 'Quiescence', p.76
[920] Interview with Hennie Ludick (LHPR) Kroonstad, 22 May 2009
[921] Seekings, 'Quiescence', p.58
[922] Hughes and Grest 'The Local State', p.126

higher than the previous year's, inflation was running at 13,5%.[923] Furthermore, the community councils' financial woes were aggravated by the boards' misallocation of funds and 'fruitless expenditure'.[924] More worrying was that in the post-1976 period the traditional sources of revenue available to the Boards and Councils like the employer levies and beer and liquor sales had declined. This would help explain why the KCC experienced difficulties in providing some of the social services in the townships. Reporting about the appalling state of streets in the Maokeng townships, Bulara Diphoto wrote

> In the townships all the streets except one, are untarred. Only the main street is covered with a simple tar and heavy rains always mark the alleys with potholes. These streets become slippery on rainy days and the taxi owners find it difficult to deliver the passengers at their homes[925]

According to Seekings, "From 1977 to 1983 the employer contribution rates were not increased. The Riekert Commission of Inquiry headed by Dr Riekert, an Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister, called for them to be abolished altogether".[926] For the Riekert Commission, Africans living legally in the urban areas "... should themselves bear a greater share of the total financial burden in respect of housing, services and transport".[927] Thus in many townships the situation either remained the same or worsened. For instance, Bonner and Nieftagodien point out that in the mid-1980s the residents of Kathorus "... had to contend with decrepit sewerage systems, limited access to clean water and electricity, and a general decline in housing standards".[928]

In spite of the financial difficulties in which the community councils found themselves in, Councils initially enjoyed community support because of one role they played: mediating in domestic affairs. Seekings notes "until the early 1980s many township councillors provided residents with one channel through which they could raise and resolve certain limited problems. Councillors served as arbiters in township disputes, mediators for residents with the authorities, and dispensers of limited forms of patronage. These roles brought councillors some significant popular support".[929] This view was clearly corroborated by the interviewee in the statement below:

> If you fought with your wife, you could be taken to the councillors, and they will sort out the problems ... most of the cases were not handed over to the police, but

[923] Ibid.
[924] Ibid.
[925] *Weekend World, 1 July 1977*
[926] Seekings 'Quiescence', pp.60-1
[927] Seidman *Facelift apartheid,* p.59
[928] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* p.92
[929] Seekings 'Quiescence', p.69

> were being solved by them. Or if you have a relative living in the rural areas, and you want that relative to live in the township, this can be done through the councillors ... That is why our parents had confidence in them[930]

In similar vein, other residents viewed "the councillors' roles as limited and well-defined

> The councillors were people who were just going to help with family disputes. Our people didn't think of them playing any active political role whatsoever, they were just like social workers, or marriage counsellors[931]

Indeed, Simon Monne Ramothibi, who became a councillor in the Phiritona Community Council (PCC) in 1979, claims that he, as a councillor, made it his responsibility to assist members of his community when they approached him for help. He explains

> *When residents came to me for help I'd* never turn them back, "rather I would say let's go to my office so that you can tell me about your problems".[932]

In addition "Councillors would lobby and intercede", writes Seekings "with state officials over such issues as residents permits, house and license allocations, development and rents".[933] Such action endeared the councillors to their communities. However, it was not long before the situation changed.

For Seekings, it was the changing role of Community Council which inevitably impacted on the councillors' relations with other residents; that was a key factor in the growing tensions between the residents and the new councils. Now that the councillors had the powers to allocate accommodation and trading sites, for instance, Seekings and other commentators believe this encouraged corruption on the part of the councillors. In 1983, for example, councillor 'Tiger' Rabolou was killed by an irate supplicant. According to a witness, writes Seekings, Rabolou's killer told him

> 'Tiger', since I gave you my R200 last year you promised that you would get me a house in the township but instead you decided to give the house to your children and you left us stranded[934]

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[930] Ibid., p.71
[931] Ibid., p.72
[932] Interview with Simon Monne Ramothibi by Gift Poli and Ace Nyaleka, for the Free State ANC Centenary Project, Free State, Phiritona, n.d. (Italics my emphasis)
[933] Seekings 'Quiescence', p.72
[934] Ibid., p.80

Similarly, Bonner and Nieftagodien note that the Vosloorus Council was criticised for misallocation of funds. According to them "In 1983 the Vosloorus Council spent R3.5 million on the construction of a civic centre *instead* of using the money towards the provision of houses".[935] Similarly, in Munsieville, West Rand, residents organised themselves into a civic organisation to oppose the community councillors, including the Mayor Mrs Makgongwane, not only for increasing rent but also for allegations of an arbitrary, oppressive and unjust methods of allocating housing.[936] In Maokeng, such allegations of corruption against certain governing councillors were spearheaded by members of the opposition in the Council.

In accordance with section 21 of Ordinance No. 8 of 1978 the election of community councillors in the OFS were held in March 1978.[937] And on 26 September of the same year, the Mayor of the Kroonstad Municipality reported that "a Community Council for the local black township would be inaugurated on 18 October 1978 ..."[938] The Council was made up of the following councillors: S.M.C. Seroto (chairman), M.M. Mabitle, A. Lechalaba, E. Phakoe, P. Tau, J. Monyake, E.M. Setai, N.B. Plank, D. Ramakhale, Mrs J. Mokgoetsi, Mrs B. Roro, T.A. Thibile, and A. Mohanoe. The executive comprised of Seroto, Mogoetsi, Lechalaba, Mabitle and Monyake.[939] The rest were opposition councillors in the council.

Not long after the inauguration of the Kroonstad Community Council (KCC), tension arose between the governing councillors and the opposing councillors. This tension can be traced back to the period of the Urban Bantu Council (UBC) and NOFBAB. In 1977 the NOFBAB built 400 houses in Constantia Park, Maokeng, whereas 9000 families were on the local waiting list.[940] This was to done at the cost of about R3 500 per house. The total cost came to just above R30 million. This cost, according to the NOFBAB's administrative control officer, Johannes Kruger, was higher than in Soweto because it included plans for waterborne sewerage and internal bathrooms.[941] After spending this sum of money, the NOFBAB expected to accrue part of its expenditure through money from rentals and service charges. It therefore increased rents in 24 townships in the northern OFS, including Kroonstad. Rents were increased for sites with

[935] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* p.97
[936] Lekgoathi 'The United Democratic Front', p.595
[937] Minutes of the Kroonstad Municipality - 'Election of Councillors 1978: Compilation of Voters Roll', 29.11.1977
[938] Minutes of the Kroonstad Municipality - 'Inauguration of Community Council: Presentation of address', 26.9.1978
[939] *Post, 19 August 1980;* also see Kroonstad Community Council Minutes, 12 December 1980 to 10 December 1981
[940] *Weekend World, 11 September 1977;* the reported number of houses built by NOFBAB differ. The *Rand Daily Mail* report set the figure at 200. See *Rand Daily Mail, 24 May 1978*
[941] *Rand Daily Mail, 2 February 1977*

waterborne sewerage from R5 to R9, and those without waterborne sewerage from R4.50 to R8.[942]

Initially, the more than 5000 people who were removed from Marabastad to Constantia to occupy the newly-built houses refused to take occupation of the houses because of increased rent.[943] They were now expected to pay R8 compared to R3 before, which some of the residents were already struggling to pay.[944] There is no evidence to suggest that these residents were organised. But it seems plausible that they were encouraged by (or had the support of the) the opposition councillors to boycott the newly built houses in Constantia. After the KCC took over from the UBC, it not only inherited the debt but the agreement reached between Kroonstad's UBC and NOFBAB. The UBC, initially opposed the NOFBAB's decision to increase rent, but finally relented and agreed to rent increments. Ernest Mahloane, secretary of the Kroonstad UBC said "The UBC was against the increases at first, but we later accepted them as necessary".[945]

These rent increases affected the site-holders. Rent, for example, as noted above, was increased in Marabastad. In Seeisoville, Constantia and Phomolong rents for houses without water borne sewerage leaped from R4.50 to R8 and in houses with water borne sewerage increased from R4.50 to R9.[946] Comparatively, Kroonstad's rent increases were lower than in some of the OFS townships. For instance, John Dlamini, a member of the Bethlehem UBC reported that new rents had increased from R7.10 to R10.50.[947] The KCC, faced with a dearth of financial resources chose the obvious route: they increased rent. Residents failed to pay and the debt increased.[948]

In its attempt to encourage residents to pay rent, the KCC Executive Committee met in January 1979, where suggestions were made by councillors that either a mass meeting or ward meetings be called to inform the residents about the "true financial position of the town council. In the event, the councillors decided that a ward meeting be held first, and later a mass meeting, in which officials may attend.[949] It is not clear whether such meetings were held or what the outcomes were. But from the available evidence, rent debt continued to increase. In 1981 the council owed the OVAB[950] R257 007.10 in site rentals; R3 610.00 for business site rentals; and R31 347.00 in rentals for scheme houses.[951] Unlike the Community Council, the OVAB decided

[942] *Rand Daily Mail, 3 August 1978; Rand Daily Mail Extra, 2 August 1978*
[943] *Rand Daily Mail, 24 May 1978*
[944] *Rand Daily Mail Extra, 21 August 1978*
[945] Ibid.
[946] Ibid
[947] Ibid.
[948] In 1980 the residents of Marabastad owed the Council R140 000. *Post, 26 August 1980*
[949] Minutes of the Kroonstad Community Council Executive Committee, 29 Nov 1978 to 27 Nov 1980.
[950] Following the publication of the Riekert Commission and the White Paper, the 22 Administration Boards were consolidated into 14 new Boards. Kroonstad fell under the Orange-Vaal Administration Board, which straggled between the Transvaal (today Gauteng Province) and OFS, see Bekker and Humphrey, *From Control,* p.31
[951] Minutes of the Thirty-Sixth General Meeting held on 26 Nov 1981 – 'Rentals in arrears: Kroonstad township'

to take vigorous steps to recover its money – steps which were later to be enforced by the KCC. The OVAB issued notices warning "the culprits may face eviction and their movable properties would be confiscated to recover the owed money".[952] Tensions boiled over between the opposition councillors and the ruling councillors when the latter seemed to be supporting the OVAB's decision.

Ben Plank, leader of the opposition councillors, at a well-attended meeting at Social Centre Hall in Seeisoville criticised the KCC's executive committee reveal[ing] "that the committee always takes irrelevant decisions which are harmful to the residents". "Worse still", he added, "other councillors are not duly informed about those decisions."[953] Phakoe, another member of opposition party "advised all those who have received notices which bore the signature of the township manager, J.J. van Rooyen, to meet him urgently."[954] Moreover the opposition councillors accused van Rooyen of acting beyond his authority.[955] The governing councillors, through their chairman Seroto, responded and criticised the opposition. Seroto termed the statements by the opposition as "irresponsible", and went on to defend Van Rooyen's actions. He argued that Section 7 of the regulations promulgated under proclamation number R186, dated August 25 1967, empowered him to recover the outstanding rentals.[956] From available sources, particularly the council minutes, there is no evidence to suggest that either the OVAB or the governing councillors evicted rent defaulters, or confiscated their belongings to recover money. Instead, the OVAB's police went around the township daily with a loud-speaker, advising residents to pay their rents.[957]

The opposition councillors do not seem to have taken further steps either, except to hold the meeting with the affected residents, where the Community Council committee was criticised. In an interview with Alfred Matube he claimed that Soroto's and some of his councillors' properties were destroyed by the residents.[958] None of the other people interviewed for this study recalled this incident. It is unlikely to have happened during the Kroonstad Community Council's reign. The only time when councillors' and the council's properties were attacked and destroyed was during the student revolt in 1985 (see Chapter Five). Matube probably misplaces this incident to the late 1970s.

Opposition to rent increases in Maokeng was not properly organized. Although it affected all the townships in Maokeng, opposition was, however, only mounted in Marabastad. And this opposition was led by the opposition party in the council. A closer look at the reason the

[952] *Post, 19 August 1980*
[953] Ibid.
[954] Ibid.
[955] Ibid.
[956] *Post, 23 August 1980*
[957] Ibid.
[958] Interview with Matube

opposition party in the council, which in 1980 had coalesced with the Committee of 12 elected by the residents of Marabastad, opposed the OVAB and KCC's executive decision to increase rent suggests that the coalition group opposition was simply not because it was against the policy of increasing rent. But this coalition opposed the rent increase particularly in Marabastad, because the area was neglected by the local authorities and the fact that the UBC, prior to the KCC, had made an undertaken that the proposed rent increases in the townships would not affect Marabastad. Plank, the leader of the opposition party, argued

> The increases should affect Marabastad, which has been declared a slum. Marabastad received little attention, if any, from the Orange-Vaal Administration Board[959]

A.T. Thibile, a spokesperson for the opposition party, addressing a meeting at Maokeng Higher Primary to discuss the rent increases, referring to the previous resolutions by the defunct UBC, added

> Marabastad has been declared a dead donkey, it has long declared a slum but most humiliating, the board does not shame itself for collecting even a cent from the poor residents[960]

In the same meeting, Plank reasoned that it was illegal to charge the residents of Marabastad additional rental fees because "the residents of Marabastad live in dilapidated houses because the board discouraged them from improving them".[961]

The uncompromising position by the coalition group, led by Plank, encouraged the residents of Marabastad to refuse to pay the rent increases. This caused serious tensions between the governing councillors and the opposition party. These intensified. The opposition watched the governing councillors' every move like hawks. If they suspected misconduct on the part of the governing councillors, they informed the higher authorities. For example, in 1980 Councillors Phakoe, Thibile and Plank sent a letter to the Minister of Co-operation and Development, Dr Piet Koornhof, informing him of alleged irregularities in Kroonstad. This mainly involved the chairman of the Council's [mis]use of the Council's Kombi to transport prison convicts to jail in the afternoon of the 14th December 1979, which was for his own benefit. They complained that "his travelling expenses are borne by the community which is very much hit by scarcity of work in its area."[962] In the same year, a report was given to the Community Council, informing it that the chairman of the council had been temporarily allocated two business sites by the Township

[959] *Post, 18 March 1980*
[960] *Post, 11 April 1980*
[961] Ibid.
[962] Kroonstad Community Council Minutes, 12 December 1980 to December 10 1981

Manager without the notification of the Council. Thereafter the sites were advertised. The source of the report is unknown but it is possible it might have come from the opposition councillors.[963] Other than the opposition councillors in the council challenging and even exposing unpopular decisions and corrupt tendencies within the council, there was no other structure in Maokeng such as a civic association to mobilize the residents against the Council. But some of the members of the community were conscious of the misdeeds perpetrated by the governing councillors and perceived these as the cause of lack of improvement in the township.

For Leonard Butiboy Mafokosi, the founding member of the Dikakapa ('The Legends') Party, this was the key factor in them forming a party that was to contest the 1983 Black Local Government elections. He remarks

> I remember then I was still working in the insurance industry – this was in the '80s. I was the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the party. I didn't join Dikakapa; I was the founder member of Dikakapa. And as we sat and discussed with other people, then we felt that Kroonstad was going [nowhere]. *Ntate* Koekoe had just left Kroonstad for homeland politics. He was in Qwaqwa. *Ntate* Mabitle took over and other people as councillors [in the KCC]. But we realised that 'No can go'. There was no improvement in terms of infrastructure, schools, anything, you know. Then we felt that we had to do something as people in Kroonstad[964]

These sentiments were also shared by other disgruntled residents in other townships. In Phiritona, Heilbron, in the northern Free State, some of the members of the community organised themselves to contest the community council elections, with the intention of substituting the incumbent UBC councillors in the township because they felt the latter had not only failed the community but were also "puppets" of the Superintendent, Asseweging. Ramothibi, who became the Mayor of Phiritona towards the end of the 1980s, explains

> During this period there were 'blockmen'. These were nominated by the residents but it was the Superintendent who decided who became a member of the 'blockmen'. If he liked you, you became a member and if not you couldn't. Some of the members of the 'blockmen' included Ms Maipuso, who was also a nursing sister; Mr Shongwane, Mr Mabusane. They were old people most of them. Then we plotted to oust them from office. This was in 1978 or 1979. We held our meetings clandestinely in the houses of the people that we trusted. The reason for this was that at this stage there were the Special Branch here[965]

[963] Ibid.
[964] Interview with Leonard Butiboy Mafokosi, (LHPR), Letaba Farm, Kroonstad District, 15 January 2009
[965] Interview with Ramothibi; 'blockmen' or *libonda* were councillors in the Urban Bantu Council

Ramothibi and his colleagues won the Community Council elections. Ramothibi continues

> Okay, we were able to oust the 'blockmen'. And we took over. It was Sephula, Hlahane, Molete, Ms Mamolora, myself, teacher Mpembe – we were seven. I've forgotten the other member. We became a Council. This was in 1979[966]

In spite of the challenge from the opposition councillors, the governing councillors in Maokeng continued with their mandate as stipulated in the Community Council Act. Among other things they allocated business sites. For example, in the Community Council's meeting held on 9 February 1980, the Council reported that it had considered 14 applications for business sites on subdivided stands 3971 and 5698 in Constantia.[967] The council, subject to the approval of the Department of Co-operation and Development, also planned to allocate 442 stands in Constantia, provided with sewer, water reticulation and gravel road at a total estimated cost of R203 000.00. The bulk of the money to finance this project, it was claimed, would come from external loans.[968] Equally important, the Council offered bursaries to local students, and for others, loan bursaries.[969] Finally, it purchased and distributed 2 136 blankets amongst indigent persons residing in their respective wards.[970]

To finance these projects the Council used various methods to both save and raise money, in addition to rent. It saved its finances by amending its expenditure account. For example, in 1980 the Council reduced the contribution towards the maintenance of buildings from R32 000 to R25 000. It did the same with the contribution intended for the maintenance of electrical networks. It reduced this contribution from R30 000 to R25 000. Whereas, contributions towards the replacement of refuse bins and sanitary pails were deleted. In the same vein, it deleted the R1000 contribution towards bursaries for students.[971] In the following year, the Council accrued its finances by charging building plan fees. With effect from 1 July 1981 new building plans cost R20 and additions R10. And any person erecting buildings in accordance with standard plans … with a size of up to 60 square metres had to pay R10 for a new building and for additions R5.[972]In addition, the Council expected to receive its revenue from rent, which mostly was not forthcoming because of the boycott by the site permit holders.[973] From 1 April 1982 unsewered sites cost R19.50 per month and R20.50 per month for sewered sites.[974] The Council also levied

[966] Ibid
[967] Kroonstad Community Council Minutes, 26, March 1981
[968] Ibid.
[969] Kroonstad Community Council 6th Special Minutes, 10 March 1981
[970] Kroonstad Community Council Minutes, 30 April 1981
[971] Kroonstad Community Council Minutes, 1980
[972] Kroonstad Community Council Minutes, 27 May 1981
[973] In August 1980, for example, these owned the Council R140 000 in rents. *Post, 23 August 1980*
[974] Kroonstad Community Council, 35th General Meeting Minutes, 29 October 1981

other service charges: Unmarried persons without dependants had to pay 6.00 per month; a head of a family whose wife or dependant children or both resided with him had to part with R6.00 every month; along with R3.50 per month for a female headed-home, whose dependent children resided with her; and scholars who did not reside in Kroonstad were charged R1.00. Hostel fees, on the other hand, were R18.00 monthly and R1.00 daily.[975]

Finally, the Council accrued its revenue by imposing spot fines on residents who flouted the council's regulations. A. Gampepe of Seeisoville, E. Kambule of Constantia, and A. Mmath of Constantia, for example, were each fined R10 for hawking food without a licence.[976] Elsewhere, these were some of the issues used by local activists to mobilize township residents. In Maokeng, in spite of such financial burden on the residents nothing happened. Perhaps it was because the residents relied on opposition councillors to take up their fight with the governing councillors. But it could also have been because of the KCC's efforts at improving the living conditions of the residents with little resources at its disposal as well as its mediating role on behalf of the residents of Maokeng. For instance, when the Chamber of Commerce and the Afrikaanse Sakekamer, probably with NOFBAB's approval, preferred to employ Africans from Qwaqwa, the KCC pleaded with the NOFBAB regional director to request the abovementioned institutions to reconsider this position and "to pay higher salaries to the black employees and to give preference, where possible, to the employment of local blacks instead of blacks from the Qwaqwa National State.[977] There is, however, no evidence to indicate whether this request was granted or not.

Ketena eo re tlo o hula ka yona re be re o diela nokeng koana (We'll pull you with that mayoral chain and drown you in the river:[978] Town Council of Maokeng, 1984-1994

This section will demonstrate why the Town Council of Maokeng (TCM) was able to remain in power from 1984 to 1994.[979] This was in contrast to many Councils in other townships, which were forced to dissolve in the mid-1980s. I will attempt to explain this in two parts by focusing, firstly on, Koekoe, the Mayor, and his personalised attention to individual issues, and secondly, on the TCM's ability to deliver infrastructure without significantly raising rents.

The inability to provide infrastructural development, pervasive allegations of corruption against councillors, and the persistence in raising rents discredited many community councils across the country. Hughes and Grest write "clearly the system was not working in the manner intended and

[975] Kroonstad Community Council Minutes, n.d.
[976] Kroonstad Community Council Minutes, n.d.
[977] Kroonstad Community Council Minutes, 12 December 1980 to December 1981 (Social meeting)
[978] This phrase is drawn from the interview with Letsabo. The latter was describing the local council intense contestation in Kroonstad in the early 1980s
[979] The other Town Council that ran its full term was in Phiritona. It only dissolved in 1993. Interview with Ramothibi, the former Mayor of the Phiritona Town Council.

in 1982 it all but collapsed".[980] Seemingly, the government, following the persistent crises associated with the Community Councils, concluded that this mode of local government could no longer be sustained. Hence, in 1980, Dr Koornhof, the Minister of Co-operation and Development (CAD), introduced a package of three Bills, broadly dealing with Africans in urban areas, for comment.[981] These Bills, according to the authors drew widespread protest and were withdrawn. The Minister responded by setting up a ten-man commission under Judge Justice E Grasskopf. After two months of intensive deliberations, the commission reported in May 1981. Interestingly, the findings were not immediately published and only emerged in the press in October 1982. It then transpired that the Minister ignored the commission's recommendations[982] and had re-introduced the Bills in early 1982, as the Black Communities Development, the Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons, and the Black Local Authorities. It was against this background that the Black Local Authorities Act No.102 of 1982 was enacted which allowed for the upgrading of the KCC to the Town Council of Maokeng (TCM) in 1984. Hennie Ludick explains

> There were elections at that stage. It was 1983/4, I'm not 100% sure … But it's round about there. And then the very, very first black town council was being elected and it was called the Town Council of Seeisoville. Later on it was changed to the Town Council of Maokeng. So one other technical reason was that the authorities didn't want to accept Maokeng at that stage. But after we had made recommendations, they changed to Town Council of Maokeng. And then Mr. Koekoe was elected as the Mayor amongst the other councillors. I think they were 11 in total[983]

[980] Hughes and Grest 'The Local State', p.123
[981] Ibid., p.129
[982] Ibid.
[983] Interview with Hennie Ludick, Kroonstad, 22 May 2009



Maokeng Township *(Source: Tshepo Moloi)*

Koekoe's Matla A Sechaba (South Sotho for 'Power of the Nation') Party won probably the most fiercely contested elections in the history of Maokeng in 1983. Before this Koekoe had been a councillor in Kroonstad during the era of the UBC and, he later joined the Qwaqwa homeland government as a minister (his political career is discussed in detail below). Some of the parties which contested the elections included Seroto's Inkatha Ye Sizwe, Dikakapa led by Mafokosi, John Coangae and others, and Pitso's Dinkwakwetla (South Sotho for 'Strong People'). Describing the election campaign, Mokhehle Letsabo, who worked for Matla A Sechaba, remarks,

> Do you remember that the previous Mayors used to wear chains around the neck? You see, when we were canvassing with the mics (microphones) in the morning, when we took over in 1983 … We took over from *ntate* Pitso. You see, people who were chairmen were Pitso, Mabitle and Seroto. I remember when we were canvassing, they used to wake up at 03h00. They'd come and stand in front of your house – I'm talking about the opposition. They would say *Ketena eo, re tlo o hula ka eona re be re o diela nokeng koana* (We'll pull you with that mayoral chain and drown you in the river)[984]

Fanela Nkambule, for his part, recalls that Dikakapa's campaign centred around Koekoe's spell as the Minister of Interior in Qwaqwa. He explains:

> We had some secret meetings where we said we wanted to do away with

[984] Interview with Letsabo

> *Liphuramollo* (UBC councillors). We felt that they were an apartheid structure, for example. And at that time … Koekoe was a leader of Qwaqwa government, the Bantustan. … Then he came here *and wanted to* become a mayor. So we *said* 'No, he's going to come with the Bantustan things here and the like …[985]

Nkambule's involvement with Likakapa, which opposed Koekoe, caused tension between himself and his grandmother, who revered and supported Koekoe from his days as a councillor in the UBC. The tension deteriorated to the extent that his grandmother threatened not to pay his tertiary fees anymore. Nkambule recalls

> I was living with my grandmother, Violet Nkambule. Then my grandmother had two sons: it was my father and his brother, Mzozephi. Mzozephi was hit by a police car - hit and run - and he died. My grandmother and my grandfather did not know how to work out this case. What happened they went to the former councillor Mr. Koekoe. Mr. Caswell [Koekoe] fought this thing and my grandmother got some money from the state. And to my grandmother, you know, he [Koekoe] became the most important person in her life. At some point when I was at Mphohadi (Teachers College) we wanted to form a party called Dikakapa - it was a local party. I was a student. … I did not want my grandmother to know about this thing [that] … we wanted to overthrow the organization of Caswell Koekoe and others. Mama (grandmother) wanted to know why I returned home after 10 o'clock [at night]… And then she learned that we have formed a structure that want[ed] to oppose Koekoe. It was terrible between me and my grandmother, because my grandmother knew how important this Koekoe was: he fought for that money; challenging the state. I was totally discouraged not to participate in anything that was political. She even went to the extent of saying she would make sure that I didn't go further with my studies at Mphohadi College if I joined that party[986]

At this stage Koekoe's support came mainly from women, especially elderly women. Matshiliso (Tshidi) Paulinah Rantie, who was born in 1938 on a farm at Mahlakamaholo, in the District of Steynsrus, in 1938 but grew up in Kroonstad, claims that she was a member of Matla A Sechaba and during their campaign for the BLA elections in 1983 Matla A Sechaba targeted elderly women for support. She explains

> I joined Matla A Sechaba and supported Koekoe because of Mr Mahlatsi, who also became a councillor. His house was opposed our home. I can still remember during the elections, transport would be organized to fetch grandmothers to take them to the polling stations. Some of them would refuse to get into the cars if I was not there.

[985] Interview with Fanela Nkambule, Kroonstad, 28 October 2008
[986] Interview with Nkambule

> They would demand that I should be fetched. We targeted mostly old people, particularly grandmothers[987]

It is possible that old people, especially elderly women, supported Matla A Sechaba because they believed that Koekoe, the leader of the party, could assist them as he had done during his days as a UBC councillor, as noted in Nkambule's testimony above. This was, however, not peculiar to Maokeng. Opposition parties within community councils, just like squatter movements, tended to receive more support from women. The latter were generally the most marginalized in society. First, their existence in the urban areas was constantly under threat. For example, if not married their chances of owning a municipal house were very thin, if not non-existent. And second, many were unemployed and therefore survived by engaging in illegal trade of home-brewed beer. The municipal police frequently raided their homes and confiscated their beer. This had a devastating effect on their trade. It was for these reasons that women in the urban areas had the propensity to support leaders who could challenge either the governing councillors or the administration boards on behalf of the community, and women in particular. Gideon Ngoduka, leader of the Vosloorus Progressive Party (VVP), also enjoyed support from women. Ngoduka launched the VPP in 1980, initially, to fight for the Xhosa migrants, who had been deceived by Ezra Jukuda, the Xhosa councillor.[988] Bonner and Nieftagodien note "Ngoduka's ambitions extended well beyond a campaign to root out corruption from council politics. His aim was to gain political control of the council …"[989] To achieve this, amongst other things, he "was particularly keen to address the needs of unmarried mothers".[990] Ngoduka campaigned that the council should build houses for the unmarried mothers. Undoubtedly, such efforts must have endowed Ngoduka to women, particularly unmarried mothers, in Vosloorus.[991]

In the mid-1980s many of the town councils, as already mentioned, had been either forced to dissolve or to become inoperable. One of the first councils to have its councillors forced to resign was the Lingelihle Village Council (LVC) in Cradock, in the Eastern Cape. The LVC had been inaugurated in January 1984 and led by Doris Hermaans.[992] The latter had initially been part of the Cradock Community Council (CCC), which she joined in 1979. The CCC was notorious as comprising councillors who had been cleared by the Special Branch as apolitical and therefore suitable to be in the council.[993] When the LVC took over it was confronted by a highly politically charged community as a result of the unfulfilled promises made by the CCC. The situation had

[987] Interview with Paulina Rantie (LHPR), Seeisoville, Maokeng, 19 April 2012
[988] According to Bonner and Nieftagodien, Jukuda had promised to organize work for the Xhosa migrants and, in the process, defrauded them as well. Bonner and Nieftagodein *Kathorus,* p.99
[989] Ibid.
[990] Ibid.
[991] For an in-depth account on women's role in squatter settlements, see for example, Sapire 'Politics and Protest'
[992] Tetelman 'We can', p.189
[993] Ibid., p.148. Interestingly one of these, Aaron Tshantshana, had served on Robben Island for his role in political protest

been worsened by the latter's decision to endorse the Eastern Cape Administration Board's proposed **"**sliding scale" rental scheme in 1983, "… in which residents would pay rates based on their monthly incomes".[994] This was in spite of the economic recession of the early 1980s, which caused mass unemployment in the township.

According to Tetelman, "many families survived on the income of domestic servants, whose wages ranged between R30 and R40 rand per month".[995] The Cradock Residents' Association (CRADORA) was launched in 1984 under the chairmanship of Gladwell Makhawula to take up civic issues.[996] The inability of the LVC to fulfil its mandate largely caused by lack of funds, and the unresponsive behaviour of the councillors agitated some of the sections of the community, particularly the younger people. In mid-April (1984), a small crowd engaged in a militant dance known as *toyi-toyi* and sang insulting songs in front of Hermaans' home. Two days later, younger people stoned her house. All six councillors in the LVC installed wire fencing and corrugated iron sheets around their houses.[997] The situation boiled over after the police had orchestrated the bombing of a CRADORA executive's home, prompting younger residents to petrol bomb Hermaan's home as well as that of one of the councillors. Hermaans' mother, who suffered from heart trouble, died from shock.[998] For some of the councillors this incident left them with no choice but to resign.[999] Later in October more councillors resigned after a rumour had spread that councillors were "dishing out houses" in return for money. Hermaans and a few other councillors remained in office obstinately. But she was finally convinced by Matthew Goniwe in a secrete meeting to resign. "On 4 January 1985", Tetelman notes "she and the remaining councillors capitulated".[1000]

In March 1986 councillors in the Alexandra Town Council (ATC) followed.[1001] The ATC was chaired by the Reverend Sam Buti, who played a significant role in the 'Save Alexandra Campaign', after the government had intensified its resolve to remove the township to make way for a hostel complex in the 1970s. At the time Buti, together with other prominent members of the community, established the Alexandra Liaison Committee (ALC) "… to make representation to the government about the removal of the township", with the main objective of saving Alexandra.[1002] On May 1979, after 16 years of uncertainty Alexandra received reprieve.[1003] Later in the year, the ALC announced to the community that it would participate in the forthcoming

[994] Ibid., p.175
[995] Ibid., p.176
[996] Ibid., p.178; Matthew Goniwe was instrumental in the formation of CRADORA
[997] Ibid., p.189
[998] Ibid.
[999] Ibid., p.191
[1000] Ibid., p.193
[1001] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* p.295
[1002] Ibid., p.217
[1003] Ibid. p.224

Community Council elections as the Save Alexandra Party, led by Buti. Three years later the ALC won the BLA's elections and took over the ATC. The main impetus prompting residents of Alexandra to press the ATC councillors to resign was lack of service delivery in the township. The residents of Alexandra started to boycott rent in early 1986, because the 1980 Master Plan, which had promised to uplift the community, had failed.[1004]

Following the disbandment of the ATC, an administrator, Steve Burger, was appointed to manage the township. But at this stage, the activists' in the township literally managed the township through the street and ward committees. This was the era of the 'People's Power'. Examples abound of the councils which were forced to dissolve in the mid-1980s.[1005]

The town (and village) councils under the BLA's inherited all the challenges faced by the community councils before them. Worse, these councils were directly responsible for deciding on and enforcing rent increases. Just like the community councils, the town councils were required themselves to raising their revenue to administer the townships. As Bonner and Nieftagodien note "one of the debilitating and far-reaching policies of the government was that townships had to be financially self-sufficient". "Moreover, the political responsibility for achieving this objective", they add "fell squarely onto the shoulders of the BLA's".[1006] Thus faced with lack of available sources of funding and absence of development in the townships many town councils were forced to increase rent and service charges to accrue revenue to develop their townships. This was done without proper consultation with the communities, and worse there was generally very little to show what the money the residents paid for rent was used for. This incensed the residents. For example, when the residents of Thembisa Township embarked on a rent boycott it was not only against rent increases in themselves but against the uses to which they were put. Comparatively rent was generally lower in Thembisa than in Soweto.[1007] As one Thembisa resident remarked:

> In Thembisa people were also concerned about where their rents went. On checking what was happening … and not seeing any improvement in the township I became aware of the people in charge of the township progressing in life, in fact, becoming business owners. Most of the senior Thembisa councillors owned businesses, and reportedly restricted competition through a careful zoning of shopping centres.[1008]

[1004] Ibid., p.268

[1005] For a detailed account of the resignation of the Thembisa Town Council, see for example, Moloi 'Youth Politics'

[1006] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* p.241

[1007] Seekings, 'Quiescence', p. 160

[1008] ibid. p. 82

It was because of this that properties belonging to councillors in Thembisa were attacked during rent protests. For example, in 1985 the house of Herbert Majokoana, the deputy mayor of Thembisa, was damaged in a hand-grenade attack.[1009] The attacks and demonstrations against the town councils continued unabated. They even spread to townships which were relatively tranquil and quiescent. Zamdela, in Sasolburg, was one such township. The township was established in 1954 to accommodate the employees of the Sasol and Natref oil refineries.[1010] Unlike other townships in the northern Free State, Zamdela was initially the responsibility of the Sasol Company. The latter built houses for its employees and equipped them with electricity, water and toilet inside the house.[1011] However, the situation changed in 1977 when the Vaal Triangle Council, which fell under the jurisdiction of the Orange Vaal Administration Board (OVAB) took over the administration of the township.[1012] Rent and service charges paid by the residents of Zamdela to the Council were used for the development of townships in the Vaal and not Zamdela. In 1984, following the Vaal uprisings in September, students at Nkgopoleng High School, together with some of the disgruntled members of the community, attacked and burned down the two shops belonging to Paul Mahlatsi, a Lekoa Town Councillor (formerly of the Vaal Triangle Council).[1013] Reporting the incident, a *Sowetan* reporter wrote "A group of about 40 people marched through the streets. A bus was later hijacked and driven through the display window of a butchery and supermarket belonging to Mahlatsi. After plundering the shops, the police used teargas to disperse the crowd. An 18 year-old man was arrested".[1014]

Not all councils which were attacked and opposed by residents and civic organisations succumbed to pressure and dissolved. A few obdurately held on to power until the early 1990s when the transitional local governments took over. The Phiritona Town Council (PTC) was one of these. It was able to remain in office until 1993. The PTC was led by a politically astute Mayor, Simon Monne Ramothibi. Ramothibi claims to have been introduced to politics in Dukathole Location, Germiston, in the early 1950s when he lived there. He explains

> I was born in Phiritona, Heilbron, in 1934. I started my primary schooling on the farms, where I did my Subs A and B. I came to Heilbron when I was to start my Standard 1at Bantu United until Form 3. I could not continue, because my father became ill … After dropping out of school I found work for a year as a clerk of the

[1009] *Star, 10 May 1985*
[1010] *Rand Daily Mail,* 31 July 1979
[1011] *Rand Daily Mail,* 31 July 1979
[1012] The OVAB, which in 1984 became the Orange Vaal Development Board (OVDB) also administered the Vaal Triangle and other townships in the northern Free State like Tumahole, in Parys, and Maokeng, Kroonstad. See M. Chaskalson and J. Seekings 'Vaal Triangle/Orange Free State: The Awakening: Desperation and Defiance', in *Political Conflict in South Africa: Data Trends 1984-1988* (An Indicator SA Issue Focus, December 1988), 30
[1013] *Sowetan,* 14 December 1984
[1014] Ibid.

> town council at Clasdale. Then I moved to Germiston to work as a petrol attendant. While in Germiston I came to know Bertha Mashaba (later came to be known as Gxowa) and Mr [Joshua] Moagi. These people were very political. On Sundays Ms Mashaba would climb on top of a horse-cart and address the residents of Dukathole. We would shout the slogan 'Mayibuye iAfrika' and raise our hands, with our fists closed and thumb out. For that sign and shouting Mayibuye you could be arrested and sent to prison. There was a time when there was talk that potatoes should not be eaten; they were boycotted, because people were arrested and sent to Bethal to work on potato farms, and sometimes they were killed there[1015]

In the mid-1970s he returned to Phiritona, where he became involved in the politics of Community Councils, as mentioned above. Ramothibi could claim that his stature in the township steadily rose during his days as a councillor in the Community Council. Like other councillors during this period, Ramothibi, also interceded with government officials on behalf of the members of the community and also helped to resolve residents' domestic disputes. This won him some support in the community. He seemed to have used this to his advantage even during his tenure as the mayor of Phiritona from 1989 to 1993. He claims that his Council was able to convince the residents to not boycott paying rent. He asserts this was because his Council did not impose decisions on the residents but it discussed with the residents and reached a consensus before taking any decisions. In his words

> I remember when we wanted to improve services in the township, we would inform the residents in a meeting that this is what we intend doing. And for us to be in a position to achieve this, you the residents would have to pay so much rent. Then we would say 'If you're satisfied and willing to pay this rent, then we would be able to do all these things'. The residents would then advise us to prioritise certain services and the rest like, for example, recreational facilities, we could do in the coming years. After we had agreed, we would explain to them that each and every house would have to pay so much rent so that we can be able to repay the government its money, because we received loans from the government. It was for this reason that we did not have any problems when it came to the residents paying rent, because the residents were the ones who gave us the mandate about what to do. They would say 'Provide us with all those services and we would pay for them'[1016]

[1015] Interview with Ramothibi; for a detailed account on the role of Bertha Mashaba and Joshua Moagi in Dukathole, Germiston, see Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* pp.32-5; For an account on the Potato boycott of 1959, see for example, Holden, P. and Mathabatha, S. 'The politics of resistance: 1948-1990', in Peter Delius (ed.) *Mpumalanga: History and Heritage* (Scottsville, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2007), pp.397-403

[1016] Ibid.

In spite of this, the situation changed towards the end of the decade when the residents, led by younger people in the township, attacked and burned properties belonging to the councillors. Ramothibi argues that this happened because the residents were emulating what other youth were doing in other townships and not because they were genuinely dissatisfied with the Council. The residents accused Ramothibi of having embezzled funds. They burned his house and kombi.[1017]

There seems to be some element of truth in Ramothibi's assessment of the situation. This is corroborated in Mogotho Steven "Ace" Mogoera's oral testimony. In the mid-1980s Mogoera was a leading figure in the branch of the Azanian Student Movement (AZASM) in Phiritona. Recalling the attack on the councillors and their properties, Mogoera explains

> Then there were what we called *dibonda* (councillors) and these were perceived as colluding with the enemy. I mean, we used to say they were in the enemy's camp. Here in Phiritona some of them were Mr Mpembe, Ms Molora, and later came Mr Ramothibi. These people were working for the discredited system of the white people. So, for us to fight the apartheid system we would tell our community to boycott paying rent. Well, we had learned that in some areas communities were not paying rent. So, we asked ourselves why should we continue paying rent here in Heilbron?[1018]

The attack on the councillors and their properties does not seem to have succeeded in discouraging some of the residents from continuing supporting the PTC. These residents carried on paying their rentals. As a result the Council was able to remain in office until the early 1990s.

Just like the PTC, the Town Council of Maokeng (TCM) enjoyed a considerable support from some sections of the community. And because of this it was able to remain in office for two full terms. Before attempting to explain the reason the TCM was able to remain in office for so long, it is necessary to trace Koekoe's earlier political life.

Caswell Montshiuwa Koekoe was born on a farm in Heinnenman, about 50 kilometres from Kroonstad. My interviewees were unable to determine the date of his birth. But Mpopetsi Dhlamini, a long time resident of Maokeng and close family friend, believes he was born in the early 1920s.[1019] After leaving school, before attaining his matric,[1020] he headed for Germiston, where he studied to be a motor mechanic (and probably worked there for sometime as well).[1021]

[1017] Ibid.

[1018] Interview with Mogotho Steven "Ace" Mogoera by Tshepo Moloi, for the ANC Centenary Project, Free State, Heilbron, 3 November 2011

[1019] Personal conversation with Dhlamini

[1020] Matube recalled that when Koekoe was contesting the local government elections he was also corresponding, to improve his qualifications. Interview with Matube

[1021] Pherudi *Who's who,* pp.248-9

According to Bonner and Nieftagodien, "from the 1930s the mines and industries of the Kathorus region had been growing rapidly. This was as a result of the economic boost provided by the 1933 increase in the gold price. Industry expanded even more rapidly during World War II because South Africa was forced to manufacture for itself many of the goods that it had previously imported from Europe". "Germiston", the authors assert, "was in the forefront of this development."[1022] Because of this and the reasonably easy access to Germiston, because of the railway system, large numbers of Africans settled in Germiston. Raphael Palime, cited in *Kathorus*, noted "that's where the trains met."[1023] It seems likely that Koekoe also joined the throng of Africans who went to Germiston in search for better opportunities.

While in Germiston, Koekoe claimed to have joined the ANC Youth League (ANCYL). Mantoa Leseri, who worked closely with Koekoe in Qwaqwa and Maokeng as his personal typist, remembers: "He said he was born in Heinnenman, and proceeded to Germiston to look for a job, where he ran away during the time when [Nelson] Mandela and others were arrested, because he was also involved in politics."[1024] There is no hard evidence to prove Koekoe's involvement in the ANCYL's politics, particularly in Germiston. For now we will have to be content with the oral testimonies provided by the residents of Maokeng. These suggest an entrenched collective memory about Koekoe's membership in the ANCYL. Blackie Tumisi recalls that in the 1990s, in the period leading to the first democratic local government elections, Koekoe's historical ANC membership caused tensions between the ANC and the Maokeng Civic Association to the extent that even Nelson Mandela, then president of the ANC, had to intervene (more about this in Chapter Seven).[1025]

Circumstantial evidence suggests that it is not the least bit implausible that Koekoe joined the ANCYL in this period. Firstly, the ANCYL at its inception was both anti-Communist and anti-Indian, and in both Germiston and Benoni, on the East Rand and Alexandra to the North of Johannesburg, it mobilised pressure against Indian businesses in African areas. In Germiston and Benoni, one target was Indian taxi-drivers, which would likely have struck a chord with motor mechanic or aspirant taxi-owner, like Koekoe. Secondly, the ANCYL was active in Germiston, and became a leading force in Germiston politics when Germiston City Council announced its plans to remove the African Location of Dukathole, where Koekoe in all probability lived. Joshua Moagi, who played a leading role in the formation of the Germiston branch of the ANCYL, recalled

[1022] Bonner and Nieftagodien, *Kathorus,* p.5
[1023] Ibid., p.3
[1024] Interview with Mantoa Leseri, Gelukwaarts, 26 March 2010
[1025] In 1993 when Koekoe was blamed for electricity cut in the offices of three ANC-aligned organizations in the township, he invoked his membership of the ANC to demonstrate that the decision to cut electricity supply was not prompted by his hate for the ANC, but it was based on the common economic practice. Koekoe is reported to have said "I'm a staunch ANC member, who also took part in the anti-pass laws demonstrations during the 1960s …", see *New Nation, 26 March to 1 April 1993*

> we, the youth decided we would act to prevent the removal by force. We, the youth, decided to call another conference in December. We invited people from other areas. I was elected assistant secretary of the whole East Rand region ... (some while later) the police raided me and told me my permit was no longer valid ... People were told not to move. Even though the police came we, the youth, would protect them from being moved. This is how we came to be arrested[1026]

Thirdly, the campaign against removal overlapped and re-inforced the Defiance Campaign of 1952, which led to many arrests. Against this background, it is probably true that Koekoe was indeed a member of the ANCYL in Germiston during this period and had to flee to Kroonstad in 1952 when some of his comrades were arrested, as Moagi explained above.

In Kroonstad, he operated a taxi business and established the African Garage. Hennie Ludick remarks: "He was a businessman. He [wa]s a qualified mechanic. He used to have a motor garage in Seeisoville, named African Garage. And he started a taxi business."[1027] Mamatela Lenong concurs: "Also he owned a taxi. And when we were going to board a train, we would phone his house and give them the number of that train, so that he could be able to come and fetch us together with *abuti* (older brother) Jimmy… He drove the taxi himself."[1028]

Koekoe also participated in community affairs. He was, among other things, a member of the School Board, together with some of the prominent members of the community like Mr Pitso, Reverend Tsoai, and teacher Dorrington Matsepe.[1029]Koekoe was also actively involved in sport in the township, chairing Shamrock Flowers Football Club, together with Mr Ben Plank, a businessman.[1030] In addition, he was also interested in providing the township residents, particularly the unemployed, with marketable skills which could enable them to find employment. Violet Motlhacwi explained: "In 1952 he called the community to the stadium, where people were taught how to work with tractors, hoe, and so forth, especially those who were unemployed".[1031]

Undoubtedly, Koekoe's involvement in the community popularized his image in the township. When the UBCs were established, he became a councillor, or *Sephuramollo* ("Fire extinguisher")

[1026] Cited in Bonner and Nieftagodien, *Kathorus,* p.30
[1027] Interview with Ludick
[1028] Interview with Lenong
[1029] Interview Leseri, (Italics my emphasis); Mantoa Leseri was a typist for the School Board
[1030] Interview with Coangae; Interview with Alfred Matube, Kroonstad, 25 September 2009
[1031] Interview with V.L. Motlhacwi conducted by T.C. Challa and A.H. Mosoeu for the Department of Sport, Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Library and Archives Service Directorate, Oral History Interviews, 15 June 2000, Tswelopelo Public Library, Maokeng. I am indebted to the Free State Provincial Archives for allowing me to use these interviews

as they were known locally. After a slow start, by 1967 only four UBC's had been established, including one in Kroonstad.[1032] Because of their circumscribed powers and persistent allegations against the councillors that they were prone to corruption, the UBC's came to be derogatorily labelled the "Useless Boys' Club" or the "United Bantu Crooks".[1033] In the main they advised the white local authorities like the Administration Boards (ABs) on 'township opinion' …[1034] But as noted before they also played an important role in resolving family disputes and mediating with government on behalf of the township's residents.[1035] It was this role that Koekoe excelled in and that won him considerable support and respect in the "community". For example, Mamatela Lenong recalls that Koekoe interceded with government officials on behalf of her family to help them register the house her father had purchased from a cousin in her family's name. She remarks

> My father, Madimabe Lenong, was uneducated … lived on a farm in Bothaville. He bought a house in Kroonstad location called Marabastad while he was on the farm so that his mother and children can have a shelter, because his mother used to move from one place to another with us. So he sold his cattle in order to build a house for his children in Kroonstad. That is how we came to know *ntate* Koekoe and to be closer to him. Because the house that my father had bought was not yet registered in his name after a long time he had bought it, it was still registered in the person who sold the house to him. And my sister realized that this would give us difficulties should my father die. So she went to the municipal offices to sort it out. I think it was around '60 … Way back in the 60's. I'm not sure about the year but it's a long time ago … I don't want to give wrong information but it was during the 60's. During the times of *Diphuramollo*, you see. So he (Koekoe) was sorting the matter out for us, and he would come over to our house. My sister was working at Baragwanath Hospital and every time she came down she would go to the offices to make a follow up on the ownership of the house, because the records at the offices didn't show that my father had taken ownership of the house. They only showed payments that my father *made* to the owner of the house. And remember my father couldn't write but his wife could, and they lived together on the farm. So it was easy for my sister to get all this information from my mother. So my sister …. collect[ed] those slips (receipts) and letters and got the house to be registered in my grandmother's name, you see, because there was this thing that my father will not be allowed to own a house in

[1032] Brooks and Brickhill, *Whirlwind,* pp. 275-277

[1033] See, Brooks and Brickhill, *Whirlwind ,*pp. 275-303; Bonner, and Nieftagodien*, Kathorus*, pp. 59-62; Kahanovitz, C. 'Control in the Townships and Popular Resistance: The system of Community, Town, Village Councils, 1977-1985, with specific reference to the Cape Town Community Council', in *South African Research Papers 5: Student Research Papers*, (eds.) Helen Bradford and Bill Nasson (Cape Town, University of Cape Town, 1988), p.33

[1034]See Kahanovitz 'Control in the Townships', p.33

[1035] Seekings 'Quiescence', p.71

> the location, because he lived on the farms, especially because it was Bothaville farms and not Kroonstad farms[1036]

Again, in 1974 Koekoe, in his capacity as a member of *Diphoramollo*, intervened on behalf of Mamatela Lenong and other students to be accepted at Mphohadi Teachers' Training College. She explains

> Before my matric *ntate* (Reginald) Cingo gave me a job on the farms as a teacher, and I did my matric privately. And then I proceeded to Mphohadi (Teachers' Training College) to do PTC (Primary Teachers' Certificate). That's during the time when I realized … that Mr. Koekoe was an ambitious man. I think there were about seven of us; those with a 3rd and not a 2nd class pass at JC (Junior Certificate). Yes, we were the second group at Mphohadi, of which during that time the principal there was white and the whole staff were whites, except for *ausi* Ouma Lebona, who was a Mosotho. We were told we couldn't be accepted because we have 3rd class and not 2nd class. Then Mr. Koekoe stood up and intervened. I don't know how he came to school, but he did come and he asked Mr. Ledo what the difference was between a person with a 2nd and 3rd class and whether they knew the reason why we didn't make the 2nd class? And he insisted that we should be accepted. And eventually we were. And once we had been accepted, we studied very hard. And after I finished my PTC, I went back to the farms to teach there …[1037]

A similar role was also played by the UBC councillors in other areas. Sesomo Samuel Seakhela's oral testimony corroborates this. Seakhela, who in the early 1970s was a councillor in the UBC in Viljoenskroon, OFS, recalls that one of their roles was to settle family's or neighbours' disputes. He remarks

> After 1972 … I became a councillor. ... Our duty then was to ensure that peace prevailed in the township … Conflicts amongst neighbours, such as when one neighbor complains that his neighbour's children messed up in his yard; or a conflict between couples; or thirdly, when one becomes jealous. When that happens we would call them together and get them to reconcile. We had no problem and never fought

Because of this role, Seakhela concludes

> We were respected then. And people used to listen to us when we called them to

[1036] Interview with Mamatela Lenong, Gelukwaarts, Maokeng, 26 March 2010; Some of the members of the *Diphoramollo* included Koaho Moleko Alpheus, Mahomane and Mabitle. See, Pherudi, *Who's who,* p.235
[1037] Ibid.

order[1038]

In 1975 Koekoe joined the Qwaqwa homeland government under Tshiame Kenneth (T.K.) Mopeli. There are two possible reasons Koekoe made this move. First, it is plausible that he was requested by Mopeli to join his Dikwankwetla National Party (DNP) prior to the first Qwaqwa elections in 1975. Before Mopeli's DNP (later it was renamed Dikwankwetla Party) won the elections, Qwaqwa was under the control of two tribes: Bakoena and Batlokoa.[1039] However, this arrangement divided the community of Qwaqwa along tribal lines. This seems to have continued even after the two had been constituted into Bakoena and Batlokoa Tribal Authorities in 1969, and again later on 1 October 1971 after the legislative assembly had been created, which began to function in 1972 under Chief Wessels Mota.[1040] These tribes were seen by the majority of people in Qwaqwa – who incidentally were not South Sotho-speaking - as collaborators with the apartheid regime. This was after Chief Charles Mopeli of the Bakoena tribe had supported the unpopular agricultural improvement programmes in the area.[1041] When Mopeli assumed power as the Chief Minister of the homeland government, he intended to change this perception. This followed the Dinkwakwetla Party's manifesto that it "… undertook to represent the aspirations and wishes of the broader South Sotho-speaking people within the framework of the homeland government".[1042] Twala notes "… Mopeli, therefore came to be seen by the majority of the South Sotho-speaking people, both in and outside Qwaqwa, as a leader with a vision".[1043] It was against this backdrop that seemingly Mopeli decided to invite people who were not aligned to the two tribes and who were without chiefly ties, but people who were "experts" in administrative work. When Koekoe joined Mopeli's government in 1975 he had already proven himself as a member of the UBC in Kroonstad.

The second reason is that Caswell Koekoe was recruited to join the Qwaqwa homeland government by his older brother Michael Koekoe. The latter had been a teacher at Bodibeng High School until 1970.[1044] After a brief stint as the principal of Moepeng Primary School still in Kroonstad, Mpopetsi Dhlamini claims that he left and joined Radio Bantu (for Basotho) and in 1974 left and became part of the Qwaqwa Legislative Assembly under Chief Mota.[1045] When in Qwaqwa, Dhlamini adds, Michael Koekoe drew closer to T.K. Mopeli and his Dinkwakwetla Party that he was requested to traverse the country mobilizing the elite amongst the South Sotho-speaking to join the Qwaqwa homeland government. In Kroonstad, according to Dhlamini,

[1038] Interview with Sesomo Samuel Seakhela, 28 October 2008; also see Seekings 'Quiescence', p.71
[1039] Twala, C. 'Resistance and conformity in the Qwaqwa homeland, 1975-1990', in *SADET The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol 4, 1980-1990* (UNISA Press, 2010), pp.816-7
[1040] Ibid., p.817
[1041] Ibid.
[1042] Ibid., p.818
[1043] Ibid.
[1044] Setiloane *The History,* p.126
[1045] Telephonic discussion with Mpopetsi Dhlamini, 14 June 2012

Michael recruited his brother, Caswell who was appointed the Minister of the Interior in Mopeli's government.[1046] In Welkom, Michael recruited James Ngake. Ngake became the Minister of Education and chairman of the Dikwankwetla Party.[1047] And Ramabolu and Marumo were identified in Bloemfontein and Sebokeng, respectively.[1048]

Recalling Koekoe's performance as the Minister in Qwaqwa, Leseri remarks

> He was such a good Minister, even if he was in a bad mood … Mopeli wanted *ntate* Koekoe to be present in every meeting we held. And he would ask *ntate* Koekoe to give him a script of what the meeting was going to be about, and Koekoe would explain to him that he didn't write down what he's going to talk about because when he was alone he couldn't think. He could only think about what to say when there were people around him. He would say "I can't write down notes when I'm alone. But only when there were people around me". I was even secretly called one time by Mopeli and others to ask me if *ntate* Koekoe had never asked me to write notes for him. And I told them no. They used to say that Koekoe knew how to address a meeting than Mopeli, and others[1049]

Leseri's testimony is supported by Twala. According to him, "Koekoe and Ngake (who was expelled after Koekoe's dismissal from cabinet) were considered hard workers with Dikwankwetla Party circles, articulate and fiery speakers, and among the most powerful men in the cabinet and ruling party".[1050]

Part of Mopeli's reason for wanting to see advance copies of Koekoe's speech was that Koekoe was sometimes critical of the homeland government. This strained the relationship between Koekoe and Mopeli. In a newspaper article it was reported that "the Chief Minister and some members of his Cabinet, [we]re not happy with, in particular, the radical speeches … Koekoe often ma[de] in public."[1051] In 1976 when the Qwaqwa government was barely nine months in office, Koekoe is reported to have raised his concerns about what he saw "… as a softening up on the part of the Chief Minister."[1052] Because of Koekoe's continued criticism of the Chief Minister and his government, in 1979 Mopeli summarily to dismissed him from his government. However, according to Twala, before this in January 1979 Koekoe was deployed to the ministry

[1046] Ibid., p.823
[1047] Ibid., p.824
[1048] Telephonic discussion with Dhlamini; In 1979 Koekoe and Ngake, who had been expelled by Mopeli from his cabinet organized the Dikwankwetla Party conference in Kagiso where the conference adopted a resolution to expel Mopeli, Marumo and Ramabolu from the party. See Twala 'Resistance and conformity', p.825
[1049] Interview with Leseri
[1050] Twala 'Resistance and conformity', p.824
[1051] *Weekend World, 22 February 1976*
[1052] Ibid.

of Public Works, where he served for less than a month before his dismissal.[1053] Twala notes that the reason given for Koekoe's dismissal was that he had refused to grant a trading license to one of Mopeli's white friends.[1054] But it was "later discovered", Twala writes "that Koekoe's dismissal was propelled by what Mopeli viewed as insubordination *because Koekoe* openly criticized and challenged him in cabinet meetings".[1055] After unsuccessfully challenging his dismissal in the Supreme Court and through the Dikwankwetla Party structures[1056], in 1982 Koekoe returned to Maokeng, Kroonstad.

In Maokeng he formed a political party, Matla a Sechaba[1057] ('Power of the Nation'), and towards the end of 1983 he contested the BLA's elections. Armed with the vast experience in government politics and his understanding of the "community" of Maokeng from his days as *Sephuramollo*, Koekoe used these to his advantage leading up to the elections. He recruited some of the older and more respected people in the "community" to contest the elections on behalf of his party. These included people like Mokhehle Letsabo (then a teacher), Azael Lepedi Nkukane, (then school principal and later inspector), Vernon Cwaka Mfazi (then teacher and later inspector), Alfred Itumeleng Lefafa (then inspector of schools) and Edgar Phakoe (then businessman). Dhlamini, a party official of Matla a Sechaba during the 1983 elections, believes that the composition of Koekoe's party, and later his council, was his "trump card".[1058] Letsabo remembering how he was recruited, remarks

> My principal then was the late Mr. Nkukane. He's the one who made *ntate* Koekoe approach me. Right! There were older teachers than me there at the school, but he approached me young as I was then. What exactly he saw in me I do not know. But as a teacher, *haai* (no, ways), I worked hard. If something [wa]s wrong, it [wa]s wrong. I did not allow it just because you [we]re a principal. … Even if you [we]re an inspector, 'No, you don't tell me [my problems]. I should tell you my problems and then we can assist each other. You should not dictate terms'. That's the reason I think Mr. Nkukane saw that I will be the right person[1059]

It is possible that Koekoe took advantage of the trust and respect the people of Maokeng, especially the adults, had for teachers in particular. This paid off. Matla a Sechaba won the elections. The unavailability of the election results makes it impossible to prove Koekoe and his

[1053] Twala, C. 'Resistance and conformity in the Qwaqwa homeland, 1975-1990', in SADET *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 4 (1980–1990)* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2010), p.823
[1054] Ibid.
[1055] Ibid. (Italics My emphasis)
[1056] Ibid., pp.823-6
[1057] Some authors spell the party's names as Matla a Setjhaba, see Twala 'Resistance and conformity', p.826
[1058] Interview with Mpopetsi Dhlamini, for the "Local Histories and Present Realities" Programme, 16 January 2009, Constantia, Maokeng; also see interview with Letsabo, particularly transcript number two
[1059] Interview with Letsabo

party's popularity during the elections. For now we will have to be content with the oral testimonies provided by the residents of Maokeng to underscore this. When recalling the campaigns by different parties for the first BLA's elections, my interviewees were all in agreement about Koekoe's ability to combine shrewdness and intelligence as a politician. Mafokosi, who was the Public Relations Officer of Dikakapa Party, recalls a meeting addressed by Koekoe in which he denigrated his party: He remarks

> ... When we were starting to campaign, *ntate* Koekoe would hit at us, calling us *marakana* (small dogs). I remember it was on a Sunday when he had a public meeting, and we were having a public meeting on Monday – it was public holiday. So, I attended their meeting and sat there, listening as he was slashing us left, right and centre. I was the target. This was our sign (a half-opened hand or clawed-like hand). Then he would say: *Lebone le letsoho labona le khaetsi, letlonka dichelete tsalona* (Look at their sign is a half-opened hand; it shows that they are here to take and embezzle your money)[1060]

For Lewele John Modisenyane, who later became a leading figure in the 'progressive' structures in Maokeng, Koekoe's ability as a politician was evident when he "tore the leadership of Dikakapa apart" and went on to win the elections. He explains dramatically – at length

> It was Phakoe who called people and he said: *Sechaba sa Maokeng se eme sehlohong ke ntante* Koekoe! (People of Maokeng are proud because they were once led by (Mr Koekoe). Then he played some hymns. As *supporters of* the UDF we were trying to mobilise people not go to the meeting. But that didn't work. Old grannies and grandfathers were on their way to the meeting. And *ntate* Lengoabala's brass band just got everybody excited at the Seeisoville Community Hall. When he [Koekoe] stood up he said: *Kene ke nahana hore ke le siile le banna mona, hathe ke le siile le maphyeha.* (I thought when I left that I was leaving you in the capable hands of real men but, instead, I left you in the hands of cowards). …

In conclusion he said

> *Ba bang ke bana ba ngola dimpampiri empa ha ba ipolele hore ke bo mang. Ha ba santse ba peperana pele haka, ba tla etsa eng makhoa. Hobane ke bana ba tshaba le ho ipolela hore ke bo mang. Feela le ha hole jwalo ke ya ba tseba, ke tla ba bitsa. Ha e le banna ha ba nyolohe batle ba eme pele ha ka.* (There are some people amongst us who are busy writing pamphlets, but they don't say who they are. How will they deal with white people when they are still tripping over their own feet in front of me, because they are afraid to

[1060] Interview with Mafokosi

> say who they are? But I know their names and I will call them out. However, if they are real men they must stand up and come up and sit with me here [on the podium]. Nobody stood up!

Then he started picking on them, one by one, starting with the leader of Dikakapa. He said

> *Moshimane ke ona ba re ke* Mafokosi. *Ha ke sheba o phasitse matriki sekolong, fela o phasitse ka 'S'.* (There's this boy called Mafokosi. I understand he passed his matric, but with an 'S' symbol). The hall was packed. People were even standing outside. He continued: *Molebaleng!* (Forget about him!). How can [such] a person lead the community of Maokeng? *Re mo lebetse,* members of the community shouted back (We have forgotten about him). Then he went on to the next one: John Coangae. Koekoe said: *E kae Good Hope?* (Where is Good Hope [Football Club]?). *Motho ha a hloleha ho tsamaisa club ya bolo, o re a ka tsamaisa motse wa Maokeng. Molebaleng!* (If a person can't even run a mere football club, how can he manage the community of Maokeng? Forget about him!). *Re mo lebetse!* (We have forgotten about him!). After he had rounded them all, the whole township was shouting: "Koekoe, Koekoe!"[1061]

Finally, Alfred Matube remembers how Koekoe convinced the residents of Maokeng not attend a campaign meeting organized by Dinkwankwetla Party. Dinkwakwetla had slaughtered cows, with the hope of attracting masses of people to its meeting. Koekoe's brilliance thwarted Dinkwankwetla's campaign. Matube recalls

> You know, there were Dikwankwetla. You know, the [TK] Mopeli *Party*. So, he [Koekoe had] left Dikwankwetla. And so it happened he had to face the followers of Mopeli here. Now the supporters of Mopeli slaughtered cows. Then Mr. Koekoe called a meeting and announced: 'Yes, they have slaughtered cows there because they know that you would come in large numbers. … You must know that when you go there, you are a dog, because they are going to call you a dog there'. And that rumour made those who were supporting Mopeli to take all the food, because people didn't go there. Mr. Koekoe could convince people not to go there, because they would be called dogs[1062]

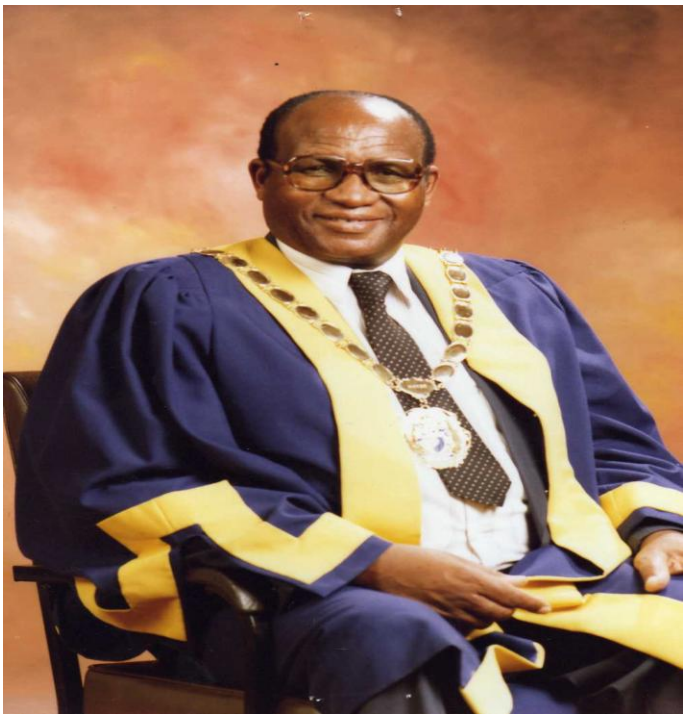
After the elections, Matla a Sechaba emerged victors and Koekoe was elected mayor of the township – and he held that position until 1994.

[1061] Interview with Modisenyane, Kroonstad, 9 July 2008; an 'S' symbol in matric does not qualify a student to enter a university. A student would need an exemption for that

[1062] Interview with Matube; Mopeli was the leader of Dinkwankwetla Party in Qwaqwa and when Koekoe was in Qwaqwa he was also a member of this party. In Maokeng Dinkwankwetla Party was led by Pitso

Koekoe, as mayor in particular, endeared himself to the majority of the residents of Maokeng, because of his management style. He was hands-on and accessible. Leseri remarks

> He didn't want to see people suffering - not at all. He would try by all means to help them. People used to go to him to explain their situation; that their children were unemployed and they had no income at all at home. And he would personally go to the house to see for himself. And if it was true, he would take the older one (child) and offer him a job at the offices to clean the yard. And if it was a girl, he would offer her a job as a general worker[1063]



Caswell M. Koekoe, former Mayor of Maokeng
(Source: Hennie Ludick)

Matube echoing Leseri said

> Mr. Koekoe was this leader who … if you went to him and then he heard your plight, he would make a decision immediately. If you came begging that 'Hey, *ntate,* … there's no one who is employed at home Mr. Koekoe'. And knowing his community, he would go and find out. Just to research. Is it true there's no one who is employed at the Moloi's? And he would employ one of the family members on Monday. He would start working[1064]

[1063] Interview with Leseri

Lenong, again, recalls that Koekoe demanded quality service from his officials when dealing with the residents. She explains

> Because even if you went to the offices and you found that a white person was not helping you and *ntate* Koekoe found out, that white person would be reprimanded. I remember there was a white guy called Ludick. Mr. Koekoe would tell him that he must do his work and serve the people, because he was not a *baas*. But he was there to serve the people. He was still young and worked nicely with people. But Koekoe didn't tolerate any wrongdoing from him, and would shout at the top of his voice[1065]

Mrs Mokoena makes a similar point

> When he was leading the community, you could see that we were being led by a black person and not white people. There was a big difference. He made it his responsibility that people were treated like human beings … He was not afraid to challenge white people[1066]

Those who benefitted during his tenure regarded him as a hero. Ntlama Abel Kholumo made this point succinctly when he said: "Some of us managed to own taverns because of the assistance and the good advise we got from Mr Koekoe. He was our hero in Maokeng."[1067] It was because of these reasons and others that Koekoe and his council were able to stay in power for two full terms, even though in the last term protest against the council and Koekoe in particular erupted. The 'progressive' structures in Maokeng aligned to the ANC campaigned for his resignation and the disbandment of the council.

Moreover, Koekoe, more than his colleagues in the council, continued in the tradition of the UBC and KCC by interceding with government officials on behalf of the members of the community. Among other examples is when he had to intervene to help Mrs M.J. Mokoena. The latter's husband was not permitted to reside in Maokeng because of his political activities. Mrs Mokoena explained

> Mr Koekoe played an important role in leading the community of Maokeng. ...

[1064] Interview with Matube

[1065] Interview with Lenong; in the interview with Ludick, he attested to Lenong's remarks. See interview with Ludick

[1066] Interview with Mrs Mokoena

[1067] Interview with Ntlama Abel Kholumo conducted by T.C. Challa and A.H. Mosoeu for the Department of Sport, Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Library and Archives Service Directorate, Oral History Interviews, 15 June 2000, Tswelopelo Public Library, Maokeng. I am indebted to the Free State Provincial Archives for allowing me to use these interviews. I have transcripts of these interviews in my possession

> Let me use my husband's case as an example. My husband was involved in politics, so he was told to leave Kroonstad and go and live in Qwaqwa. To show that he was not allowed to stay here his passbook was supposed to be signed every year in June ... But when Mr Koekoe came to lead the township's council my husband told him about his problem. Mr Koekoe then challenged the whites and asked them if Qwaqwa was a dumping place. That's how my husband got a reprieve and was allowed to stay here until his death[1068]

Koekoe's popularity amongst certain sections of the "community" of Maokeng was not tarnished even after he was alleged to have fatally shot and killed the 10-year old Pinda Vincent Mntuze in 1986 during the riots in the township.[1069] He was neither arrested nor prosecuted for this incident. It was alleged that he had shot and killed an innocent child that did not pose any danger to him. Pinda's astounded mother Elisa Mntuze, testifying before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings, said she was informed that her child was playing in the streets with other children when he was shot by Koekoe through the window of a minibus he was travelling in.[1070] This incident, and later the shooting and killing of two children by the municipal police in 1990, was to be raised in the mid-1990s when some of the members of the ANC fiercely contested the inclusion of Koekoe's name in the ANC's local government elections' list (see Chapter Seven).[1071] In spite of this incident, the "community" does not seem to have called for his resignation. Interestingly, two years after the incident Koekoe was acknowledged for his contribution as one of the best local government administrators and for that he was awarded with a trip to the United States of America. In 1988 he attended the International Institute of Municipal Clerks Convention in Spokane.[1072] Seakhela recalls that when Koekoe returned from his trip a big welcoming party was thrown in his honour.[1073]

However, the situation changed in at the beginning of the 1990s following allegations that Koekoe supported the Three Million Gang (TMG), which terrorized the community of Maokeng (more about this in Chapter Six). During this period he was also alleged to being an accomplice in the murder of township residents. In 1990 the municipal police shot and killed Paul Rabanye, 10, and George Mabitle, 18, when the "community" planned to march to the Maokeng and Kroonstad town councils to present a petition complaining "of corruption, high rents and

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[1068] Interview with Mrs M.J. Mokoena conducted by T.C. Challa and A.H. Mosoeu for the Department of Sport, Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Library and Archives Service Directorate, Oral History Interviews, 15 June 2000, Tswelopelo Public Library, Maokeng. I am indebted to the Free State Provincial Archives for allowing me to use these interviews. I have transcripts of these interviews in my possession

[1069] Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Hearing, http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/welkom/welkom3.htm. Downloaded, 14 January 2010

[1070] Ibid.

[1071] *Weekly Mail, 2 March to 8 March 1990*

[1072] *Die Noordelike Stem – The Northern Times, 21 October 1988;* also see Minutes of the 50th Ordinary Meeting of the City Council of Maokeng, 30 June 1988. I have a copy of these minutes in my possession

[1073] Interview with Seakhela

exorbitant electricity bills and demanding the reinstatement of 700 municipal workers who were dismissed last year (more about this in chapter six).[1074] Criticism against his council and himself grew louder, and this was spearheaded by some of the women who previously supported him. Paulina Rantie was one such woman. Rantie felt personally aggrieved and betrayed by Koekoe. On 11 October 1990 Rantie's 17 year-old son, Solomon, was brutally murdered by the members of the TMG in her presence. Testifying before the TRC, Rantie recalled that her son, who was a member of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) was chased from his school to her house by the TMG and "chopped" to death.[1075] What particularly incensed Rantie was that Koekoe, as a mayor and someone she used to support, failed to demonstrate solidarity with her and her family during their bereavement. She remembers

> I used to canvass for Koekoe's Matla a Sechaba. But when the Three Million started killing our children, he didn't even send a message of condolences. As mayor, when we wanted to meet and discuss this issue with him, he would instead fly over the township in a helicopter and distribute papers, explaining his position. He discussed with us through papers. If he was genuinely concerned he would have instead used other media like T.V. (television) to send a message of condolence[1076]

At this stage the influence of the campaigns spearheaded by the MDM was very strong in Maokeng, particularly against those perceived as collaborators. In spite of this, at the beginning of the 1990s Koekoe joined (or rejoined?) the ANC, and was elected chairman of one of the Wards. There is a strong belief among some of the residents in Maokeng that he joined the ANC because he was tactical. When he realised that the political situation was changing, he decided not to resist the changes but rather accommodated them. Reflecting on this period in Koekoe's life, Matube observed: "He was a leader who, when he made a mistake, was able to [admit]. That's why when things changed he joined the ANC."[1077] He continued to work as a councillor for the ANC until he passed away in the year 2000.

Having sketched Koekoe's career, which is intimately linked to the black local governments in Maokeng, the chapter will now turn to the Town Council of Maokeng (TCM) and the reasons it enjoyed support within the "community".

[1074] *Weekly Mail, 2 March to 8 March 1990*
[1075] Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Proceedings held at Welkom, 10 October 1996. http://www.justice.gov.za.trc/hrvtrans/welkom
[1076] Interview with Rantie
[1077] Interview with Matube

"What we need to understand is that the municipality here was very powerful"[1078]: The Town Council of Maokeng and Service Delivery

On 25 August 1988 Koekoe, addressing his council, said

> The council enjoys the trust of the community – that of all its residents: adults, pupils and children. ... The community admires the services rendered by the council in their interests. ... The work done by the council and the developments initiated by the council is the reason for peace and order in Maokeng[1079]

Koekoe's astuteness and charismatic character were visible in the way the TCM managed the township. But this also caused strains between himself and some of the councillors. For example, a year after Matla a Sechaba took over the town council some of the councillors quit. Letsabo, who was a councillor then, contends that these resignations were caused by Koekoe's uncompromising stance. He remembers

> *Ntate* Nkukane, inspector Lefafa, teacher Mfazi, who had been promoted to become an inspector, *ntate* Phakoe, and then *ntate* Koekoe, we were the people who formed the first executive. But as you know, problems are never ending. Then Mfazi and Lefafa quit. I think it was after a year. And some of the councillors also quit ... some were members of the executive. They quit. They said that *Majoro* (Mayor) Koekoe was dictating the terms. *Ja*, he doesn't take their point. Yes, Koekoe was like that. If he says this and that, his suggestion should be considered. It was his personality[1080]

But these resignations do not seem to have disrupted the TCM. The latter identified and brought in new councilors like Sesomo Seakhela, and continued with its work. The TCM under Koekoe's leadership made concerted efforts to meet the residents' needs, without increasing rent and service charges (or at least keeping them at a minimum level compared to other townships). This helped the council to circumvent potential tensions between itself and the residents, as it was the case in many other townships. The residents' main grievance in other townships, as noted already, was the rent and service charges increase, without visible provision of services. In 1986 Thembisa residents, through the local civic organization, "… made the non-payment of rent an official stand in the township … *which resulted in* rent boycott in Thembisa".[1081] This, as

[1078] Interview with Modisenyane

[1079] Minutes of the City Council of Maokeng – Ordinary Meeting (52nd Ordinary Meeting), held in the Council Chambers, Maokeng, on Thursday 25 August 1998. I have a copy of these minutes in my possession

[1080] Interview with Letsabo

[1081] For a more detailed account on rent boycott in Thembisa, see Siyotula, N.G. 'Thembisa Rent Boycott' Honours Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand. 1989, pp.28-57 (Italics my emphasis)

Siyotula observes, "made Thembisa the second township after the Vaal to embark on a rent boycott".[1082] The rent boycott continued unabated, and in 1989 the chairman of the Board of Thembisa Administrators, Mr. Gert Muller, announced that the township had sustained a loss of R7.1 million.[1083] Bonner and Nieftagodien, in their study of Alexandra Township, note "the rent boycott, which had previously been launched by the Alexandra Residents Association (ARA) … enjoyed immediate success." "In fact, in March 1986", they continue, "the income derived from rent had plummeted to about one-third of the rent collected in December 1985 (R51 285 compared to R155 938)." In conclusion, the authors write "at the height of the rent boycott in July 1986, only slightly more than R19 000 was collected."[1084] This rent boycott played an important role in forcing the councillors in the Alexandra Town Council (ATC) to resign en masse in1986, as noted above.[1085]

In Maokeng the situation was different. From the outset the council embarked on uplifting the community. After coming to power, Matla a Sechaba , *inter alia*, revealed that among its responsibilities were to carry on in the UBC's and KCC's traditions that of mediating on behalf of the residents and helping to resolve domestic disputes. Letsabo explains

> When I joined the council our main job was to oversee that things were running smoothly in the township. And people's problems should be resolved by us, instead of being taken to court. They could only be taken to court if we had failed to resolve them[1086]

Furthermore, the council scrapped both the lodger's and visitor's permits. Letsabo continues

> ... Things like lodger's permit were no longer there. We got rid of them. We also got rid of the visitor's permits. We got rid of this thing that if you were visiting ... you could sleep over that night, but the following morning you had to go and request the visitor's permit at the municipality's office, or else you'd be arrested[1087]

[1082] Ibid

[1083] *The Star,* 5 January, 1989

[1084] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* p.295

[1085] Ibid.

[1086] Interview with Letsabo

[1087] Interview with Letsabo; Dipuo Elizabeth Mamatela describing the hardships caused by the lodger's permit said: "I was blessed with eight children. My two sons decided to leave school at an early age ... to look for work. You see, a child once he/she had reached a certain age they were supposed to pay lodger's permit. The two used to pay lodger's permit ..." Interview with Dipuo Elizabeth Mamatela conducted by T.C. Challa and A.H. Mosoeu for the Department of Sport, Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Library and Archives Service Directorate, Oral History Interviews, 15 June 2000, Tswelopelo Public Library, Maokeng. I am indebted to the Free State Provincial Archives for allowing me to use these interviews.

In similar vein, the Management Committee (Manco) in Brentpark intervened on behalf of the residents of Brentpark when the Kroonstad Municipality proposed rent and service charge increases in the 1980s. James "Jimmy" Nanyaane, who was born in 1938 in 'A' Location, Kroonstad, and joined the Brentpark Manco in the mid-1980s, recalls

> We fell under the white guys' municipality. We got our finances from the[ir] municipality. We got an annual budget for Brentpark. Yes, the issue of rent. I had a cousin here. He was a very good politician. We worked together in the Management Committee and we gave them hell. The guys from town came with the proposal of [increasing rent]. So, we had to fight against that. This time they were proposing, say from R3.80 to about R7.00. We fought the matter at committee level. Even the community didn't know about it. They saw the rent not changing. No increments whatsoever. Well, the argument was the same old argument: people are poor. They can't even buy a packet of mielie meal. So how can you raise the rent?[1088]

Seakhela, who joined the executive committee of the TCM in1985, adds that the council was able help the community because sometimes Koekoe took issues into his own hands:

> ... *Ntate* (Mr) Koekoe was a very stubborn person who sometimes took decisions rather than comply with the rules. For example, there was a rule that said people from the farms were not allowed to enter into the location, but they should go to the homelands. But *ntate* Koekoe would unlawfully let people into the location[1089]

Before long the council also embarked on infrastructural development as part of its tasks. Seakhela remembers

> We managed to build the [Municipal] offices that are situated at Constantia; and the two roads; and Mphefela [section]; and we also managed to build the power station next to the [municipal] offices. Then the riots erupted[1090]

Similarly, Letsabo remembers proudly

> People were satisfied. Roads were fixed. If it was raining like it is (today), they [people] were certain that the following day streets would be levelled. During Koekoe's tenure that's how things were. You know, in the afternoon he would drive around the township – all over. The following day when he arrives at the

[1088] Interview with James "Jimmy" Nanyaane (LHPR), Brentpark, 14 November 2007
[1089] Interview with Sesomo Seakhela (LHPR), Constantia, Maokeng, 28 October 2008
[1090] Interview with Seakhela

> council he would say 'Men, you must go and fix this and that street because I found it not in a satisfactory state. He did not wait for a white person to come and inform him to go and do this and that. He was hands on[1091]

Leseri concurs

> *Ntate* Koekoe used to drive around the location to check roads. You would not find roads as bad as they're presently during his time. He would drive slowly in his car around the location, and in a wink of an eye you would see construction people fixing roads. Even if you went to him and said 'I live near an open space and people are dumping things near my house'. He would go there personally to check for himself and then would later send people to remove the dirt and clean that area. You wouldn't find the location as filthy as it is now[1092]

John Lewele Modisenyane, who later became the organizer of the UDF in the OFS, corroborates these testimonies

> When you look around now you can see there isn't any (development). But during his term he wouldn't allow you to keep an old car in your yard. He would say *"jwale ore tlisetsa litweba wena"*(Your old car is going to infest this township with rats). He worked really hard and he monitored his people. He was so powerful. It's sad he's not here anymore[1093]

Ludick, who was the Secretary for Housing and Community Services, remembers that to develop the township the council began by purchasing land from the surrounding farms. He explains

> To start off, we identified the need for land. We purchased land. We purchased the farm, Jason, to built Constantia; the Farm Gelukwaarts. Now it's a township. But the farm's name was Gelukwaarts, you see. We bought that farm from Mr. Dirkson[1094]

In 1986 *Volksblad* reported that Mr Willie de Bruyn, a property broker from Kroonstad, invested R1 million in the development of Gelukwaarts. The housing project aimed at civil servants who could afford to purchase modern houses ranging between R26 000 and R56 000. The houses, according to the report, would be fitted with carpets, cupboards, modern baths and toilet

[1091] Interview with Letsabo
[1092] Interview with Leseri
[1093] Interview with Modisenyane
[1094] Interview with Ludick

facilities, and a television room. By June 50 houses were almost ready. In line with the council's policy, the project created 160 vacancies for the residents of Maokeng.[1095]

Lenong, one of the beneficiaries of the project, concurs

> Here there were real changes. Constantia location was established. And the people there got running water in their yards when they came, and the municipality gave each one of them a fruit tree to plant. Also in Gelukswaarts. When we arrived here *in 1986*, we found running water as well, even though we weren't given some fruit trees. I mean, there was water in every household and electricity. Ours was just to get them connected into our yards[1096]

Furthermore, the council built more houses on the land it had bought. Just about the time Gelukwaarts was built, the council also commissioned the building of Troubou. This area was designated for pensioners. Mpho "Bebe" Taka, who later joined the Three Million Gang, recalls that his family moved to Troubou after his grandmother was offered a house there. He explains

> … We got a house from the municipality at Troubou, next to Gelukwaarts, for pensioners, because we were staying with a pensioner, our grandmother. What a peaceful area ... and beautiful. You see, if you were a pensioner you would go and register your name. Then you would be given a certain number to show that you were on the waiting list. Then you get a house. We were taken in municipality's tractors in those times of Mr Koekoe. [The houses were] only for pensioners. They would allow you to go with whoever you were staying with; your own children or grandchildren. [What happened to the house in Marabastad?] We put tenants[1097]

[1095] *Volksblad, 18 June 1986*
[1096] Interview with Lenong (Italics my emphasis)
[1097] Interview with Mpho Samuel "Bebe" Taka (LHPR), Mphefela, Maokeng, 13 August 2009



(*Source: Mpopetsi Dhlamini*)

Machabe Thulo, whose family struggled to make ends meet, recalls that he was forced to abandon his schooling to look for work to help out at home. He was employed by the construction company that built Troubou. He remarks

> I was working for Troubou. Troubou is not a name of the location. It's a contract. We were building. Then it happened that when the owner of that company was supposed to give us our last payment, he disappeared. We took the wheelbarrows, hose-pipes, and whatever the material was there. [Even] the thing that you climb on

> when you're build[ing] … scaffolds. We sold them to pay ourselves. It was in 1986[1098]

In the early 1990s Troubou changed from being a peaceful and beautiful place and became a violent-torn area after the Three Million Gang had changed it into its stronghold in its fight against the "community" (see chapter six).

In spite of the efforts the council put into developing Maokeng, in 1986 Dennis Bloem, a leading figure in the local politics called for the resignation of the council but for reasons not pertaining to lack of service delivery (or rent increase). He informed newspapers in a service to commemorate the deaths of people who 'died in the struggle for a just South Africa', that they (i.e. the "community") will call for the immediate resignation of mayor Caswell Koekoe and his councillors, because of their participation in the 'system's' politics and because residents have declared them undesirable characters.[1099] Bloem's call was made in response to the dismissal of 43 workers from three prominent businesses in Kroonstad, the death of Viljoenskroon activist, Meshack Letshabo. The latter was shot dead during an unrest at Viljoenskroon. And finally, the call was in protest against the acute lack of facilities at Bodibeng High and Kananelo Secondary schools.[1100] Evidently, Bloem's demand had nothing to do with the council's inability to provide services, or that it had increased rent and service charges.

It was for this reason that this call did not deter the TCM and its councillors. The majority of the councillors continued with their work. One resigned though. Ben Plank was reported to have resigned from council after 18 years service in various councils. Seemingly his resignation was prompted by the call to councils to resign. Explaining to the *Citizen* reporter why he decided to resign, Plank said "People have told us that they no longer need us. I decided to bow to their demands after threats were made to my life as well as threats to boycott my shop … in Constantia".[1101]

Just like Bloem's call, Plank's resignation did not discourage the other councillors. They continued with their work in the council. In addition to constructing houses, the council also built schools. Ludick explains

> We made a motivated application that there was a need for schools because, as I said two of our councillors were circuit inspectors and we had a very good relationship with

[1098] Interview with Machabe Thulo (LHPR), Gelukwaarts, 23 September 2009. In the 1990s Thulo became the 'commander' of the community's self defense units

[1099] *City Press, 9 February 1986;* also see UWL SAHA AL2431 (Box 48) UDF Collection, 'Dennis Bloem, OFS Organisations and Incidents

[1100] The 43 workers were dismissed for voicing their dissatisfaction about unfair treatment. See *City Press, 9 February 1986*

[1101] *Citizen, 25 March 1986*

> the late Dr. [Reginald] Cingo. … And with his assistance, we managed to build … I can name them Motswela High School, Boikemisetso is the other one … And later on there was Phephetso at Koekoe Village. Koekoe Village is another farm that was bought. But the farm's name was Nasiebithorn. That farm was bought and the township that was established there was named after *ntate* Koekoe. It was called Koekoe Village[1102]

In 1989 the Lofty Group Constructions collaborated with the council to build a large bakery, Ultra City (including a petrol station) in Kroonstad, and a school in Maokeng at the total cost of R8.75 million.[1103] Mr Bruce Ross, managing director of A Fairweather and Lofty-Konstrukse companies, told *Volksblad* that his companies were involved in a R5 million project building the Dr. Reginald Cingo High School. He noted "the school [would] be the largest black high school in the Free State and [could] accommodate 1000 pupils".[1104] "[It would] consists", he added "of an administration block, library, the classrooms block, with laboratories and a workshop, where motor mechanics and other technicians would be trained".[1105]

Similarly, the Brentpark Manco, in spite of its circumscribed powers, was also able embark on infrastructural development in Brentpark, although on a smaller scale than the TCM. Nanyaane explains

> Well, the role of the Management [Committee] was far better, because of our efforts. We established a high school – a boarding house high school. We got a swimming pool. We got a stadium …[1106]

On the other hand, the TCM went further and constructed an old age home and a resort. Ludick recalls

> And apart from the houses we built, we built the community hall …, we built an old age home. And in that old age home we accommodated a lot of people. The old age home got registered. It's now called the Boiketlong Old Age Home, yes, yes. And furthermore we also identified the need for a resort, you know. So at the back of Gelukwaarts there's … a spot for a resort. So we got the extension of money also from the government and we built a holiday resort. You know, starting with the caretaker's house, we fenced the whole area. We built the swimming bath, because there was no swimming bath in Maokeng. And we built the conference facilities there and little lapas. All these were also done during the term of the very same Mr. Koekoe[1107]

[1102] Interview with Ludick
[1103] *Die Volksblad, 17 February 1989*
[1104] Ibid.
[1105] Ibid.
[1106] Interview with Nanyaane

Koekoe and the TCM's efforts did not go unnoticed. And some of the accolades he garnered came from unlikely quarters. Some of the activists supporting the UDF in Maokeng recognized these as the reasons the local activists could not unseat the council. Joseph Litabe, a leading figure in the township politics in the 1980s, remarks

> *Ntate* Koekoe was powerful and respected by many people, because when he returned from Qwaqwa he fixed the infrastructure in Kroonstad. He did so many things. … He installed the sewerage system and water taps were installed in people's yards … He was intelligent. That's why during the elections for the local government he was widely supported …[1108]

Similarly, Modisenyane concurs and explains: "... What we need to understand is that the municipality here was very powerful. It was under *ntate* Caswell Koekoe. People voted for him. He had influence".[1109]

What probably made it even more difficult for the 'progressive' structures in Maokeng to mobilise the residents against Koekoe and the TCM was the latter's ability to create employment for locals and still manage to build all these infrastructures and not raise rent and service charges (or keep them at a minimal level compared to other townships). Leseri explains

> At the time when these houses (Ditlenkereng, in Gelukwaarts) were built, he [Koekoe] told us to inform him about any builder that we knew. And we did. The builders went to see him and each one of them was given a number of houses to build. He explained to them that they should appoint their own labourers. He also informed them that he'd pay each builder what they charged and they would have to pay their labourers. Then the houses were built[1110]

Ludick echoes Leseri

> … At the same time we were creating job opportunities, because we employed people. We employed a leader for a house, so you can earn as a leader. You can say I can build and we can see that. And then we allow you to have say, for instance, 5 or 6 labourers to

[1107] Ibid.; In 1994 Koekoe's council bought tracts of land for future projects. In 1993 the government offered the City Council of Maokeng - CCM (after the 1989 elections TCM changed to CCM) R17 million to purchase land. The council bought the Meadows and Dawie Malan smallholdings. See *The Citizen, 22 February 1994*

[1108] Interview with Litabe (LHPR), Kroonstad, 14 January 2009

[1109] Interview with Lewele Modisenyane conducted by Tshepo Moloi for the "Local Histories and Present Realities" Programme, 9 July 2008, Kroonstad

[1110] Interview with Leseri; *Ditlenkere* are a special type of bricks. These bricks were used to build houses in Gelukwaarts, hence the area was named *Ditlenkereng.*

> build the house. Once that house is finished, we give you another plan, you see[1111]

In spite of all these efforts, the TCM does not seem to have alienated the residents by increasing rent and service charges. Letsabo claims that their council "never had instances where people did not pay for the services".[1112] And Seakhela, on the other hand, remembers "we never experienced such problems (protests), because our rent was very low. ... Koekoe never increased rents." "Rent", he asserts, "was only increased recently after he had left".[1113] Seakhela's recollection is somewhat of a bit of an exaggeration. The City Council of Maokeng (CCM) under the leadership of Koekoe did increase rent and service charges. At the beginning of the 1990s the council increased rent to R41.40 – and it was at this stage that the Maokeng Democratic Crisis Committee (MDCC) mobilised the residents and opposed the council.[1114] Although it is not clear if this amount was charged for smaller houses (two-roomed) or bigger houses (five-roomed), but comparatively it was relatively lower than elsewhere. In Thabong, Welkom, for instance, in 1985 for a two-roomed house residents paid R43.90 and for a three-roomed house R50.90.[1115] In March 1990 tariffs for services in other OFS townships were as follows: Thabong (Welkom) R44 per month and in Phiritona (Heilbron) R31.[1116] Lenong remembers that for the two stands they owned at Gelukwaarts they paid R57.80 for rent and service charges. For Ludick, because of cuts in rent payments like the lodger's fee (and of course because of satisfactory service delivery), residents were encouraged to pay rent and service charges and the council managed to break even.[1117]

The council was able to sustain itself financially because it did not solely rely on rent and service charges payment – although this made up the larger chunk of its revenue. It used various methods to raise funds. One of these was to approach directly the Minister responsible for local government and request financial assistance – and in the case of Maokeng this was made easier by Koekoe's charm and charisma. Ludick claims

> So the problem was to get funds. Fortunately, Mr. Koekoe had the skills and he was a person who could easily arrange a meeting. He would jump into his car, pull the officials with him and we would go to even Bloemfontein or Pretoria to see a Minister or whoever, and then arrange for something. I can still remember good, you know, at one stage we went to Pretoria[1118]

[1111] Interview with Ludick
[1112] Interview with Letsabo
[1113] Interview with Seakhela
[1114] Interview with Litabe
[1115] *City Press,* 1 December 1985
[1116] City Council of Maokeng Minutes of the Seventy Two Ordinary Meeting, 28 June 1990
[1117] Interview with Ludick
[1118] Ibid.; It is possible here that Ludick might be referring to the Inter-governmental fund made available by the central government to the local authorities, particularly those which had been severely affected by the rent

In addition, the council also used innovative methods to raise funds. It employed residents with building skills – probably at cheaper rates – to build houses, which then the council sold to private companies. The council avoided using construction companies, which were likely to be expensive. Ludick explains

> Locally, because there were a lot of people in Maokeng with very good building skills, we built the houses and sold them to Transnet, for instance. … We built houses even for the local firms. There's a motor company in Kroonstad, FCNH. We built houses for their employees. Then we got our money back into this account [1119]

Although documented evidence to substantiate the amount of money the council was able to generate from the external sources is not readily available, it is clear however, taking into account the number of projects the council successfully carried out, that funding was not a constraint.

It was perhaps for this reason that Koekoe in August 1988 confidently informed his council that the TCM enjoyed the support of the whole "community". Notwithstanding his pronouncement, during the campaign leading to the BLA elections in October 1989, Matla a Sechaba demonstrated signs of intolerance. It attempted to impede opposition parties from campaigning. For example, a case was opened against the TCM for allegedly using state resources to intimidate other contestants. The Supreme Court in Bloemfontein found it guilty of obstructing other parties like the newly formed Maokeng People's Party (MPP) from campaigning freely. It was established that the council twice forbade the MPP from holding public meetings.[1120] This suggests that the leadership of Matla a Sechaba feared its party might not perform well in the elections if opposed. It is also possible that the leadership of Matla a Sechaba had come to terms with the fact that in 1989 the majority of the residents in Maokeng, particularly the younger generation, had been involved in the struggle for liberation since 1985. And this was the generation that was totally opposed to any government-created structures such the town councils and its activities. Therefore, it could not count on its support. The only section of the "community" that would support it were the elderly who, in spite of the perception that the TCM was collaborating with the apartheid regime, still held Koekoe and his council in high regard. Indeed, Ludick observes that even though support was still there but it came mainly from stand

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boycotts. Koekoe informed his council that "Maokeng [had] made an application to the previous government for funding in its attempt to guard against financial problems, especially to be able to pay for the salaries of its employees and emergency services". See City Council of Maokeng Minutes of the Hundred and Fourteenth Committee Meeting, 13 April 1995

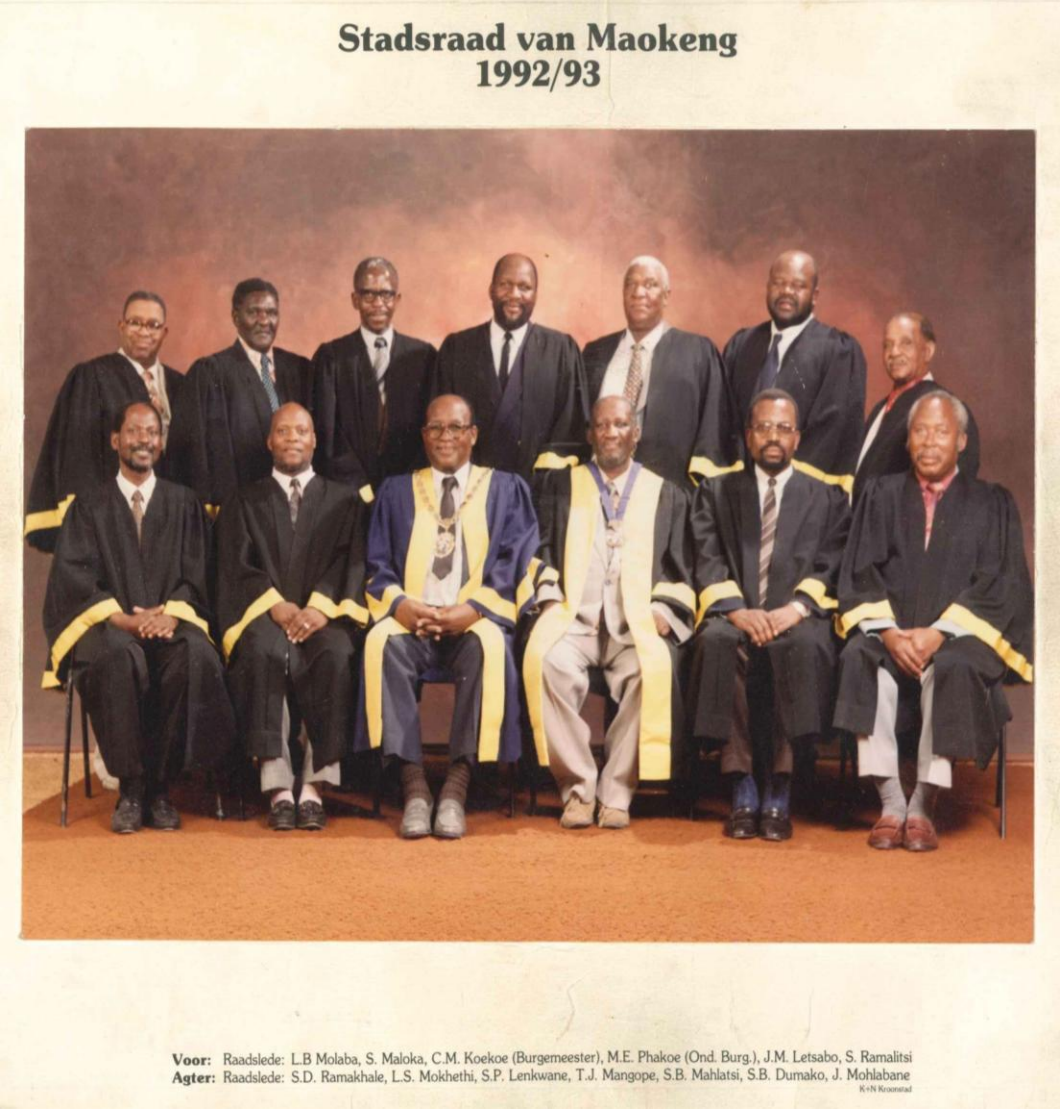
[1119] Ibid. (Italics my emphasis)

[1120] *Die Noordelike Stem – The Northern Times, 26 August 1988*

owners, because they knew (i.e. still had faith in) Koekoe.[1121] But this generation was rapidly shrinking because many, regrettably, were passing away.

Although Koekoe's Matla a Sechaba won these elections it does not seem to have received huge support as was the case in the previous elections. Despite the propaganda used by the government to encourage residents to vote, voter turnout was low across the country. For instance, the government distributed a leaflet announcing that Nelson Mandela's release from prison was dependent on the residents turning out to vote in their numbers.[1122] One newspaper estimated that only 40 716 or 19.8 per cent in the Orange Free State voted in the 1989 elections.[1123] Interestingly, a significant number of the eligible voters in Maokeng registered but only a few actually voted. In 1987 it was estimated that there were 31 779 adults in Maokeng (this number might have slightly increased in 1989) still 22 462 registered to vote, but only 7 277 cast it.[1124] The Reverend Mzimase Humphrey Gozongo, the first applicant in the case between Gozongo and 11 Others against The Minister of Law and Order and Two Others, claimed in his affidavit that "On 10 October 1989 in a total poll of 21% only, the present mayor, Mr Koekoe, and his councillors were elected to office as the municipal government of Maokeng".[1125]

[1121] Interview with Ludic
[1122] UWL HLP AD 1912 (91.7) SAIRR
[1123] *Weekly Mail, October 21 to October 27 1988*
[1124] 'Voter Boycotts in the 1980s: Black Local Authority Polls', in Mark Benett and Deborah (Research Co-ordinators) *Political Conflict in South Africa: Data Trends 1984-1988* (An Indicator SA Issue Focus, December 1988), p.167
[1125] UWL HLP AK2274 Gozongo and Others versus The Minister of Law and Order and Others



(*Source: Mpopetsi Dhlamini*)

To comprehend the low turnout during the 1989 elections various factors have to be considered. First, the call by the ANC in exile in January 1989 to make that year a "Year of Mass Action for People's Power", second, publicized attacks on voters at the voting centres by young political activists[1126], and finally, and perhaps more importantly, the opposition mounted by the MDM must have galvanized the masses to boycott the council's elections in the townships. As part of its Defiance Campaign, the MDCC, aligned to the MDM, mobilized the residents to oppose the City Council of Maokeng (CCM) – at this stage the Town Council of Maokeng had changed its name. The MDCC called for the disbandment of the council and the resignation of the councillors. But its efforts were unsuccessful.

[1126] *Sowetan, 27 October 1989*

Chapter Six explores attempts by some of the local activists to force the City Council of Maokeng to dissolve – albeit unsuccessfully. However, first, the next chapter focuses on mass political mobilization and protests in Maokeng. It particularly deals with students, youth partly, and older political activists' organizations (these were not civic organizations, as will be shown).

Conclusion

After the student uprisings in 1976, the government introduced reforms. Among these, it established community councils, replacing the Urban Bantu Councils, to manage African townships. The government devolved specific and limited powers to these councils but without financial backing. To accrue revenue to service the townships, community councils increased rent and service charges. Towards the end of the 1970s most of the residents in African townships across the country mobilized and established civic organizations/associations (or civics) to oppose rent and service charges increases. This rendered the community councils inoperable. In 1982 the government upgraded them and introduced town (and village) councils under the Black Local Authorities Act. Still this was done without providing these councils with financial assistance. Worse, the town councils, unlike the community councils, had no tax base to accumulate funding. State-owned liquor and beerhalls were privatized, there were few businesses in the townships and they were under severe competition from the big shopping outlets in town. Just like the community councils, town councils also dependend on charging exorbitant rental and service charges. On observing that there were no real changes in their areas of settlement despite the rent service charges they were paying every month, coupled with allegations of corruption and embezzlement against the councillors, the residents, through the civics, intensified their opposition. By mid-1980s many of the town (and village) councils across the country had dissolved.

This chapter has tried to show that in Kroonstad's black townships of Maokeng and Brentpark the situation turned out differently. First, the community council, and later the town council (and the management committee in Brentpark) were never opposed to the point of being forced to dissolve. These local authorities continued managing their residential areas until they were disbanded in the early 1990s after the transitional local government was established. In Maokeng, for example, because of the dearth of pressing infrastructural problems such as lack of housing experienced in other areas like Lingelihle, in Cradock, Eastern Cape, and in the Rand townships such as Alexandra and Kathorus there was no civic organization which was established to mobilize the "community". Instead, during the era of the community councils the residents' grievances were taken up by the opposition councillors (or dissident councillors) within the council against the governing councillors. In some of the areas lack of housing was the main problem. This was largely compounded by the unabated influx of immigrants from the rural areas in search of employment in the ever expanding manufacturing sector in some of the urban areas. Those who could not be accommodated in houses found accommodation in informal

settlements. These were the people who were mobilized easily by civic organizations against threats of eviction and shack demolition by the councils.

What distinguished the Town Council of Maokeng (TCM) from other town councils was that it was led by a charismatic mayor Caswell Koekoe, who assisted the residents of the township, including finding employment for them. The council under him made concerted efforts to provide the necessary social services in the township, without increasing rent and service charges (or at least retaining them at a minimum level comparatively). Moreover, councillors working for the TCM continued in the tradition of the UBC and Kroonstad Community Council (KCC) of mediating on behalf of the residents. As a result the TCM enjoyed support in the township, particularly amongst the elderly people (i.e. rate payers). The same applied in the case of the management committee in Brentpark. The later opposed rent increments proposed by the Kroonstad Town Council. These efforts severely limited the space for any opposition against the TCM and Manco, in the case of the TCM at least until 1989. After 1989 the MDM-aligned structures in Maokeng mounted pressure against the TCM (then known as the City Council of Maokeng - CCM), called for its disbandment and its councillors to resign. This was after the CCM had increased rent and service charges. But more importantly vociferous demands for their resignation were made after rumours made rounds in the township that the council, particularly Koekoe, supported the Three Million Gang.

CHAPTER FIVE

Mass mobilisation, political protests and generational struggle, 1984-1989

Introduction

The 1980s were arguably the turning point in South Africa's late 20th century political history. At this point a massive intensification of the struggle took place against the apartheid state. By 1984 an upsurge of resistance was occurring in most urban townships.[1127] For example, the school boycotts which broke out in February 1980 in Coloured schools in the Western Cape quickly spread to some schools in the then PWV and OFS.[1128] In OFS students began boycotting classes in July 1980 in Botshabelo, then Qwaqwa, after which Thaba 'Nchu followed. In September the boycotts spread to Mangaung, in Bloemfontein.[1129] The main reason for these boycotts was "a growing popular rebellion against the imposition, over the years, of various school board structures".[1130] Chitja Twala notes that students' resentment of the school boards was based on the "belief that they were remote-controlled by the apartheid education authorities".[1131]

Moreover, in November 1983 students in Thabong Township, Welkom, protested, *inter alia*, against the proposed introduction of age limits.[1132] The government regulations gazetted in December 1980 and May 1981 laid down 'age limits' of 16 years for African pupils in Standard Five (today's Grade 7), 18 years for Standard Eight (Grade 10), and 20 years for Standard Ten (Grade 12).[1133] For the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) this regulation was a sinister attempt by the government to "exclude students who had missed school through boycotts

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[1127] Marks, M. and McKenzie, P. 'Militarised Youth: Political Pawns or Social Agents?', in Cock., J. and McKenzie (eds.) *From Defence to Development: Redirecting Military Resources in South Africa* (Claremont, David Philip, 1998), p.223

[1128] See Hyslop, J. 'School Student Movements and State Education Policy: 1972-87', in William Cobbert and Robin Cohen (eds.) *Popular Struggles in South Africa* (Africa World Press, 1988), p.188. In the Western Cape students boycotted against the South African Defence Force (SADF) national servicemen teaching in schools, demanded for free and compulsory education, and called for the re-admission of barred pupils.

[1129] *Post* (Johannesburg*), 10 and 24 September 1980;* Mosoeunyana White Mohapi, who was doing Form 1 in 1980, recalls that in the same year during a demonstration by students from his school Lereko High two students were shot and killed by police. These were Papi Makotokoto and Sejake. See interview with Mohapi by Chitja Twala, for the SADET Oral History Project, Bloemfontein, 18 January 2008

[1130] Twala, C. 'The Emergence ' of the student and youth resistance organisations in the Free State Townships during the 1980s: A viable attempt to reorganise protest politics?', in *Journal for Contemporary History, Vol.32, No.2, December 2007,* p.40

[1131] Ibid.

[1132] Chaskalson, M. and Seekings, J. 'The Awakening: Desperation and Defiance', in Mark Bennett and Deborah Quin (Research Co-ordinators) *Political Conflict in South Africa: Data Trends, 1984-88* (An indicator South Africa Issue Focus, December 198), p.31

[11331133] Carter, C. 'Comrades and Community: Politics and the Construction of Hegemony in Alexandra Township, South Africa, 1984-1987' (Mansfield College, University of Oxford Ph. D Thesis, 1991), p.96

or because they had been detained for long periods."[1134] Finally, in 1984 in Tumahole Township, in Parys, students first became active in protests over a rent increase.[1135]
In spite of all the political action taking place in other townships, especially in the OFS, Kroonstad's black townships, Maokeng and Brentpark, remained conspicuously quiet until early 1985. It is important to note here that these were not the only townships which lagged behind in terms of massive political revolt. Seekings writes that [the transition to confrontation] "did not occur during 1984 throughout the PWV … Several townships remained largely quiescent, in the sense that there was no mass political protest or confrontation".[1136] These townships included Soweto, Kagiso, Munsieville and Mohlakeng, in the West Rand; and Mamelodi, in Pretoria.[1137]Although by 1984 already civic organisations had been established in these townships[1138], Seekings notes that the reason(s) for the slow shift to confrontational politics there was generally because of the absence of rent increases, the weakness of radical civic organisations, and the continued credibility of former conservative civic organisations which now controlled the township councils.[1139]

But there were also particular reasons which were only applicable to individual townships. For example, Seekings argues that Soweto was quiescent because it was subsidised by the state; and in Kagiso and Mohlakeng no rent increase were imposed. Most important though, in these two townships the structure of local employment, which was particularly service rather than industrial, militated against the development of collective consciousness and organisation.[1140] Maokeng and Brentpark, like these townships, were held back, first, by the dearth of pressing socio-economic grievances, and the fact that, as noted in the previous chapter, the recently elected Town Council of Maokeng (TCM) and the Brentpark Management Committee (Manco) did not raise rent and interceded with the white government officials on behalf of the members of their communities. However, unlike these townships, in Maokeng in the period under review, there was a striking absence of political events or incidents like, for example, a funeral of a victim of political unrest (or of a struggle stalwart), or commemorations of historic days that could be used to galvanize the residents.[1141] The detention, severe torture and finally the

[1134] Ibid., pp.96-97
[1135] Seekings, J. 'Political Mobilisation in Tumahole, 1984-1985', in *Africa Perspective: Agrarian Struggles in South Africa – The Debate Continues, Vol.1, Nos. 7 & 8,* (*1989*), p.121; Twala 'The Emergence', p.51
[1136] Seekings 'Quiescence', p.252
[1137] Ibid., also see Lekgoathi 'The UDF in the Vaal', p.590
[1138] Attempts by Mosioua "Terror" Lekota and Mongezi Radebe to organize the residents of Maokeng to form a civic organization in early 1980s were unsuccessful. See interview with Radebe by Frederikse
[1139] Seekings 'Quiescence', p. 252
[1140] Ibid.
[1141] Either lack of information or simply political avoidance prevented the residents of Maokeng from commemorating the death of Petros Molefe, one of the first cadres of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) to die carrying out sabotage acts in 1961. Molefe was born in Kroonstad and moved to Johannesburg, where he worked as a truck driver. He joined MK and on the night of 16 December 1961 his unit from Dube, in Soweto, attempted to blow up

sentencing of Mpho Petros Makae and Mosiuoa Jacob Tledima of the YCW in 1979 seemed to have cowed the residents of Maokeng. Furthermore, the government's ban on political meetings of more than 10 people worsened the situation in Kroonstad. Although there were sporadic but isolated acts of radicalism especially among some of the students at Bodibeng High, these failed to reach and galvanise the wider "community". For instance, in July 1980 slogans were written on the chalkboard in Standard 7B at Bodibeng, urging students to boycott classes and night studies.[1142] In 1983 more slogans were scribbled on the school's chalkboards, advising students to revolt and boycott sports. But this time the slogans were also directed against the government. Mahlatsi, a student at Bodibeng, admitted to having written "Vote No', ostensibly urging the students (and probably the teachers as well) to disregard the BLA elections to be held towards the end of the year.[1143] Finally, Maokeng lacked political veterans who, in other townships, helped to disseminate information about the role of the banned African political organizations such as the ANC and PAC[1144], or veterans who created links between local activists and the banned organizations in exile, and in the process encouraged political mobilization and organisation.[1145] Indeed, there were political veterans in Maokeng – albeit limited. However, these avoided becoming involved in resistance politics. For example, John Coangae, who at the beginning of the 1960s organized the PAC's cells in Maokeng, steered clear of resistance politics after he was released from Robben Island in 1963. Instead, Coangae, as shown in the previous chapter, participated in the government-created council politics.

Furthermore, what distinguished Maokeng from other townships was that when the opportunity to embark in mass political mobilization and protest finally availed itself in the mid-1980s, the residents of this township failed to sustain the momentum. This chapter will argue that this was, first, because of the long-term detentions of the leadership and the deployment of some of the committed and experienced political activists to regional and national structures. Second, the split within the 'progressive' structure in Maokeng between the Activist Forum (AF) and Maokeng Democratic Crisis Committee (MDCC) divided the residents in general, but the activists in particular. And, finally, the fight between the Three Million Gang (TMG) and the "community", particularly the MDCC-aligned political activists, affected attempts to mobilize the "community" and wage protests (the majority of the residents were scared to be seen taking sides, particularly after the TMG formed an alliance with the Inkatha Freedom Party).

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the Municipal Bantu Control Office in Dube. Molefe died after his bomb prematurely exploded, and it injured another member of his unit, Benjamin Ramutsi. http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/petros-molefe

[1142] Bodibeng High School Logbook, 30 July 1980

[1143] Bodibeng High School Logbook, 23 September 1983

[1144] In Kagiso, this role was played by activists such Sister Bernard Ncube. In March 1983 she, together with Ike Genu and Lettie Nzima, was arrested on charges of possession of banned literature. See Lekgoathi 'The United Democratic Front', p.595

[1145] In the case of the Eastern Cape, see Tetelman 'We Can', and the Free State, Twala and Seekings 'Activist Networks', and in Limpopo, Delius, P. 'Migrants, Comrades and Rural Revolt: Sekhukhuneland 1950 – 1987' in *Transformation,* 13, 1990

In the course of political revolt from the mid-1980s inter-generational struggle developed in Maokeng. However, unlike in other areas such as Crossroads, in the Western Cape[1146], and Thabong, in Welkom,[1147] in Maokeng this struggle did not degenerate into a backlash by the older generation against the younger generation in the broader township. It emerged between school-going students and the teachers in schools, particularly at Bodibeng High. This was evident when students disrespected, clashed, sometimes physically, with their teachers, and smoked *marijuana* openly, and refused to be punished. On the other hand, some of the teachers struck back in a heavy-handed manner. This chapter will make two-pronged argument in attempting to explain the reasons for this. First, in Maokeng from 1985 to 1989 school-going students were plunged into the leadership of the politics of resistance. This was largely because of the absence of pressing socio-economic grievances in the township. In townships where these existed, as shown in the previous chapter, they were taken up by the adult-led civic organisations. And second, the fight against the TMG necessitated a close working relationship between the younger generation and the older generation outside of the school environment.

Quiescence: Maokeng Township, 1980 to 1984

From 1980 there was a discernible shift from black consciousness philosophy to the 'charterist'[1148] ideology.[1149] This was evident when the Congress of South African Students of South Africa (COSAS), formed in June 1979, adopted the Freedom Charter in 1980.[1150] In the same year, the *Sunday Post* publicised the Freedom Charter, and in mid-year a campaign was undertaken to celebrate the Freedom Charter's 25th anniversary.[1151] However, most significantly during this period the ANC in exile and its members on Robben Island were beginning seriously to discuss the formation of a non-racial united front to lead the struggle inside the country[1152] – this was to be realised in 1983 with the formation of the UDF. For instance, Lazarus Mawela, a former member of the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) and, in the 1980s an underground operative of the ANC in Thembisa, claims that he received instructions from the

[1146] Cole, J. *Crossroads: The Politics of Reform and Repression 1976-1986* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987)
[1147] *Mabangalala: The Rise of Right-wing Vigilantes in South Africa – Occasional Paper No.10* (Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand, Centre for Applied Legal Studies, 1986)
[1148] 'Charterists' were (and still are) activists who adhere to the Freedom Charter, adopted by the Congress Alliance, led by the ANC, in 1955 in Kliptown, Soweto.
[1149] By 1980 the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), a black consciousness-inspired organization, was the only legal political organization for black people in the country. It was launched in 1979. See, for example, Mzamane, M.V. and Maaba, B. 'The Azanian People's Organisation, 1977-1990', in SADET*'s The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol.4, 1980-1990* (Pretoria, University of South Africa, 2010)
[1150] Seekings 'Quiescence', p.183; For an in-depth account about COSAS, see Matona, T. 'Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979–1985' (University of Cape Town, Honours Dissertation, 1992)
[1151] Seekings 'Quiescence', p.183
[1152] See, for example, Gerhart, G. M. and Glaser, C.L. *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1990, Vol.6 – Challenge and Victory, 1980-1990* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2010), pp.47-52

ANC in Botswana to help prepare for the formation of the united front inside the country. He explains

> So after a while we took a decision to go and speak to [Thami] Mnyele in Gaborone, Botswana. Alex Segale, whose younger sister later got married to Mnyele, was the first to go there. Segale returned and briefed us … I first went to meet him in 1980. We were instructed to prepare for the formation of the UDF[1153]

Similarly, prisoners on Robben Island were instructed to form youth congresses *to be affiliated to the proposed front* after their release.[1154] For example, Reuben Mahlagare and Thabiso Radebe, who in the 1980s became active in the branch of COSAS and youth structures in Thembisa, recall that Michael "Figo" Madlala and Brian Mazibuko, prisoners on Robben Island from 1977 to 1982, influenced the formation of Moya Youth Movement (MYM) in 1983.[1155] They claim "Brian gave Greg Thulare a copy of the Freedom Charter and also gave him the guidelines of how to form an organization".[1156] The Freedom Charter's profile, and by extension the ANC's, was further raised in 1980 through the extensively publicised bombings of the Sasol plants, both in Sasolburg and Secunda, by MK cadres.[1157]

The expanding influence of the Freedom Charter/ANC inside the country caused the development of severe contestation between the 'Charterists' and members of AZAPO, derogatorily referred to in the townships by the supporters of the Freedom Charter as the 'Zim-Zims'.[1158] The contestation between the two groupings was mainly caused by ideological differences. The supporters of the Freedom Charter, on the one hand, argued that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, both black and white. And, the members of AZAPO, and its student

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[1153] Interview with Lazarus Mawela by Tshepo Moloi, for the South African History Archive Thembisa Oral History Project (hereafter STHP), Umfuyaneng, Thembisa, 30 October 2011; In the 1970s Thamsanqa 'Thami' Mnyele was a staunch advocate of the black consciousness ideas. In 1979 he fled the country to Botswana where he joined the ANC. He was killed in Gaborone in 1985 during the raid by the South African Defence Force. Kellner, C. and Gonzalez S. (eds.) *Thami Mnyele and Medu: Art Ensemble Retrospective* (Johannesburg, Jacana, 2009)

[1154] Seekings 'Quiescence', p.191 (my emphasis)

[1155] MYM was later renamed Thembisa Youth Congress (TEYCO)

[1156] Interview with Reuben Mahlagare and Thabiso Radebe, conducted by Tshepo Moloi, 26 August 2004, Thembisa. SADET Oral History Project

[1157] For a detailed account on the bombing of Sasol and Natref plants in Sasolburg, interview with Solly Dhlamini by Tshepo Moloi, for the Free State African National Congress' Centenary Project, Centurion, 19 August 2011; Houston, G. and Magubane, B. 'The ANC's Armed Struggle in the 1970s', in the SADET'S *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol.2, 1970-1980* (Pretoria, University of South Africa, 2007), p. 508; and for the bombing of the Sasol plant in Secunda, Mpumalanga, see interview with Patrick Chamusso by Lerapo Lesetja, for the SADET Oral History Project, 2002; also view the screenplay *Catch a Fire*

[1158] The 'Zim-zims', in turn labeled the 'charterists' *Amavarara;* for a detailed account of the tensions between the 'charterists' and 'zim-zims', see Mkhabela, S. *Black Roses and Open Earth: Remembering 16 June 1976* (Johannesburg, Skotaville Press, 2001), chapter10; also see Carter 'Comrades and Community', pp.245-9

wing the Azanian Student Movement (AZASM) form in 1983, on the other hand, refuted this view and contended that *Azania* (South Africa) belongs to blacks. In the mid-1980s fierce tensions between the 'charterists' and the 'zim-zims' erupted in Maokeng and claimed people's lives (see below).

The government's problems were further compounded by the economic recession at the beginning of the 1980s. According to Gerhart and Glaser "a brief economic boom between 1979 and 1981 had been followed by falling gold prices and growing balance-of-payments deficits that soon induced a full-blown recession".[1159]In 1982 about 24 per cent of black people were unemployed, to which number even more were added by a steep rise in retrenchments of employed workers during 1982 and 1983.[1160] The situation worsened in late 1984 following the waning of foreign investment in the country as the gradual exodus of multinational companies accelerated.[1161] Due to these developments when the recently elected town (and village) councils – integral parts of the government's reforms – increased rent, purporting it to be for the development of the townships, residents who were already feeling the pinch because of the economic recession, took to the streets to protest against rent increases. This was evident when on 3 September 1984 the residents of Vaal Triangle, who "under the Lekoa Town *Council* were paying the highest average township rents in the country",[1162] declared a one-day –stay-away, protesting against rising rent. Describing the situation in the area, Gerhart and Glaser write

> On September 3, bands of youths throughout the Vaal townships disrupted transport services and set up barricades to hinder access by the police. In Sharpeville and Sebokeng most of the public buildings, dozens of shops, and many homes belonging to councillors were gutted by arson attacks. The majority of workers in Sharpeville, and many from other Vaal townships, stayed away from work. For the next week the Vaal triangle was in a state of crisis and confrontation and the regional economy was severely disrupted. Police responded with brutality to the uprising, using teargas, rubber bullets, and sometimes live ammunition to disperse crowds[1163]

It was against this background that townships across the country erupted in the early 1980s generally against apartheid, but more specifically against, first, the community councils and, later, the town (and village) councils. However, when this happened Maokeng remained

[1159] Gerhart and Glaser *From Protest,* p.16
[1160] Chisholm, L. 'Redefining Skills: Black Education in South Africa in the 1980s', in *Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans* (ed.) Peter Kallaway (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1984), pp.387-8
[1161] Gerhart and Glaser *From Protest,* p.36
[1162] Ibid., p.68 (my emphasis); Protest against rent increases started in Tumahole, Parys, on 15 June 1984. See Seekings, J. 'Political Mobilisation in Tumahole, 1984-1985', in *Africa Perspective: Agrarian Struggles in South Africa – The Debate Continues, Vol.1 (7-8), 1989*
[1163] After several weeks of violence, at least 60 people were killed. Gerhart and Glaser *From Protest,* p.69

quiescent and tranquil. As already explained, this was mainly because of lack of pressing socio-economic grievances and the fact that the governing councillors, especially the town councillors, continued functioning in the tradition of the community councillors, resolving family disputes but also interceding with white government officials on behalf of the residents of the community (see the previous chapter). But crucially, Maokeng during this period lacked political events such as a funeral of a political veteran or a victim of police killing, which in some areas were used to galvanise residents into political action. For example, the killing of Emma Sathekge, a student at Atteridgeville, in February 1984 by a police vehicle served as an impetus even for students who did not live in Atteridgeville. Simon Mashishi from Thembisa claims that this incident convinced him to become involved in student politics, first, joining COSAS and, later AZANYU (Azanian National Youth Unity), the PAC's youth wing.[1164]

The brutal murder of Saul Mkhize in April 1983 in Driefontein, Mpumalanga (formerly Eastern Transvaal) by a white policeman, Constable Nienaber, also motivated some of the young people in the area to resolve to become involved in the liberation struggle to oppose the apartheid system. Mkhize was leading the residents in their resistance against the government's intention forcibly to remove them from Driefontein, because the area had been declared a 'black spot' in a white area.[1165] Zweli Sidu, who had been born in Lochiel next to Amsterdam in 1966 and arrived in Driefontein in 1982 to further his schooling, recalls that his decision to be involved in politics was influenced by Mkhize's killing. He explains

> When I arrived in Driefontein in 1982 there was a rumour that the government wanted to remove the people living in this place to homelands. That was what really influenced us politically – and the killing of Saul Mkhize. We organized ourselves and during school holidays we would go to Johannesburg to receive political education. When some of our friends from Jabulani, in Soweto, like Sibusiso Yende and Bongi Yende came to Driefontein they introduced us to Radio Freedom. Sibosiso had a small radio and we would search for the station and listen. It would be Sibusiso, Bongi, Vusi, and myself – actually I think we were about six. This was in 1983 after Mkhize's death[1166]

After Mkhize's funeral, Sidu and some of the students he was at school with formed the Driefontein Youth Congress (DRYC). And when he left Driefontein to complete his matric in Dennilton, he continued his involvement in student politics there.[1167]

[1164] See interview with Simon Mashishi by Tshepo Moloi, Tsepo Section, Thembisa, 8 June 2003

[1165] The most compelling reason the residents of Driefontein resisted the removals was that they owned the land they inhabited, because Driefontein had been bought by Africans in 1912 – a year before the 1913 Land Act. See Gerhard Mare 'Driefontein – exception or rule?' in *Work in Progress, 27* 9June 1983

[1166] Interview with Zweli Sidu by Tshepo Moloi, Driefontein, 26 October 2011. Personal Collection

Similarly, Bonner and Nieftagodien demonstrate how the funeral of Vincent Tshabalala "… infused a new dynamism and militancy in the Alexandra Youth Congress …" According to them: "A crucial moment in the development of youth politics in Alexandra was the death of Vincent Tshabalala on 9 February 1985. Tshabalala, a student at Minerva High School and leader of the Alexandra branch of COSAS, had left the country in 1984 to undergo military training with Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the military wing of the ANC. He returned to South Africa in early 1985 but died soon afterwards in a gun battle with the police. … More than 3 000 mourners attended the funeral, which took place on 23 February, in what was one of the largest political funerals yet mounted in the township. It marked the first major demonstration of public support for the ANC in the township for many years and signalled an important shift whereby that funerals of activists became acts of defiance against the state."[1168]

Indeed, for many of the local activists in Alexandra this funeral demonstrated the active existence of the ANC inside the country, but more specifically in the township. For example, JB, interviewed by Charles Carter, emphasising this point indicated

> My father used to listen to radio Zimbabwe. He was interested in the history of his country. He would say why there's fighting there. He would tell us [his children] the whole story, and end up with the ANC in South Africa. It was with Vincent's death, however, that I knew that there are (sic) cadres inside the country[1169]

More importantly, political funerals also played an important role of bringing together activists from different areas who, under the repressive circumstances that prevailed then, did not have the chance to meet openly. It was at such gatherings that some of the activists made contacts with people who could assist them to leave the country to undergo military training in exile. Hosia Lengosane's oral testimony supports this view. Lengosane, who was born in Brakpan, East Rand, in 1966 and in 1984 was a leading figure in student politics in Tsakane Senior Secondary School (TSSS), recalls that after several unsuccessful attempts at finding people who could help

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[1167] Ibid. Sidu's oral testimony is corroborated by Bongani Paris Mkhize, Saul Mkhize's son, who was also a founding member of the DRYC. Interview with Bongani Paris Mkhize by Tshepo Moloi, Driefontein May 2008. This interview with was conducted for the Mpumalanga – History and Heritage: Teachers' Guide, 2008 by Cynthia Kros and Tshepo Moloi (Unpublished); Michael Tetelman also demonstrates how the funeral of Canon Calata in 1983 galvanised the residents of Lingelihle. Tetelman 'We Can', pp.170-3

[1168] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* pp.278-9; also see Carter 'Comrades and Community', pp.129-131; Niehaus, C. *Fighting for Hope: His Own Story* (Cape Town and Johannesburg, Human & Rousseau, 1993), pp.97-100; Carter notes that after Tshabalala's funeral the membership of AYCO doubled. According to him, in June 1984 approximately 50 people had attended the first AYCO General Council meeting. And in 1985 the organisation had approximately 100 paid-up and active members. Carter 'Comrades and Community', p.131

[1169] Carter, 'Comrades and Community', p.130

them leave the country to go into exile he, and some of the members of the branch of COSAS at TSSS, met 'contacts' who could assist them to achieve their goal. Although Lengosane could not leave, many of his 'comrades' were able to leave. He explains

> We tried again in 1985. We went to Alexandra ... to attend the funeral of Vincent Tshabalala. That's where we got contacts ... for us to go to exile. You see … it was around February … when we got there we found that the only means of transport was a Kombi but there were many of us. We had some of the comrades from Duduza, Tsakane and KwaThema. But here in Tsakane we had a problem. A point was raised that the whole executive of COSAS wanted to leave (the country) and if that's the case the branch would be left without an executive. And most importantly we were the people who were active. Then it was suggested that we should decide who should remain behind (and they can only leave in June). But they should return to Tsakane to organize the structure first. So we came back. And we formed TSAYCO (Tsakane Youth Congress). Only the two of us returned. It was myself and MacMillan Mngomane [who] died in exile[1170]

Additionally, there is no evidence to suggest that the residents of Maokeng commemorated historic days, which in some areas played a significant role in conscientising and attracting people to participate in politics. For instance, the Azanian National Youth Unity (AZANYU), which had been formed in February 1981, used this tactic effectively. On the 21st March 1981 it commemorated the 20th anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre, and in 1984 the June 16 student demonstration. AZANYU held a night vigil at the Hector Petersen's home in Zone 10 Meadowlands, Soweto.[1171] These, and other community projects such as 'Masifundisane' (Let's Teach Each Other), won AZANYU maximum support from the various sectors of the community.[1172] The absence of political organisations such AZANYU and AZAPO[1173] in Maokeng at the beginning of the 1980s, for example, partly helps to explain the lack commemorations. But more importantly, the dearth of political activists like Tsiu Oupa Matsepe who could openly remind young people about the significance of remembering the historic days (see chapter three), encouraged quiescence in Maokeng.

[1170] Interview with Hosia Lengosane by Tshepo Moloi, for the SADET Oral History Project, Tsakane, 1 August 2004

[1171] Hector Petersen was arguably the first victim of police shooting during the 1976 Soweto student uprising. There are some authors who believe that Hastings Ndlovu was the first victim. See Ali Khangela, Sfiso Mxolisi Ndlovu and Muthobi Motluatse (eds.) Soweto '76 : Reflections On The Liberation Struggles : Commemorating The 30th Anniversary Of June 16 (Houghton, Johannesburg, Mutloatse Arts Heritage Trust, 2006

[1172] Moloi 'Youth Politics', pp.103-105

[1173] A branch of AZAPO was only launched in 1984 in Maokeng. See interview with Liphaphang Frank Mohapi (LHPR), Ferndale, Johannesburg, 2 July 2008

Furthermore, the quiescence in Maokeng during this period was aggravated by the relative absence of local political figures that could disseminate historical information about the banned African organisations to the young activists and also, clandestinely, link the latter with these organisations. This is underlined by the role played by Peter Nchabeleng in Sekhukhuneland. Nchabeleng was born in the village of Apel … in the north of Sekhukhuneland (in today's Limpopo Province). He was active in the ANC, the Office Workers' Union (a South African Congress of Trade Unions' affiliate) … In 1963 he was tried for involvement in MK and sentenced to eight years on Robben Island. … By the mid-1970s [after his release] he had helped establish a number of small discussion groups amongst students at the local schools which drew in some older activists and a few teachers. … In the context of national political mobilization from 1983 onwards, Nchabeleng and the youth with whom he was in contact provided a crucial impetus to local organization. In 1984 a Sekhukhune Youth Committee was established …[1174]

Again, interaction between some political veterans helped conscientise young people who in later years became actively involved in trade unions. Mongezi Radebe's story clearly demonstrates this point. Radebe, as noted in chapter three, was introduced to politics in Phiritona by Mankele (possibly MaMokhele), an ANC veteran that had been banished to Phiritona, Heilbron. After his involvement in the Young Christian Workers (YCW) in Maokeng in the mid-1970s, Radebe joined the South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU) – forerunner to the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA) in 1980.[1175]He recalled

> At first I organized in Jo'burg (Johannesburg), and after some five months or so I went back to the Vaal Triangle, in the Free State area, and I was to establish a branch there in Vereeniging … in April 1981[1176]

It was not long before his involvement in trade union activities led him to meeting with Chris Hani, chief of MK operations in Lesotho, and Ray Alexander and Thozamnile Botha, both trade unionists. While in Lesotho Radebe attended meetings with Hani and others, briefing them about the deliberations taking place at the FIET (International Federation of Employees and Technicians) – organised labour conference held in Lesotho, but most importantly he underwent sessions of *umrabulo* (political training).[1177] After six months in Lesotho he returned to South Africa and began to operate covertly as an ANC underground operative.[1178]

[1174] Delius, P. 'Migrants, Comrades and Rural Revolt: Sekhukhuneland 1950-1987', in *Transformation, Vol.13, 1990,* pp.19-20

[1175] Interview with Radebe by Julie Frederikse

[1176] Ibid.

[1177] FIET was an international organization for commercial workers based Geneva. See Houston, G. 'The ANC's internal underground political work', in SADET *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, *Volume 4 (1980–1990)* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2010), p. 184

[1178] Ibid.

It was probably at this stage that, in addition to leading the Orange-Vaal CCAWUSA branch, Radebe in the mid-1980s, together with Mosioua "Terror" Lekota attempted to organize activists in Maokeng to establish a civic organization – albeit unsuccessfully[1179]. Interview with Fredererkse alluded to his involvement in the formation of an ad hoc committee charged with the formation of branch of the UDF in Maokeng (see below for a detailed account of the various attempts to form UDF structures in the OFS, including in Kroonstad).[1180]

As noted in chapter three that "Commandant' Caleb Motshabi was one of the few key members of the ANC and MK in Bloemfontein in the 1960s, from the late 1970s he, together with Ike More, a young journalist for *The Friend* and an ANC underground operative in Bloemfontein, recruited a series of young activists, mostly from the Bloemfontein area, and facilitated their travel to Lesotho, where the ANC had a substantial presence.[1181] One of Motshabi's recruits, Nape Khomo, remembers

> I was recruited by … comrade Caleb Motshabi. I went through political education in Lesotho as well as crash courses in different military activities[1182]

In similar vein, Janet Cherry, writing about ANC's underground structures in the Eastern Cape, points out that, just as in Bloemfontein, in Ezibeleni, Eastern Cape, Mzwandile Koyana politicized young people and linked them with MK in Lesotho. But, in contrast, many of the young activists who went to Lesotho returned to the Eastern Cape after receiving crash courses on military activities to carry out military missions. Major Bobelo was one such young activist. "Bobelo and some of his trusted friends consulted one of the MK veterans who had recently been released from Robben Island – Koyana", writes Cherry.[1183] The latter had been recruited to MK in Port Elizabeth by Vuyisile Mini in the early 1960s. After 18 years in prison he was banished to Ezibeleni, where he made contact with Bobelo.[1184] Bobelo explains the 'lectures' offered by Koyana

> When we met we used to listen to what was called *umrabulo,* that is the politics of the ANC, the struggle, why was the ANC formed, what were its aims, its policies. He was lecturing in [Isi]Xhosa. Not in a big group, two or three people in his house. This was the first time I heard the actual history from a person who was involved, who was sent to Robben Island and came back with such a vast knowledge, and clarity

[1179] Interview with Radebe by Frederikse
[1180] Ibid.
[1181] Ibid., pp.770-1
[1182] Ibid., p.771
[1183] 'Hidden histories of the Eastern Cape underground', in SADET *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 4, 1980–1990* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2010), p.366
[1184] Ibid., p.367

> of things, he was well-versed although not well-educated …[1185]

Not long after these 'lectures', Bobelo left for Lesotho, where he received military training and returned to South Africa with the instruction to work with the student movement, COSAS, "to build it and to recruit from it".[1186] Just as Koyana did with them, Bobelo and some of his friends also 'lectured' other students in *umrabulo,* with the intention of recruiting them.[1187]

It was for this reason that the Eastern Cape had strong and active branches of COSAS and operations by MK cadres during this period.[1188]

Although Sello "Bra Zile" Monyake had left the country in 1980 or 1981 to join MK in exile, there is no evidence to suggest that, like Bobelo in the Eastern Cape, he returned to Maokeng to recruit for the ANC and MK. However, the knowledge that he had joined MK seemingly at a later stage encouraged some of his close relatives to become involved in the politics of resistance. Liphaphang Frank Mohapi, who in the mid-1980s was a leading figure in the student politics in Maokeng, recalls

> … There was another cousin of us who had left, I think in 1980 or 1981. Bra Zile, Sello Monyake … He is one of the older MK members. So that's one of the persons that motivated us in my family[1189]

In December 1982 Dennis Bloem was introduced to Lekota by a prison warder working at the Kroonstad Prison. Lekota had been transferred to this prison after he was released from Robben Island.[1190] After Lekota was appointed publicity secretary of the UDF in 1983[1191], he connected with Bloem again with the aim of mobilizing for the UDF in Kroonstad. Bloem readily took up the task and attempted to conscientise some of the members of the community of Brentpark by disseminating information about the UDF. Bloem, giving evidence at the Delmas Treason Trial in 1985, stated:

> On 18-11-83 around 05:30 when I was still at home, Mosioa (sic) Lekota arrived. He gave me a packet of UDF yellow posters to distribute in Brentpark. He also gave me 26 SASPU national newspapers and 1 *The Eye* newspaper to also distribute in

[1185] Ibid., p.367
[1186] Ibid.
[1187] Ibid., p.368
[1188] Some of the COSAS' leaders in the Eastern Cape who were also members of the ANC underground and members of MK, included Simphiwo Mtimkulu and Topsy Madaka. The two were later killed by the apartheid government's 'death squad'. See Cherry 'Hidden histories', pp.376-85
[1189] Frank's older brother, Hlohosang, left the country to go into exile in 1985 from Sharpeville, in the Vaal Triangle. Interview with Mohapi
[1190] Interview with Dennis Bloem (LHPR), Sheraton Hotel, Pretoria, 14 January 2008
[1191] Seekings, *The UDF,* p.56

> Brentpark. I took the pamphlets and newspapers ... to my shop. Lekota still had a lot of the UDF pamphlets in his red Toyota Corona's boot. ... He did not tell me what he was going to do with the pamphlets or who he was going to give them to. ... I took the ... pamphlets and I gave 13 of them to a school *pupil*, Michael Molotsi, and asked him to give one to each teacher at Brentpark Primary school. ... I can't really say if he gave the posters to the teachers or not. I still had not distributed the newspapers yet ...[1192]

Bloem's attempt was summarily quashed following the detention of his young protégé, Michael Molotsi. Molotsi who was 15 years old at the time, was detained for assisting Bloem in his mission. He remembers

> On my side I was at [Dennis Bloem's shop] that morning, before going to school. … We're distant family members. I used to help him in the afternoons. So, that morning he gave me some pamphlets of the UDF … to give to some of the teachers. At that time I didn't know about politics … I think there were three or four white teachers. I think I was in Standard Four or Five. When I got to school I started handing them out and I gave one of the white teachers. So, she called the police. I wasn't aware she had called the police. The next morning when I got to school something like four or five vans, fully armed policemen were looking for me. So, they took me to their headquarters in town, where I was interrogated for the whole day[1193]

However, before handing over this material to Molotsi, Bloem, first, briefed him about the UDF and its role. Molotsi remembers: "He told me that this thing of apartheid should be stopped. And the UDF will stop it. So, that we can go to town anytime we want …"[1194]

Bloem's efforts at conscientising people were also confirmed by Daniel Marco Lethae, a resident of Maokeng and close relative of Bloem, during the Delmas Treason Trial. He explained to the court that Bloem sold him a UDF t-shirt and thereafter informed him about the role of the UDF. He stated: "What he said to me was that the UDF is an organization which looks into the problems of the residents. He further said that the UDF does not approve of apartheid."[1195] When he was asked if he ever joined or took part in the activities of the UDF, Lethae responded in the negative.[1196]

[1192] UWL HLP AK2117/J6, CA9-35 Exhibits, Delmas Treason Trial (Italics my emphasis); Bloem's statement was translated from Afrikaans to English

[1193] Interview with Michael Molotsi (LHPR), Brentpark, 15 January 2009

[1194] Ibid. During this period there was a curfew restricting black people from being in town after 9 o'clock in the evening

[1195] UWL HLP AK2117/I 2.31 Delmas Treason Trial

[1196] Ibid.

It is also possible that Bloem's efforts at mobilizing for the UDF, in addition to Molotsi's detention, were summarily quashed because he was unsuccessful in convincing the residents of both Brentpark and Maokeng to support the UDF. In Maokeng, as already noted, for example activists supporting the UDF failed to oppose the BLA's elections because of the support Koekoe and his Matla a Sechaba enjoyed within the "community". Relatedly, it could also have been because of lack of political support from the national leadership (in 1984 the UDF's national leadership decided to seriously deal with this shortcoming). It was for this reason that the UDF structures in Kroonstad failed to develop until 1989.

The UDF was made up of different affiliated organizations from various regions, ranging from students, youth, women's, trade union, civic organizations, and many more. Keith Gottschalk, citing Tom Lodge and Bill Nasson, writes "at the UDF's launch there were 313 local youth congresses affiliated to it; 32 separate women's and 47 student congresses, and 82 civic associations.[1197] Any organization could affiliate provided it supported non-racialism, a united South Africa, and did not collaborate with apartheid institutions.[1198]

It was formed, initially, to co-ordinate opposition to the National Party (NP) government's reforms, particularly the introduction of the 'Tri-cameral parliament', which provided racially segregated representation in central government for Coloured and Indian as well as white South Africans. The proposed parliament excluded the African majority altogether, although African people were granted greater representation in segregated local government institutions (like the BLA's).[1199] For Seekings, the UDF's primary focus on national politics and not on local politics during the period 1983-84 "… distracted the UDF from direct involvement in the local struggles which were central to politics in African townships."[1200] Although his study looked at the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vaal (PWV) region, its findings also applied to Maokeng and Brentpark. Seekings' study also demonstrates the inactivity of the UDF in Kroonstad in particular, but in the OFS in general.

Twala and Seekings observe "Overall, political struggles in the [Orange] Free State did not compare with those in many other parts of the country. There was no effective organization at the regional level until 1990, and no regional UDF structure was ever formally launched."[1201] Seekings, in his study of the UDF, notes that prior to the launch of the UDF in August 1983 "regional structures were established in only three regions, the Western Cape, Transvaal and

[1197] Gottschalk, K. 'United Democratic Front, 1983-1991: rise, impact and consequences', in *The Long March: The Story of the struggle for liberation in South Africa* (eds.) Ian Liebenberg *et al.* (Pretoria, HAUM, 1994), p.189
[1198] Ibid., p.190
[1199] Seekings *The UDF*, p.2
[1200] Seekings 'Trailing Behind the Masses': The United Democratic Front and Township Politics in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vaal Region, 1983-84', in *Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol.18, No.1, March 1991,* p.94
[1201] Twala and Seekings 'Activist networks', pp.766-7

Natal, where opposition to the Tri-cameral parliament was strong".[1202] Other regions like the Border and Eastern Cape followed later.[1203]

To redress the dearth of formal UDF structures in the region, numerous efforts were made by the UDF's national leadership. First, the UDF's National Executive Committee (NEC) decided that the Transvaal region, together with Popo Molefe and Lekota, should undertake organization building in the OFS.[1204] In 1984/85 Lekota ran several workshops for activists, and liaised closely with activists in Bloemfontein and in the corridor from Welkom through Kroonstad to Parys. This resulted in the establishment of Ad-Hoc Committees in different townships, but the Seeisoville's was non-existent in August 1985.[1205]

Second, in April 1985 the UDF's National General Council (NGC) invited a delegation of about ten people from the OFS to a meeting in Azaadville, in the West Rand, where links between different townships in the OFS seem to have been created.[1206] Papi Kganare, from Mangaung, in Bloemfontein, recalled Lekota introducing the delegation from Bloemfontein to comrades in Welkom.[1207] Prior to this, the relationship between different townships in the OFS was weak. Twala and Seekings write "In most cases the towns in the northern part of the Free State preferred to be associated with the Vaal Triangle than the Free State itself."[1208] This was supported by Janie Mohapi, cited by Twala and Seekings, who recalled that "Thabong (in Welkom) activists said they were not part of the Free State but rather wanted to be considered part of the Vaal Triangle".[1209]

The Orange Free State delegation seems to have returned from Azaadville spurred on, because not long after that NGC, a regional UDF workshop was held in Welkom. The workshop is said to have been convened by Lekota. It was at this workshop that a co-ordinating committee was formed comprising two delegates each from four townships, including Kroonstad's Dennis Bloem and Wilfred "Bizza" Makhathe.[1210] This co-ordinating committee, however, does not seem to have been very active, "in part because of problems of transport".[1211] Finally, realising the slow pace of organization in the OFS, at the beginning of May, the UDF's NEC, again met and noted that the 'OFS and head office should meet to discuss how the organizing work in that

[1202] Ibid., p.97
[1203] Seekings *The UDF,* PP.88-89
[1204] Popo Molefe was the national general secretary of the UDF. Seekings *The UDF,* p.56
[1205] Chaskalson and Seekings 'Awakening', p.35
[1206] Twala and Seekings 'Activist networks', p.791
[1207] Ibid.
[1208] Ibid., p.781
[1209] Ibid.
[1210] Ibid., p.792
[1211] Ibid.

region will be coped with'.[1212] However, matters were made even worse when Lekota and Molefe were arrested and only emerged from jail in 1989.

In spite of the UDF's presence in the other regions, awareness about it was still low in African townships. This was evident during the October and November BLA's local elections in 1983. The UDF attempted to organize a boycott against these elections but was unsuccessful. This led Seekings to conclude "The Black Local Authority elections seem to have occurred too soon for the UDF to organize a well co-ordinated campaign against them."[1213] Notwithstanding this, Seekings notes "In mid-1984 localised struggles over education and rent increase began in townships across the PWV".[1214] As a result, Seekings notes that "in the face of revolt and consequent state persecution, in April 1985 the UDF's National General Council met and amended the Working Principles. The UDF's stated goals were reformulated to encompass opposition to apartheid in general.[1215] To carry out this task, in Kroonstad older activists like Bloem turned to the students. "We went to the students", recalls Bloem "and that's why I'm saying that was a turning point".[1216]

Traditions of Resistance

Notwithstanding the UDF's shortcomings in entrenching itself in the OFS region, particularly in Kroonstad's black townships, there were other routes toward conscientising the residents of these residential areas, especially young people in Maokeng. For some politics started at home. Liphapang Frank Mohapi's interview reveals the strong family influences that finally helped to shape his political outlook at a later stage. It is worth quoting Mohapi's career in detail:

Mohapi was born on 10 November1968 in Kroonstad. His father worked for the Railway and mother was a domestic worker. His father passed away in 1983, when he was 15 years old. The responsibility of raising five children was left to his mother, and this was not an easy task. Mohapi recalls "You know, you had your school fee, which was very cheap, R30 or R50. But, you know, as a domestic worker she couldn't afford." But Mohapi's mother totally refused to have her children, like most other children in Maokeng at the time, take up part-time work to supplement her income. Mohapi continues: "I remember I sneaked out to do gardening for a white family and she heard about this. I was thoroughly beaten. And she gave me the reason later. She told me 'I will never suffer at the white man's hands and let my children suffer, too. I will suffer on your behalf.' Mohapi's mother's strong-willed and willing-to-sacrifice attitude must have also rubbed off on Mohapi's siblings. One of which was Hlohosang. After leaving

[1212] Ibid.
[1213] Seekings 'Trailing', p.101
[1214] Ibid., p.104
[1215] Seekings *The UDF*, p.18
[1216] Interview with Bloem

Bodibeng High School, he completed his schooling in Sharpeville. And after matric he found employment at SASOL, until he was summarily dismissed following the SASOL bombings in 1982.[1217] It was while he was in Sharpeville that he became actively involved in politics. Mohapi remembers that whenever he was at home he would encourage them to tune in to Radio Freedom, the ANC's clandestine radio broadcasting from exile. He explains: "He would fight me and my other brothers when we listened to radio Sesotho or Radio 702, and would say 'What a crap. Are you listening to 702 …?' And in 1984 he started introducing me to Radio Freedom and some materials like the ANC's Freedom Charter. And the first book he bought me was [Vladmir] Lenin's – Biography of Lenin'[1218]

Because of this background, by 1985 Mohapi was more advanced than his peers in terms of political understanding. This was evident when he joined the AZASM in Maokeng in 1984. In his words: "So, my actual first movement to be part of was the BC, although he (Hlohosang) was not. And I remember I became the first executive member and treasurer of AZASM in my township.[1219] After joining AZASM, Mohapi observes: "I began to understand that the situation in [my] family is not of my parents' making. There's a bigger picture: that if there's no food on your mother's table, it's not a mistake. It's because of the system".[1220] At the beginning of 1985 Mohapi was recruited to the UDF by his teacher, Oupa Ntombela, and he left AZASM.[1221]

In much the same way as Mohapi, Mamokhele Sebetoane, one of the few leading female student activists in Maokeng in the 1980s, was first made aware of the injustices prevailing in the country by the discussions her grandparents used to have at home. She remembers

> They spoke about apartheid. Sometimes when they were listening to the news, they would talk about what white people did to them. For instance, [my grandfather] would say white people would appoint a white person to be their foreman, even if that white person did not have proper schooling. … Also that white people's children, especially here in South Africa, are raised by our parents but they don't give them the respect that is meant for the person who was always there when their parents were not there. When they meet them in town, they would realize that here in South Africa you were even mistreated by a young person just because you were black and they were

[1217] The Sasol and Natref plants, in Sasolburg, were bombed by the Special Operations MK cadres in the early hours of Sunday 1 June 1980. See *RSA World,* 31 July 1980; Houston, G. and Magubane, B. 'The ANC's Armed Struggle in the 1970s', in the *South African Democracy Education Trust's The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol.2, 1970-1980* (Pretoria, University of South Africa, 2006), pp.508-10
[1218] Interview with Mohapi
[1219] Ibid.; also see interview with Masizane
[1220] Interview with Mohapi
[1221] Ibid.

white[1222]

Daniel George was another figure in student politics who was also influenced by his grandmother's narratives about how the family suffered at the hands of white people and how this resulted in the family being forced to appropriate a white man's surname. She would also lament how her family was removed from the Old Location in Marabastad, but was never compensated. He recalls

> My grandmother would tell me how my grandfather used to have cows and how they were taken away. And myself, how I became George [surname]. Because she would tell me that I'm supposed to be Mahe, but because they were evicted from another farm by this white man and the only condition was that when you get onto another farm, you must adopt the surname of the farm owner. So, that's how I became George. George is not my surname[1223]

He continues:

> I grew up with my grandmother, my uncles, my cousins, even my younger brother. We were staying in one house at 546 B Location. Well, after some time we had to move because there were these [things], what one can call evictions, to Phomolong 2907. … Then my grandmother used to tell me that we did not get our money - the money that they were supposed to have got[ten], because we were removed from Marabastad[1224]

When asked how he felt after listening to his grandmother's sad tales, George responded "they really influenced me a lot."[1225] The political influence that these young people received from home shaped their political outlook, but the lasting impact was to follow when they began interacting with individuals from outside Maokeng (more about this below). Other young people in Maokeng, and elsewhere, were introduced to politics through church and youth formations in these churches.

[1222] Interview with Mamokhele Sebetoane, for the "Local Histories and Present Realities' Programme, Seeisoville, Maokeng, 07 July 2008. Mamokhele's grandfather, Adam Sebetoane, was a member of the South African Railway Union (SARU)
[1223] Interview with Daniel George (LHPR), Constantia, Maokeng, 9 July 2008
[1224] Ibid.
[1225] Ibid.

The Chiro[1226] and Church

Church youth formations were particularly common and influential. Through them some youth became actively involved in political resistance in the mid-1980s. In Kagiso, West Rand, Frank Chikane of the Apostolic Faith Mission, for example, directed the Interdenominational Youth Christian Club (IYCC), which combined "evangelical work with social projects".[1227] The IYCC was established in April 1978.[1228] According to Frank Chikane, in that year it requested to use his church, the Apostolic Faith Mission in Kagiso, for its spiritual services. At the end of the year, it established the Social Welfare department which "… started help projects with the community (to help the community help itself)".[1229] Through these projects some of the young members of the IYCC's Social Welfare developed to become leading figures in local politics in Kagiso in the 1980s. Lekgoathi writes that the IYCC "became a place where a significant number of Kagiso youth – both males and females – received informal training in leadership and organizing skills".[1230] It was no surprise when some of former members of the IYCC like Ike Genu later became leading figures in the Krugersdorp Civic Organisation (KRO).

However, arguably it was at the Roman Catholic Church where many young people in the townships were introduced to politics.[1231] Seele Sekonyela's story supports this view. Sekonyela's main political influence can be traced back to his involvement in youth clubs at the Roman Catholic Church. Having been brought in the Roman Catholic Church, Sekonyela, who was born in 1967 in Kroonstad, joined Chiro Junior Group in 1981. At the end of 1982 he moved up to the youth group. He recalls being taught slogans and "freedom songs". In his own words

> There was a church youth league called Chiro Junior Group. So we learned stuff from our leaders like Thabo Petersen, Sister Peace Modikoe.[1232] And we had our own slogans such as "Building relations in the spirit of Christ". And we would say: "If you want peace, work for justice". Stuff like that. We used to sing freedom songs like "Africa will be saved", you see. And we started conscientizing our minds from an early age. Our Priest at church was Mr. Jan van Serford, who retired and went back to Holland late last

[1226] Chiro was an organization for young people in the Roman Catholic Church
[1227] Lekgoathi 'The United Democratic Front', p.594
[1228] Chikane, F. *No Life of My Own: An Autobiography* (Johannesburg, Skotaville, 1988), p.84
[1229] Ibid.
[1230] Lekgoathi 'The United Democratic Front'
[1231] Young people in Thembisa used the Moya Roman Catholic Church for their political activities. See Moloi 'Youth Politics', p.91
[1232] Thabo Petersen and Sister Peace Modikoe were on trial in 1979 involving the Young Christian Workers, see Chapter Three

> year, and people like Vincent Twapa, who is still around. And from the Junior Group you went to Chiro Youth Club[1233]

It was in the Chiro Youth Club that Sekonyela and his colleagues began to engage in political discussions, and also shared their concerns with youth from other areas. He continues

> And then we would have discussion groups from different committees, such as discussion committee, interchange committees, etc. And we used to visit other youth leagues from other churches and exchange information. It was about how we were affected by oppression as Christians, and what role we, as Christians, could play in the society. That's where we spoke about slogans such as "If you want peace, work for justice"[1234]

These discussions were, however, not limited to the confines of the church, or only to members of Chiro. In fact, members of Chiro took them outside the boundaries of the church, and they discussed them with their age cohorts in the township who were not members of the church or Chiro. These two groups began to share and compare ideas. Sekonyela explains

> Like I previously mentioned that we learned politics from Chiro at an early age. And whatever we learned from Chiro we would come back and compare it with the information we received in the location to check if the two corresponded. The situation was quite challenging, because we used to watch [television] dramas like *Bosollakgwadi*, *Sewesa wa Soweto, and Sekgwe ke moferekanyi,* etc. on television. In Sekgwe's case, Sekgwe was a soldier, a hero, you see. But when we got to church, we were told the likes of Sekgwe were those people who had skipped the country to fight for our liberation and they were referred to as *baferekanyi* (terrorists)[1235]

Sekonyela's association with Chiro prepared him for his involvement in the politics of resistance from the mid-1980s. In the early 1990s he was part of the self-defense units in Maokeng fighting the Three Million Gang.

In spite of the role of the family and church youth formations in introducing young people in Maokeng to politics, it was, however, the part played by activists from outside Maokeng that

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[1233] Interview with Seele Sekonyela (LHPR), Constantia, Maokeng, 20 May 2009; The title of the song is actually 'Give a Thought to Africa', composed by John Knox Bokwe (1855-1922), of the United Free Church (Presbyterian). It was not necessarily a freedom song but a hym. See a short biography about Bokwe by Phyllis Ntantala. http://www.dacb.org/stories/southafrica/bokwe_john_knox.html

[1234] Ibid.

[1235] Ibid.; The programmes listed by Sekonyela were television drama series broadcasted on SABC's TV2

eventually influenced young people in Maokeng to actively participate in the struggle for resistance.

Mobility and Individuals

After the 1976/77 student uprisings many parents in the urban areas moved their children to the rural areas to live with their families and next-of-kin and to study there. This was because rural areas were relatively quiet and schools there did not participate in the student uprisings. It was these children from the urban areas who introduced politics in the rural areas and influenced rural-based students to become involved in political activities. Sekibakiba Peter Lekgoathi's study focusing on rural areas in the former northern Transvaal (now Limpopo Province), emphasises the role of the urban students who were studying in schools in Lebowa as the driving force behind the uprisings in that area.[1236] According to him "… the most pivotal role in the disturbances at Matladi Secondary School in Zebediela was played by urban students – mostly boarders, particularly those from the townships around Pretoria."[1237]

In the 1980s, somewhat differently students living and studying in urban schools, who were running away from police harassment, hid in small towns in the urban areas or in the homelands, where there was no political activity taking place. Such areas were hardly suspected by the police as places which might habour student fugitives. Mziyafani Pholo's political career corroborates this view. Mziyafani was born in Zola, Soweto, in 1973. In 1982 he was taken to live in Leslie, Leandra (today's part of Mpumalanga Province), with his grandmother, where he started his primary school. At this stage, the Leandra Action Committee (LAC), formed in 1981, was resisting efforts by the government to forcibly remove the residents of Leslie to KwaNdebele[1238] Pholo began to interact with Abel Nkabinde, who was at the time a member of the UDF. It was not long before Nkabinde started conscientising Pholo "about the political situation we as blacks were living under".[1239] In addition, Pholo developed himself by reading newspapers like the *New Nation* and *Upbeat*, and attended the UDF meetings. As the struggle intensified in Leslie,

[1236] Lekgoathi, S.P. 'Reconstructing the History of Educational Transformation in a Rural Transvaal Chiefdom: The Radicalization of Teachers in Zebediela from the early 1950s to the early 1990s (MA thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1995), Chapter 4; also see J.S.N. Mathabatha *The Struggle Over Education in the Northern Transvaal: The Case of Catholic Mission Schools, 1948-1994* (Amsterdam, Rozenburg Publishers, SAVUSA/NiZA, 2005)

[1237] Lekgoathi 'Reconstructing', 167

[1238] Leandra Action Committee was led by Chief Ampie Mayise and Abel Nkabinde. Interview with Abel Nkabinde by Tshepo Moloi, for the House of Memory Production Company, Leandra, 10 February 2010; also see Straker, G. *Faces in the Revolution: The Psychological Effects of Violence on Township Youth in South Africa* (Claremont, David Philip Publishers, 1992), p.8

[1239] Interview with Mziyafani Pholo by Tshepo Moloi, for the SADET Oral History Project, East Bank, Alexandra Township, 14 May 2011

Mziyafani became actively involved and this exposed him to the police. This forced him to leave Leandra. Pholo explains

> My other speciality was making a petrol bomb. I can't remember who taught me. I would pour in the bottle sand, sticks of matches, petrol, spirit. I'll mix them together. One day my grandmother discovered about 18 or 20 bottles of petrol bombs behind her house. After that I became open about my involvement. So, from time to time the police would come to my grandmother's house looking for me. I think she became frightened and informed my father, Billy Pholo

Billy Pholo, fearing for his son, took Mziyafani to his hometown, Tladistad, Bophuthatswana. Mziyafani Pholo continues

> My father felt that my life was in danger, so I had to go and stay with his family in Bophuthatswana at a place called Tladistad. That's how I relocated from Leandra. I was enrolled at Seboaneng Middle School. At the time Lucas Mangope was the Prime Minister and there was no revolting. I still remember at some stage I recruited four guys, Nchaupe and his brother Mphalane, Willie – I can't remember the other guys. We were six in all. The other people were scared and did not want to join us. I informed them that the system in Bophuthatswana was not right; we're being oppressed by Mangope."As such we need to start to organize and revolt". I remember we were … sitting in the street and singing revolutionary songs like *Siyaya ePitoli, Angeke sizwe ngabo* … we decided to go to Skhosana's[1240] cottage and pelted it with stones. Skhosana and his family came outside and ran away. We were now singing revolutionary songs[1241]

This incident forced Mziyafani's parents to move him from Tladistad to stay with him in Alexandra Township.

In similar vein, the major political influence on most young people in Maokeng came from their interaction with student activists who were either on the run from police or "deployed" in Maokeng to agitate students there. For instance, Sekonyela's contact with Khahliso Moeketsi solidified his political thinking and exposed him to new ideas. Moeketsi was born on 25 February 1965 in Phomolong, Maokeng. After completing his higher primary schooling at Relebohile, he proceeded to Emadwaleni Secondary School in Orlando West, Soweto.[1242] It was while at Emadwaleni that he became involved in student politics. Emadwaleni Secondary was one of the schools in Orlando West, and Soweto in general, in the early 1980s that was at the

[1240] Skhosana was the caretaker of the school. Like other teachers, Skhosana was perceived as the servant of Mangope
[1241] Interview with Pholo
[1242] Pherudi *Who's who,* p.270

forefront of student politics. Student activists from that school immersed themselves in reading political literature and debating political ideas. Shirley Thathi, former member of the Student Representative Council (SRC) at Matshidiso Secondary, in Mzimhlophe, Soweto, remembered how she was introduced to politics by the then president of the SRC at Emadwaleni, Fezi Shabalala. In her own words

> He was the chairperson of the SRC at Emadwaleni. But we did not call each other chairperson but president. So, he *and his friends* used to come to our home. He had a child with my older sister. They would come, maybe, six or seven of them, and they would be carrying some books about [Robert] Mugabe. And they would be talking in a strange language. But when everybody else had left, I would ask him alone what they meant about some of the issues. He would then explain to me how these leaders were ruling their countries; whether it was through iron fist or what. So, in that way I understood[1243]

The prominent role played by students from Emadweleni in student politics, demanding an end to corporal punishment, the provision of free education, and many other demands, earned the school the nickname Nicaragua.[1244] In my informal discussion with Thulo Machabe, former student activist in Maokeng in the mid-1980s, he told me that Moeketsi had arrived in Maokeng after the student protests had erupted in the township, running away from the police in Soweto because of his involvement in politics.[1245] Sekonyela remembers differently. His memory place Moeketsi at the centre of the political discussions and planning before the 11th of February 1985 – the day the students took to the streets. Sekonyela remembers that after returning from Pietersburg, where his father had sent him for schooling in 1984, he made contacts with his old circle of friends and political discussions became part of their daily lives. He remarks

> I went back home and told my father I wasn't keen on going back there, because I had become deeply politicized then, though we hadn't fully developed in terms of strategizing. But, of course, we were organized with some few comrades like Daniel S'phiwe George, the late Joseph Sankie, the late Khahliso Moeketsi, the late Robert Mokgathi, Charles Mthimkhulu, and the likes of [Niki] Matsepe … Most of these guys I grew up with and we used to play football together in the location. People like Vincent who was going to school at Tsietsi, and he was my leader at Chiro. He is the one who came up with a musical play titled 'Abortion' . We used to watch plays by Gibson Kente and the likes, just to keep us motivated. We used to lock ourselves in the

[1243] Interview with Shirley Thathi, by Tshepo Moloi and Tshepo Ramutumbu, for the Johannesburg Development Agency's Vilakazi Street Oral History Project, Orlando West, Soweto, 14 October 2009. A copy of this interview is stored with the Wits History Workshop
[1244] Ibid.
[1245] Telephonic conversation with Thulo Machabe, 23 June 2010

> house, together with comrade George and comrade Khahliso, and tune in to Radio Freedom and Radio Lesotho, and also listen to Miriam Makeba's songs. Khahliso, who was from Orlando [Soweto], used to get all these stuff from the shebeens and he would then come and conscientize us. Each time there was a sound of a gun he would say to us "Listen to the Voice of Anger, the voice of reason". And he could even tell if it was an AK47 sound or if it was any other gun. He actually played a very important role in my political activities, that's comrade Khahliso[1246]

It is also possible that Moeketsi played a role in creating a political network for his comrades in Maokeng by introducing them to political activists in other areas and to their political structures. It was not long before Sekonyela and others began to interact with Aubrey Mokoena, a leading figure in the Release Mandela Campaign (RMC), and activists from Johannesburg. Sekonyela remembers

> … We had some influence from people such as the national co-ordinator of the Release Mandela Campaign, comrade Aubrey Mokoena and other people who were involved in the 1976 strikes. People like comrade Seth Mazibuko … It was a national network, you see. We also visited them in Johannesburg. We once stayed in Braamfontein Hotel … as well as Harrison Reef Hotel. He (Mokoena) would disguise as a priest and we would be the congregation. I remember one time when we were at Harrison Reef Hotel … By then he called himself Reverend Sathekge … They called us Orange Boys, because we were from Orange Free State[1247]

Sekonyela's testimony reveals two important issues: the role played by people from outside Kroonstad, or people who had links with Johannesburg, in conscientizing young people in Maokeng. And, secondly, the influence Radio Freedom had on young people in Maokeng. In the interview with Sobi "Slovo" Matli, he admitted that, amongst other things, was influenced by messages he heard from Radio Freedom. He reminisces

> You see, parents are parents. They never understood the national liberation struggle. They were saying it was a waste of time. They were saying convincing facts … But at the same time 'till when were we going to wait before we fight for the liberation?' I heard that *message* later through Radio Freedom. My radio was not able to catch Radio Freedom. There were people who were able to catch Radio Freedom. I remember one of them was this guy who went to the army, Lesala. He would give me all

[1246] Interview with Sekonyela

[1247] Ibid.; Ditseki Moeketsi remembers that Aubrey Mokoena supplied them with some materials. See interview with Ditseki Moeketsi (LHPR), Mphefela, Maokeng, 22 May 2009

> the messages, conveyed through Radio Freedom. Radio Freedom was around 9 o'clock. We would converge there, at his place. You would listen to it in darkness. It was not for public[1248]

Sekibakiba Peter Lekgoathi, in his paper on Radio Freedom, illustrates the significant role this media played in invoking people's emotions to really want to be involved in the struggle for liberation. According to James Ngculu, a Radio Freedom listener from the Eastern Cape in the 1970s, cited by Lekgoathi, "We also listened to the ANC's Radio Freedom, broadcast from Lusaka, and the sound of the opening tune 'Hamba Kahle Mkhonto' followed by a burst of gunfire, excited us. We would imagine ourselves pulling that trigger".[1249] Just like in Ngculu's case, Radio Freedom influenced some of the young people in Maokeng.

Machabe Thulo was another student who was influenced by people from outside Kroonstad, or people who had outside connections. Thulo was born in 1968 in Kroonstad and started his high school at Bodibeng in 1985. But because of lack of classrooms to accommodate all the students, Thulo and some of the Form 2 students were accommodated at Boikemisetso Secondary School. Recalling this event, Matli, who was also in Form 2, remarks

> … We were denied *accommodation* at Bodibeng in 1985. That was when I went for Standard Seven from Ntha Higher Primary. The school masters or principal, or teachers told us that it was full. So, we could not be accommodated. So, the question was what were we supposed to do? Were we supposed to be at home, not go to school at that age? Because I was around sixteen years[1250]

Moses Masizane remembers that Bodibeng was densely overcrowded in 1985. He observes

> It was heavy, heavy overcrowding. More than the word overcrowding. The were close to 20 Standard 7 classes, because there were only two high schools: Kananelo and Bodibeng. And people preferred going to Bodibeng because Kananelo was known for its strictness and punishment. So, areas like Viljoenskroon, Koppies, etc., you would find their schools were only up to Standard 8 and for people who wanted their children to be educated the only option was going to Kroonstad to study at Bodibeng[1251]

[1248] Interview with Sobi "Slovo" Matli (LHPR), Kroonstad, 29 June 2010 (Italics my emphasis)
[1249] Lekgoathi, S.P. 'The African National Congress' Radio Freedom and its audiences in apartheid South Africa, 1963-1991' (Journal of Media Studies, Forthcoming, 2010). I am grateful to Lekgoathi for allowing the use of this paper.
[1250] Interview with Matli
[1251] Interview with Masizane

To resolve the problem of accommodation, all the Standard 7 students were relocated to Boikemisetso. Matli described Boikemisetso as follows: "It was a combined school. From Sub A up to Standard 6 then. It was a newly-built school. So we took *one* part … Students of Boikemisetso ... only occupied the small part. So, *there were* only Bodibeng students doing Standard 7at Boikemisetso".[1252]

However, as soon as the problem of accommodation had been resolved, another problem surfaced. There was a delay in providing the free textbooks promised to students. Students at Boikemisetso became restive and began to demand the textbooks. It was during this turmoil that Thulo and other students were contacted by Sekgaphane, who was born in Maokeng but then based in Johannesburg. Thulo recalls

> Yes, those who were going to Form 2 now we had to go to Bodibeng to fetch text-books. There was this guy Sekgapane, I don't remember his name. He was not a student at Bodibeng. He was based in Jo'burg but they were canvassing that the struggle must go on. We met at Moepeng Higher Primary to discuss this thing … that if you wanted to go to school, these were the only schools. And the fact that if you didn't have school uniform you couldn't attend school. Those were some of the things we were fighting against[1253]

After this meeting, which was attended amongst others by Daniel George, Tommy Makau, Nicholas 'Niki' Matsepe, Khahliso Moeketsi, and many others, it was resolved that further meetings had to be held to plan the strategy to put forward the students' demands to the schools' authorities.[1254]

Finally, Masizane, George and Makau all remember that they were also influenced by people from outside Kroonstad. Masizane, cited by Twala and Seekings, claimed that he was influenced by the level of political resistance he witnessed in the then Transvaal. He argued

> As students from Kroonstad we had relatives in the then Transvaal Province. I used to visit places like Sebokeng and Duduza during the school holidays. Those places were on fire during 1984 and I personally witnessed the level of political mobilization in those areas. I think my political consciousness started when I visited those places. When I came back to Maokeng, I was recruited into the AZAPO camp here in Kroonstad. It was in February 1984 …[1255]

[1252] Interview with Matli (Italics my emphasis)
[1253] Interview with Machabe Thulo (LHPR), Gelukwaarts, Maokeng, 23 September 2009; Thulo confirmed that the date of this meeting was 7 February 1985.
[1254] See interview with Thulo; telephonic conversation with Thulo, 24 June 2010
[1255] Twala and Seekings 'Activist networks', p.774

Furthermore, Masizane recalls that students from Welkom were the ones who encouraged them to stand up and fight for their rights.[1256] He remarks: "In fact, the Maokeng uprisings were supposed to have started in 1984. There were guys from Welkom who frequented Kroonstad and would tell us that we Kroonstad guys have to stand up. We were willing to stand up, but we didn't have this clear understanding of what we were going to fight for."[1257] But the other reason students at Bodibeng failed to 'stand up and fight' was because they were discouraged by senior students to delay this action. Masizane recalls

> In1984 … I remember one time when we were attending night studies at a school called Reaitumela when a certain guy called - he ended up being a kwaito artist – called Toledo. I forgot his real name. That guy came to address us, telling us that there were people from Welkom who wanted us to riot, but the thing was we were about to write our examination and we couldn't fight now. But better fight the following year in January or February … [Toledo] was a senior student, doing matric at that time. I only realized after that, "Oh! this Toledo was securing his position that we shouldn't fight because, you know, the education that we did before was just to finish matric and go and serve the master, either by being a policeman or a teacher[1258]

Matthew Chaskalson and Jeremy Seekings point out that by 1984 many students in Thabong, Welkom, were already conscientised or had experienced political protests. According to them, "Isolated school protests broke out in Thabong in November 1983 over the issues of forthcoming examinations and the proposed introduction of age limit." "When some students were excluded in terms of the age limit in January 1984", they continue "sporadic protests resumed".[1259] In March 1984 the Thabong Youth Congress was launched to organize the excluded students. As a result of all these actions in July 1984 violent confrontations *erupted* between students and authorities at all the high schools in Thabong."[1260] It is possible that some of the students, who were harassed by the police and, later by the parents who were forcing students to go back to school, ran away from Thabong and hid in Maokeng.
Similarly George's political understanding became fully developed after he had met with the COSAS organizer from the Vaal Triangle. He explains

> And it happened that at some stage I met a guy, Isaac, who was at some stage the

[1256] Interview with Masizane
[1257] Ibid.
[1258] Ibid.
[1259] Chaskalson, M. and Seekings, J. 'The Awakening: Desperation and Defiance', in Mark Bennett and Deborah Quin (Research Co-ordinators) *Political Conflict in South Africa: Data Trends, 1984-88* (An indicator South Africa Issue Focus, December 198), p.31
[1260] Ibid., p.31 (Italics my emphasis)

> organizer of COSAS from the Vaal Triangle. Then I got the constitution of COSAS. I read it. In that constitution it was stated 'Before I become a student, I'm first a member of the community[1261]

Indeed, the preamble of the COSAS' constitution states:

We the students in South Africa regarding ourselves first as members of society before we are students and believing that students have a responsibility to society, that students are morally and spiritually obliged to contribute constructively towards the welfare of society and that the unity of students is the vital key to the realization of our objectives.[1262]

Finally, for Tommy Makau it was through his contact with his cousin in Daveyton, in the East Rand. Makau relates

> That because [students] leagues (i.e. organizations) were popular in the country from around the '80s, I remember during the Christmas holidays in '84 I had visited my cousin's place in Daveyton. I've got a cousin who was involved in COSAS, Lebohang Nthoane. So, he was sort of an organizer. I moved in with him when I was there - when they were harassing students. So, I started to pack COSAS' pamphlets and told myself I am taking them to Kroonstad. When I arrived here I did not struggle, fortunately, because many students were already into student *politics*[1263]

In the early 1980s the government, through its security personnel, came down heavily on political activists.[1264] This forced the latter to operate under difficult circumstances, thus compelling them to adopt extra precautionary measures. In areas such Lingelihle, in Cradock, Matthew Goniwe, a teacher and political activists, helped found street committees "… to facilitate efficient dissemination and gathering of information amongst community members".[1265] Possibly after learning of the security personnel's heavy-handed reaction to political activism in other areas (and those from outside Kroonstad, having experienced it),

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[1261] Interview with George

[1262] UWL HLP AD1790 COSAS, 'Cosas Constitution'

[1263] Interview with Tommy Makau (lhpr), Phomolong, Maokeng, 9 July 2008 (Italics my emphasis)

[1264] Janet Cherry provides a detailed account on how political activists in the Eastern Cape were either abducted and killed, forced to go into exile, or arrested. See Cherry, J. 'Hidden Histories of the Eastern Cape underground', in SADET *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol.4, 1980-1990* (Pretoria, Unisa Press, 2010), pp.376-85; In Alexandra Township, in 1985 the entire executive of the Alexandra Youth Congress was detained for periods between three and eight months. See Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* p.271; In Bloemfontein, in 1980 White Mohapi and some of his comrades were detained for two months for allegedly murdering a member of the Special Branch. Interview with White Mohapi

[1265] The idea of street committees was copied from the Mandela Plan (or M-Plan) drafted by Nelson Mandela in the early 1950s to counter heightened police suppression. Tetelman, 'We Can', p.196

political activists in Maokeng in an effort to conceal their identities from the police and informers held clandestine meetings to discuss their plans. So when Dennis Bloem, Wilfred "Bizza" Makhathe, and other senior activists moved in to try and conscientise the young people in the township, they found that the ground was already prepared to some extent, although not fully fertile. Bloem recalls

> Kroonstad was a very, very, very conservative place. It was very difficult to organise. But we organised the students … We had a meeting. Myself and Terror [Lekota], with 10 students on a Saturday afternoon. These students were from Bodibeng. We spoke to them. The next Saturday they were now the organisers this time. And then they organised other students – 10, 10, 10 from other schools. We had our first meeting at the Dutch Reformed Church Hall, there in Seeisoville. You see, we first started with this 10 around school issues: why must they pay school fees and their parents are unemployed? Around uniform, the teachers' salaries. Ja, the teachers were involved. We then dwelt in now rent, electricity issues. These were township issues now. Eh, and the councillors. And then they went to other schools[1266]

The initial 10 students continued as planned. They recruited other students. Makau remarks

> There were too many politics, because there were other secret meetings that were organized, especially by older people and we did not know about them. Because we only realized after the 11th February '85 that there were so many of us, which was a blessing because at least we were not few. We were about 10 when we arrived at George Tladi's [place]. I will try and mention their names. It was me, Frank Mohapi, George Tladi, Daniel George, Thabo Qobokweleni, Prince Modise, Thulo Mokgoka … (pauses) and one lady Puleng Mphosi. *Ja*, she works somewhere in the North West [Province]. George Mokotane. I can't remember the other one. There were 10 of us. But we thought that an organization cannot start with 10 people. So, what happened, we agreed that in the next meeting each member will bring one person so that there can be 20 of us. Okay, we called the meeting after a week and there were 20 of us. Yes, same place. We were 20. So, as we were expanding, information was getting out onto the streets[1267]

[1266] Interview with Bloem; Bloem is the person interviewed who claimed Lekota's presence at the meeting. None of the other interviewees recalled Lekota attending the meeting
[1267] Interview with Makau

Mamokhele Sebetoane was one of the first students to be recruited. Recalling how this happened, she remarked

> It was nothing political per ser. But we discussed issues of corporal punishment and the prefect system. We held them (meetings) at … a place in Phomolong. And to tell the truth it was as if people who used to hold those meetings before I joined, I am sure they discussed and decided about me that I would eventually join them because of my character. Because I joined those meetings when they were already far ahead. I remember one of the people who invited me was George Daniel[1268]

Some of the more enlightened student activists used these meetings as a forum to educate the less enlightened students about the country's political history. Sebetoane remembers

> I remember we had a big meeting … at Phomolong at 18h00, together with students from Mphohadi – enlightened people. As time went on, while listening it got to politics. Things crystallized. You could see how these things supported each other. They started teaching us about what the 1976 students were fighting for; how it happened. It became sort of political education[1269]

Not all the students, however, were fortunate to attend these meetings. The reason was that they were kept secrete in order to conceal from police or any other person who might leak the information to the police. Matli explains

> On the 8th (of February 1985) it was rumoured that there *was going to be* a meeting on Sunday at the Wesleyan Church – the white one in Seeisoville. But those rumours as you know they were moving secretively and *were* told to people who could ensure … confidential information. And definitely we kept it. We never even told people who we didn't know who they were. One comrade came to me *and said* 'Hey, there's a meeting on Sunday, the 10th at Wesleyan Church at 10 o'clock. It's a political meeting. Be there'. On Sunday I tried to get to the meeting. The church was empty. I went to the Roman Catholic Church. It was empty. I went to Moepeng Combined School. It was empty. *Only* to find out that the comrades were somewhere in Seeisoville in a house. So, I could not get there. So, I lost most of the information of what happened[1270]

[1268] Interview with Mamokhele Sebetoane (LHPR), Seeisoville, Maokeng, 7 July 2008
[1269] Ibid.
[1270] Interview with Matli (Italics my emphasis)

There are two important factors about township politics in the 1980s. First, adults, especially parents, were difficult to mobilize. In the case of Maokeng, adult ratepayers were content with the services they were receiving from the council led by Koekoe. So, there was no pressing issue that could be used to mobilize them. Second, senior activists recruited and mobilized students. The latter were easy to mobilize because already they needed an outlet to vent out their anger as a result of the unsatisfactory conditions they were learning under in their schools (but also because of the various influences they had absorbed in their early lives). But most significantly, students, and young people in general, felt that they had nothing to lose compared to adults by engaging in the struggle for liberation. Makau aptly summed this view up as follows

> Many people were involved in politics during the times of SASO. Because every time we were together *these* people would tell us that they were members of SASO. But they were afraid once they had their own families, because they did not want to spoil their children's future, ja[1271]

The mixture of external influences, numerous clandestine meetings and family influences filled the students with courage to resolve to take on the authorities. And 1985 was a turning point for many of these students.

Student Politics and Mobilisation

After the 1976-77 student uprisings students returned to school, albeit reluctantly, and the situation seemed to return to normality. The government made some few changes to the education system for Africans, largely focusing on establishing technical schools. This was mainly encouraged by capitalist interests.[1272] Before the 26th of July the Afrikaans teaching medium ruling was dropped by the authorities.[1273] In early 1979 the Minister of Education and Training introduced an Education and Training Bill, which was passed with minor amendments later that year. The Bill was designed to replace the Bantu Education Act of 1953.[1274] Some of the essential provisions the Bill made were:

1) That education should have a Christian character;
2) That the principle of mother-tongue instruction be observed;
3) That recognition be given to the Minister to establish of disestablish schools …; and
4) That recognition be given to the active involvement of the parents and communities[1275]

[1271] Interview with Makau
[1272] See Chisholm 'Redefining Skills', p.395
[1273] Lodge *Black Politics,* p.328
[1274] Davies, J. 'Capital, State and Education Reform in South Africa', in Peter Kallaway (ed.) *Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1984), p.351
[1275] Ibid.

Notwithstanding the introduction of the Department of Education and Training (DET), there was no substantial change to the education of Africans. Instead, the situation worsened. The DET, for example, failed to establish new schools and this caused problems in many African schools in the townships. This situation was further exacerbated by the hardships in the homelands, which caused rapid migration of people to the urban areas. Parents, after they had settled in townships, sought schools in which to enroll their children. This caused overcrowding in schools. Teachers, who were inadequately trained and with no teaching experience, resorted to corporal punishment to uphold discipline. According to Lekgoathi "… corporal punishment was used to mask teachers' incompetence and to shore up their authority".[1276] Hosia Lengosana, who was a student at Tsakane Senior Secondary School in the 1980s, claims that some of the students dropped out of school "because they were always beaten".[1277]

At this stage, amidst, financial difficulties experienced by many of the parents as a result of the economic recession gripping the country, some of schools' authorities demanded that students wear "proper" uniforms. And in some instances this had to be changed twice in a year. The cost of this "proper" uniform (together with high rent and service charges) was borne by the already impoverished parents. It was against this background that student politics were revived at the beginning of the 1980s. And these were led by COSAS, founded in 1979.

In the first two years of its existence COSAS concerned itself with national politics rather local (or school-focused) politics. For example, Whitey Mohapi recalled that students in Bloemfontein high schools in 1980 boycotted demanding the 'abolition of Bantu Education and other general demands'.[1278] Furthermore, COSAS's leadership at this stage worked closely with the ANC and MK. For example, Siphiwo Mtimkulu, chairman of the Loyiso High School SRC in Port Elizabeth, was also an underground member of the ANC. Mtimkulu was killed by poisoning by the security police in 1982.[1279]Not long after the formation of COSAS Eprhaim "Eph" Mogale, the first president of COSAS, was arrested and sentenced to five years on Robben Island for advancing the aims of a banned organization, the ANC.[1280] Because of this COSAS failed to attract significant membership to its ranks. According to Seekings, [COSAS] "had few active branches before 1984 in the various black townships across the country".[1281]

In 1982 COSAS changed its position. It began to focus on student and education-based problems. Matona, the former national organiser of COSAS, wrote '[in 1982] COSAS's re-

[1276] Lekgoathi 'The United Democratic Front', p.598
[1277] Interview with Lengosane
[1278] See interview with Whitey Mohapi, Ephraim Mogale and Lulu Johnson – the leadership of COSAS – by the Community Video Education Trust at http://www.cvet.org.za/displayvideo Accessed 19 May 2011.
[1279] Cherry 'Hidden histories', pp.376-85
[1280] Matona 'Student Organisation and Political Resistance', p.4
[1281] Seekings 'Quiescence', pp.236-7

orientation of strategy towards education-based issues took on renewed urgency'.[1282] "COSAS leaders", Matona added "identified schools as the main organisational centres and reiterated COSAS's stated objectives, among which was to strive for "free, compulsory, dynamic education in a non-racial and democratic South Africa'".[1283]

To achieve this, COSAS, supported the Azanian Student Organisation (AZASO), a tertiary-level student organisation, campaigned for an Education Charter. Saleem Badat writes 'Education Charter Campaign pledged non-racial, free and compulsory education for all in a united and democratic South Africa based on the will of the people'.[1284] According to him, 'by any measure, the Education Charter Campaign was both an ambitious and a massive undertaking'.[1285] This and other factors like lack of organisational skills, resources and finances, and the state of emergency, contributed to its collapse. By 1985 the campaign had not been launched.[1286]

In spite of this, COSAS was able to make inroads and recruited students, who in turn formed branches of COSAS in their schools. In 1984 COSAS's president, Lulu Johnson, acknowledged that the organization grew from just groups of students in different areas to a mass-based student organisation".[1287]

[1282] Matona 'Student Organisation and Political Resistance
[1283] Ibid., pp.5–6. Jabulani Sithole notes that Pietermaritzburg's high schools remained a hotbed of militant resistance politics in the 1980s. See Sithole, J. 'The ANC Underground, Armed Actions and Popular Resistance in Pietermaritzburg and the Surrounding Natal Midlands Townships', in SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 4* (1980–1990) (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2010), 238–241.
[1284] Badat, *Black Student Politics*, 285.
[1285] Ibid., 287.
[1286] Ibid., 288.
[1287] Ibid., p.236



The Congress of South African Students declared 1984 'The Year of the Boycott' (Source: *SASPU Focus, Vol.3, No.2, 1984)*[1288]

Buoyed by the rapid expansion of branches across the country, COSAS started raising demands which were education-oriented. Bonner and Nieftagodien note "In the early 1980s COSAS began to organize campaigns against poor conditions in the schools, which had plummeted to new depths in the 1970s. Overcrowding, corporal punishment, sexual harassment and age restrictions were the focal points of student agitation in Alexandra and other townships".[1289] It was in 1984 that COSAS tabled five key demands, which were later taken up by high school students in different areas. It demanded SRCs to replace the prefect system; the removal of the age limit

[1288] UWL HLP AG2635 'AZASO'
[1289] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* p.253

rule, an end to corporal punishment; that teachers stop sexually harassing female students, and that the police and South African Defence Force (SADF) be withdrawn from schools and townships.[1290] It was against this backdrop that high school students in Maokeng mobilized and organized a march that ended disastrously; this nevertheless helped to shift Maokeng's politics from quiescence to confrontation. Overt political resistance by students, and young people in general, became most visible from1985 in Maokeng.

Much like students in other townships, students in Maokeng, particularly at Bodibeng High, were also affected by the conditions COSAS opposed and wanted to get rid off. They suffered at the hands of inconsiderate and power-hungry prefects; and at the hands of teachers who seemed to enjoy inflicting pain on them through corporal punishment. At the same time there was the issue of compulsory school uniform, which the school's management changed anytime they felt like without consulting the students. Regarding this issue, students strongly felt that their parents could not afford to purchase school uniforms all the time.

Prefects were appointed by the staff and, therefore, were accountable to the staff and not to the students. In certain instances, prefects became carried away to please their 'masters'. It is suggested in *SASPU: FOCUS* that prefects were the 'eyes and ears' of the staffroom. Under the prefect system, *SASPU: FOCUS argued*, prefects' role was to instruct, command and be strict.[1291] It was for this reason that students at Bodibeng abhorred the system. Sebetoane explains

> What made us hate the prefect system is that sometimes you would find that your name was listed down amongst those who did something wrong when you didn't even know when you made the mistake. Even if you could go to the teachers and demand an explanation or ask what you did wrong, they would tell you to ask questions after they had punished you. Male prefects, also, if you refused to go out with them, you'd always find your name on the list. It was difficult for some of us[1292]

Furthermore, George recalls that prefects were unreasonable and always determined to prove they were in charge. In his words

> We would rally our students, mobilize them to say "Colleagues, the question of … the prefect system, it was an oppressive type of government to us". In the

[1290] UWL HLP AG 2635, AZASO Collection: 'The Demands behind the boycotts', in *SASPU:FOCUS, Vol.3, No.2, November 1984,* pp.11-15; also see UWL HLP AD 1790 'COSAS'
[1291] *SASPU: FOCUS,* p.12
[1292] Interview with Sebetoane

> sense that when a prefect would say, 'You have arrived late'. Maybe, like I could recall that the afternoon studies would start at 3 o'clock, when the school knocked off at 2:30. Personally, I would have to run from Bodibeng to Phomolong to have my food for lunch. Come back, only to be there at 3 o'clock. But when you arrive 5 minutes [late], they would now be arguing with you for 30 minutes. When you say "But, this is unfair, the time that you're keeping me here it's a bit unfair, because you're wasting my time", you see[1293]

Just as in George's case, Senatso, cited by Marks in her study of youth politics in Diepkloof, in Soweto, recalled the unfair treatment meted out to him by prefects in his school. He said

> When I started high school, there were these things of prefects. When we came late to school, they close the gates. When we try to explain to the prefect why I was late, they don't understand. He takes me to the principal. They took, what do you call it, stick to punish me …[1294]

Moses Masizane remembers that one of the chief prefects, William Mpembe, who is now part of management in the South African Police Services, used to take his responsibility very seriously to the extent that he would chase students who tried to sneak into the school to avoid punishment all around the township. If they outran him (and mistakenly dropped their books in the process) he would confiscate their books and return with them to school as evidence.[1295]

It was for this reason that COSAS likened the prefect system as a police body.[1296] COSAS called for the SRC to replace the prefect system. It set out the duties of the SRCs as follows:

*to represent students at school

*to articulate grievances and aspirations of students

*to create a good working relationship between the students and the staff and parents

*to help students understand and expand their knowledge of school affairs

*to make students aware of the laws which protect their interests, for example, laws concerning corporal punishment, about uniforms not being compulsory

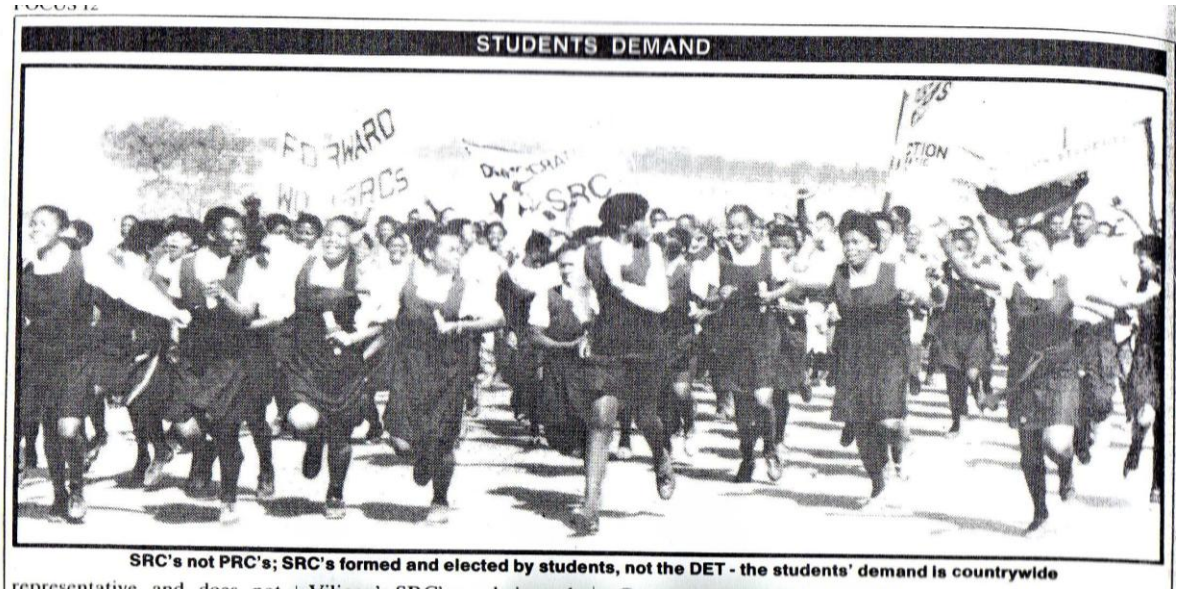
*to have a say in matters affecting the students[1297]

[1293] Interview with Daniel George (LHPR), Constantia, Maokeng, 9 July 2008; For a detailed account why students disliked the prefects, see Marks, M. *Young Warriors: Youth Politics, Identity and Violence in South Africa* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2001), p.50

[1294] Marks *Young Warriors,* p.50

[1295] Interview with Masizane

[1296] UWL HLP AD 1790' COSAS: SRC or PRC'



Students demanding SRC's (Source: *SASPU Focus, Vo.3, No.2 1984)*[1298]

Another concern for students at Bodibeng was the directive from the school's management that the school uniform was going to be changed. A new uniform was to be introduced. And it was compulsory for all the students to purchase it. The core group of students who had been attending student meetings felt that the school's management was inconsiderate because it failed to take into account the fact that many of the students at Bodibeng came from working class background or from poor families. Their argument was that their parents would not be able to afford to purchase new uniforms. George recalls that this was one of the issues they had planned to oppose. He remembers

> At Bodibeng in 1984 they were saying we needed to change the uniform from black and grey trousers, white shirts for boys and then light blue shirts. And the dungarees which were supposed to be like navy blue for girls. This really affected the parents who could not afford to change the uniform twice in one year. We could not afford[1299]

Students' concerns were genuine. They experienced on a daily basis how their parents or guardians struggled to make ends to meet at home. Most of them lived with their grandparents, who were pensioners, or with single parents, who were employed as domestic labourers and earned little (as in the case of Mohapi). Matshidiso Paulina Rantie, who worked all her life as a

[1297] UWL HLP AD 1790 'COSAS'
[1298] AG2635 AZASO, WHLP
[1299] Interview with George

domestic labourer in Kroonstad, recalls that in the 1980s she earned R80 a week.[1300] The students' parents and guardians did not have sufficient money to sustain their households and also bear the financial burden of other unnecessary educational costs.[1301]

Students failed to understand the rationale behind this decision, because there was nothing wrong with the uniform they were currently using. All along, George adds

> Boys were wearing white shirts, with grey trousers. And on Mondays we were wearing those white shirts and grey trousers, with a tie. And then on Tuesdays, we wore our khaki shirts and khaki trousers. Yes, with black shoes. Well, that was compulsory - strictly[1302]

What really agitated students was lack of consultation by the staff or school management. He concludes

> Well, as you would recall during those days there was nothing like consultation. There would just be an announcement that as from this month you would be wearing this type of uniform - as announced by the principal or a teacher[1303]

Nthabiseng "Mama" Seheri, who started attending at Bodibeng in 1982, echoes George and further explains that proper school uniform was compulsory. Just like the others she also felt that the teachers were inconsiderate. In her own words

> We were expected to shave our hair; we had to wear proper uniform - shoes that were worn by children. What are they called? Buccaneers. Other children had no proper uniform. If you came to school with a navy blue jersey or any other colour other than black, they would take it from you. We were not from the same back-ground, financially[1304]

The issue of school uniform was general. Elsewhere in Soweto, student activists also fought against the discrimination towards students who did not have "correct" uniform. They argued that they should be allowed to attend school irrespective of the uniform they wore. Shirley Thathi, former general secretary of the SRC at Matshidiso Secondary, explains

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[1300] Interview with Rantie

[1301] It would have been doubly difficult for the 166 Maokeng residents who were retrenched from Epol in March 1985. *Die Vaderland, 8 March 1985*

[1302] Interview with Daniel George (LHPR), Constantia, Maokeng, 9 July 2008

[1303] Ibid.

[1304] Interview with Nthabiseng "Mama" Seheri (LHPR), Seeisoville, Maokeng, 11 July 2008

> The uniform was compulsory. Monday to Wednesday we put on a white shirt. And from Thursday to Friday it was a khaki shirt. And if you did not wear it, you had to explain why. So, that was one of our interventions as the SRC; that if a person does not have it, it is fine to wear black and white because it could be seen that they were students. If a person didn't have a khaki shirt, they should understand that it was because the family could not afford to buy him one. That happened up until the uniform was changed to maroon and white[1305]

Corporal punishment seemed to have been at the top of the priority list of students' concerns. This was because it paralysed their confidence and, some times students felt that punishment was meted out to them for no concrete reasons, but because some teachers enjoyed doing it. Masizane recalls that they were punished for missing afternoon studies:

> You miss afternoon studies … Every Friday afternoon those who didn't attend were punished by teacher so and so. *We* would be told to go to the lobby. We would be lashed. That thing of our punishment … it brought some hatred spirit towards these people (i.e. teachers). Although, during that time, eh, truly speaking, we didn't have that much political understanding[1306]

And Sebetoane remembers that, because of constant punishment, she finally got used to it even though she disliked it; and would not even oppose it. She remarks

> When I got to Bodibeng I realized that there were teachers who were incompetent and those teachers also liked corporal punishment. I disliked corporal punishment but I ended up getting used to it. Sometimes you would deliberately misbehave because you knew that even if you behaved well, you might be counted amongst those who did wrong things[1307]

For COSAS, corporal punishment was definitely not an effective educational tool. It argued "We can never learn from being beaten".[1308]

My interviewees (both male and female), who are former students at Bodibeng High, did not raise the issue about sexual harassment at school. In many of the high and secondary schools

[1305] Interview with Thathi
[1306] Interview with Masizane
[1307] Interview with Sebetoane
[1308] UWL HLP AD 1790 'COSAS: Corporal Punishment?'

elsewhere in the country, students complained about male teachers who were sexually harassing female students.[1309]

Strike and Riot, 1985

It was against this background that students at Bodibeng High finally decided to organize themselves. It is not exactly clear who made this decision, but it is possible that the idea was suggested by the core group of students (the initial 10 students) who were then politically conscientised. On Saturday the 9th of February 1985 students from Bodibeng High, Kananelo Secondary schools and Mphohadi Teachers' Training College met at Seeisoville to chart the way forward. George claims that he personally announced the meeting at Bodibeng "that there was going to be a very important meeting, but I never said what was going to be discussed".[1310] In that secretive meeting, also attended by students from Thabong, in Welkom, students discussed their grievances and elected a committee to give direction to the students. Other suggestions were made. Seheri remembers

> We had a meeting on Saturday. I think it was on the 9th of February. But the police were not supposed to know about the meeting. The meeting was held I think it was in the hall at Seeisoville. There was this place called Seeisoville Hall. Some people were elected; some people were left out, because we were not supposed to tell all the students. We agreed that on Monday we were not taking our books [to school]. We were going to riot. We would start in the morning during the school's parade and we would do things swiftly. Thereafter, we would go to Kananelo [Secondary School]. During that time Kananelo and Bodibeng were the only high schools[1311]

George remembers that a suggestion was made that they should paint graffiti on the walls around the township. According to him they agreed that "we must write on the walls at different schools: 'No to prefects. Yes to SRC'.[1312] George claims that he stole his grandmother's spray to undertake this task. He explains

> It was difficult to say where we were going to get the spray. A spray or painting. I can recall my grandmother had a spray, which she was going to use to paint the kitchen units. So, I went home to steal that spray. And I went to Bodibeng. It was a yellow spray to spray the walls: "No to prefects, yes to SRC's". We went to

[1309] See Carter, 'Comrades and Community', pp.116-117
[1310] Ibid.
[1311] Interview with Seheri
[1312] Interview with George

> Kananelo. The same was done. All the tarred roads, especially where we knew that traffic was getting in and out. The message would go out[1313]

Masizane remembers that their discussion went further than electing a committee or painting graffiti, but also focused on the whole issue of Bantu Education. He remarks

> In 1985 it happened that on the 9th of February it was on Saturday there was a meeting which was held at Seeisoville. In that meeting there were guys from outside. Tommy Makau was also there, Frank Mohapi was there. All these guys I told you about were there. There was a briefing that there was a need that actually we as student have to stand up against the system that was implemented at school, the Bantu Education, corporal punishment, and all that stuff[1314]

The students agreed to meet the following day to finalise their preparations. Frank Mohapi explains

> I had already left AZASM. Then there was a meeting that was set on the 10th it was on Sunday. This is February. This meeting was basically to look at these, eh, student issues. And I remember on the 11th Bodibeng was going to announce the new prefects for the year. And then we had to have a meeting on Sunday to strategise how we were going to disrupt this and demand SRC[1315]

Makau adds

> You see, we called a meeting on the 10th of February, which was a Sunday and held it at the Reformed Church premises in Seeisoville. This is because it would be Monday the next day. That was where the decision was taken[1316]

Already some of the student activists at Bodibeng had contact with some of the 'progressive' teachers, who supported the UDF. One such teacher was Oupa Ntombela. Mohapi explains the role Ntombela played during this period, leading to the 11th. In his words

> Early 1985 - then I was approached by Oupa Ntombela. And Oupa then started talking to me and showing me some material relating to the UDF – it was after the UDF had been launched in Cape Town. And he managed to organize material and we started. I remember we were sitting at a shop, I forgot the name of this shop, but it was in Phomolong and we were eating fat cakes there and he said … He was already a teacher

[1313] Ibid.
[1314] Interview with Masizane
[1315] Interview with Mohapi
[1316] Interview with Makau

> at Bodibeng. He was taking us through, eh, the UDF structures … It was me, eh, Tommy Makau, Nikki Matsepe, Thulo [Mokgoka] …[1317]

Khotso Sesele, who was detained in 1976 following the student demonstration, was another teacher who played a significant role in shaping student politics. In 1982 Sesele was expelled from the Mabopane East Tecknikon, in Pretoria, for his involvement in the commemoration of the sixth anniversary of June 16 and for being among the students who raised their dissatisfaction against one racist teacher.[1318] In the following year he was admitted at Mphohadi Teachers Training College, in Kroonstad, to further his studies. In spite of the warning by the principal, Sesele actively participated in student politics. He recalls

> We arrived at Mphohadi in 1983. After we had been allocated classrooms, I think after two or three weeks, the Rector, Mr Priet, called us and asked us if we had attended school at Mabopane Technikon. And we replied "Yes". And he also told us which subjects we were doing and that we were expelled. And he also warned us that we were being watched. That was the time when I directly started engaging in meetings in different places, and when we started resisting the prefect system … which consisted both the head girl and head boy. We were trying to destabilize the school system. But I was lucky to finish my studies[1319]

In 1985 Sesele joined the teaching staff of Bodibeng. He and the Ntombela brothers, Oupa and Pini, interacted with the students and helped them to formalize themselves into an organization. In his words

> So, we would do all those things with school children, helping them to establish some structures like COSAS, etc. Then there was the Maokeng Progressive Teacher's Organisation. I think that's when one would say I started to be very, very active in politics. I … joined structures like the Release Mandela Campaign, along with the Maokeng Advice Centre[1320]

Teachers participated in political activities at great risk. Some were dismissed from their employment. Others were attacked and close to being killed. Aubrey Matshiqi, who joined the National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA) in 1984, recalls that after graduating from Soweto Teachers' Training College he started teaching at Phafugang Secondary School in Rockville, Soweto, in 1985. Because of his involvement in NEUSA, he was summarily dismissed from teaching. He remarks

[1317] Interview with Mohapi
[1318] Interview with Khotso Sesele (LHPR), Kroonstad, 13 April 2008
[1319] Ibid.
[1320] Ibid.; also see interview with Masizane

> In 1982 I matriculated and found myself doing teacher training in Soweto in 1983. I was there … until 1985. In 1984 Angie Motshekga started to make approaches towards us.[1321] I can remember we were invited by NEUSA to a workshop at Funda Centre. … Linda Chisholm would invite us to Wits to give speeches on topics such as 'People's Power'. Our first task as the newly employed teachers was to form the first branch of NEUSA in Soweto ... [and] recruit teachers and it was extremely difficult. Teachers in those days had no appetite for politics. I was a hothead then, doing interviews with the media. The *Business Day* (1986) did an interview with me. The following day I think there was a response from the Minister. I think then I should have known that there was no way I could continue as a teacher. My letter of termination was delivered by the Special Branch[1322]

In an attempt to disorganize the Progressive Teachers' Organisation (PTO) in Maokeng, at the end of 1989 the DET, without warning, notified Bodibeng High that 12 of its teachers – all members of the PTO – were to be transferred to Petrusteyn, Tweeling, Lindley and Edenville.[1323]

In spite of the extreme difficulties faced by 'progressive' teachers, the relationship between them and some of the students was productive. At Bodibeng this relationship benefitted student activists when they needed advise relating to strategies and first-hand information about the school's management's possible response to their actions.

On the 11th of February students woke up and prepared themselves for school as they normally would do. This was a precautionary measure against alerting the police or students who would unwittingly (or wittingly) reveal the plans to the teachers, or worse to the police.[1324] But students were also afraid that should news of their plans reach their homes, they might be reprimanded or punished by their parents or legal guardians. Although students tried to pretend that everything was normal on that day, signs were visible for all to see that the situation was atypical. The school's walls had been painted with the message denouncing the prefect system. Seheri recalls: "I was doing Standard Nine. When we arrived at school that day [11th Feb], we went to a parade

[1321] Angie Motshega, the current Minister of Basic Education, was in 1984 a lecturer at the Soweto Teachers' Training College and a member of NEUSA. Interview with Aubrey Matshiqi by Tshepo Moloi, for the SADET Oral History Project, Parktown, Johannesburg, 12 August 2011

[1322] Ibid.; Other teachers were not so fortunate. Matthew Goniwe was murdered in the Eastern Cape, and in 1987 Muzi Sikhakhane, formerly a teacher at Mahlaba Secondary School in Bulwer, KwaZulu, was attacked by members of Inkatha and left for dead. For a detailed account about Goniwe's assassination, see Tetelman 'We Can'; interview with Sikhakhane by Tshepo Moloi, for the SADET Oral History Project, Sandton, Johannesburg, 5 July 2011

[1323] *City Press, 31 December 1989*

[1324] Seheri remembers that her younger brother also attended at Bodibeng but she kept the planned disruption on Monday a secret even from him. See interview with Seheri

(assembly) as usual. But they had already sprayed the walls. Children were surprised: 'Who had sprayed the walls?' We kept quiet."[1325]

George, who lived with his grandmother pretended that there was nothing untoward about the day. In the morning he did everything as normal. He reflects

> On Monday morning, all the students came to my place - at my grandmother's place – to ask me "Are we carrying our books to school?" I said "Yes". Because I was afraid of my grandmother… I couldn't say, no. Because as they were coming in my grandmother was busy ironing my white shirt, because it was Monday. I said "Yes, we carry our books, we go to school". But my grandmother was very suspicious[1326]

Masizane concurs

> On that particular date, the 11th, we attended the parade as normal. The assembly was held. There were announcements. After announcements, we sang school hymns. Then there came this teacher, Makhanya. He says that we are going to appoint the prefects. Wow! Then we looked at each other. All the people who were at the meeting were asking themselves who was going to start? And there was nobody who was willing to start. It looked as if the whole thing was going to be a "flop" (failure)[1327]

Mohapi echoes both George and Masizane, but also adds that it was during the announcement of the prefects that some of the students decided to break their silence and shouted the principal down as he was announcing, demanding the SRC.[1328] He explains

> On Monday we all went to school as normal. We went to the parade. The principal started announcing the prefects. We said "No! What we demand was the SRC. We were requesting the Students' Representative Council. We don't want the prefects, because the prefects were not democratically elected, and they were not actually representatives of us; and they don't deal with our issues". And it started being a squabble[1329]

[1325] Interview with Seheri
[1326] Interview with George
[1327] Interview with Masizane
[1328] There is confusion about who announced the newly-appointed prefects. Some of my interviewees recall teacher Dutch Makhanya and others believe it was the principal, Mr Sydney Zanemvula Zothwana
[1329] Interview with Mohapi; Masizane and George remember the teacher who was making the announcement as Dutch (or Dodge?) Makhanya, see interviews with Masizane and George

Thulo Machabe, Masizane and Matli remember the incident differently. They all, although in different ways, agree that Bodibeng students accommodated at Boikemisetso were responsible for disrupting the parade and, in the process, causing mayhem at Bodibeng. Machabe remarks

> *On our way to Bodibeng* we were singing *Sikhokhele Tambo sibuyela emakhaya, sizongena kanjani* (lead us Tambo on our way back home. How are we going to enter?). I was leading the march … next to the tarred road … to Boitumelong Hospital. When we got to Bodibeng … We had received a command and it was given to me. It said when we get there and you don't find textbooks, go to the second floor and you'll find *sjamboks.* Instruct the students that they must support you, because you also want to be educated just like them. Dismiss them by force. Those who did not want to listen must be beaten. Some of them refused. We beat them with *sjamboks.* Cowards flew down from the second floor and ran away. There was this guy called Mpembe – he later became a cop – he was the chief of prefects at school. We beat him with *sjamboks.* The nurses even came to rescue him. We vandalized the place. And after that we left[1330]

Masizane concurs. He recalls that after the parade and the appointment of the new prefects, students went into their classrooms. But when a group of students from Boikemisetso arrived at Bodibeng the situation changed. In his words

> So, on that day, the 11th, there was this group of students who were going to the other school to do Standard 7. They came to take their books from Bodibeng and go back to the other school. We thought it was our group coming to support us in the fight. It happened that this guy, comrade Thulo, he was the first guy, if I remember well, to run to these guys shouting z*wakala, zwakala* (come on, come on). Then we went out of the classes, thinking that these Standard 7s came to support us. We started stoning the school "Away with the prefect system. Away!"[1331]

Finally, Matli further claims

> That morning all students of Bodibeng who were doing Standard 7, accommodated at Boikemisetso were supposed to go and be part of the elections of the *prefects* at the main building. At the same time we were going to collect our books. Mr Gaborone, who was a sub-principal or whatever you call it, was based at Boikemisetso, said we are leaving for Bodibeng. We were walking in a line as if we were soldiers - four lines – on the outer part of Kroonstad, using the main road to [Boitumelo] Hospital. As we were walking

[1330] Interview with Thulo
[1331] Interview with Masizane

down, we could see that *nothing* was happening. Because we were not part of the meeting, we could not start something which *we* never planned. Mr Gaborone was saying 'Don't go there, because something is not right'. I never listened to him. I went direct into the main yard. So I found people like Prince Modise, Thulo Makgoka engaging Mr Molefe. He was going to manage the process of the *appointment* of the prefects. Because then all classes had already handed their preferred names of the prefects. Mr Molefe was *sjambokked* by the students, but because he was almost the darling of the students not to the extent. But those whom we wanted were far away. Mr [Jacob] Ramotsoela was not even near. From there … we disrupted classes at Phuleng Primary. Others *went* to Kananelo[1332]



Machabe Thulo in Maokeng, in the mid-1980s
(*Source: Machabe Thulo)*

[1332] Interview with Matli (Italics my emphasis); The process of appointing prefects started at the class level. Each class elected its own representatives to be part of the prefect system. Those elected their names are then forwarded to the principal and staff. After deliberating the names, the principal and his staff decide who should be prefects.

However, before the students could leave the school's premises and march to Kananelo Secondary, the principal Mr Zanemvula Zothwana, himself a former activist while he was employed at Rhodes University[1333], tried to reason with them, requesting them to meet with him so that they could resolve their concerns. When the students demanded to meet with him only if he agreed that they will have the SRC, he informed them that he had to consult with Sam de Beer, a senior official in the DET. George remembers

> *Ntate* Zothwana was the then principal at Bodibeng. He wanted to have a meeting with us and we said no. The only meeting that we could have was with the students, and yourself to allow us to have a meeting, where we were going to elect our SRC. He said to us he was going to consult with *ntate* De Beer - Sam De Beer - who was then the inspector. We refused[1334]

The students left Bodibeg chanting and shouting "Viva Oliver Tambo".[1335] Together with a group from Boikemisetso, which had joined them they headed for Kananelo Secondary. Recalling this march, George explains – at length

> When we arrived at Kananelo the gates were locked. The then principal *ntate* … I'll tell you his name now … *ntate* [Douglas] Motsetse. They had already locked the gates. We kicked, we kicked. Myself, the late Thulo Mokgoka, Tommy Makau, Liphapang [Frank Mohapi], and a young lady, Mamokhele Sebetoane. The students were then fleeing out of their classes, trying to run away.[1336] They were trying to run away to the side of Brentpark. But we were calling them, saying "Come and join us". They returned when the gates were already wide open. After we had been joined by students from Kananelo, we marched past Phomolong Higher Primary School. We came towards the Phomolong shopping complex. There was a bottle store that used to be called Thabo Bottle Store. It was on Monday. There were bottles packed outside. Police were now already approaching us. We took those empty bottles. The war was already on. We were throwing them with those bottles and they were shooting at us. Then we moved down towards Constantia. They couldn't control us when we were in Phomolong. We managed to move down. We marched towards Mphohadi. When we arrived at Mphohadi, it was the same story. The then Rector of Mphohadi had locked the students in. We managed to

[1333] Sean Andrew Greyling in his MA Dissertation writes that Zothwana was a permanent instructor in the Department of Bantu Languages and was vigorously involved in the Black Workers Union (BWU) at Rhodes University in the early 1970s. See Greyling, S.A. 'Rhodes University during segregation and Apartheid eras, 1933 to 1990' (Rhodes University, MA, December 2007), http://eprints.ru.ac.za/1250/1/Greyling-MAthesis.pdf. Last accessed 16 June 2010; in 1978 he was detained at Bodibeng High (see chapter three)

[1334] Interview with George

[1335] Ibid.

[1336] A regional newspaper estimated that about 1 400 students were dismissed from Kananelo Secondary School. See *The Friend, 12 February 1985*

> get them out. They came out. But just immediately at the corner of the church, as we were turning there, the police starting to re-inforce, because the helicopter was already hovering over us. We then decided to hijack a bakery bakkie. Thulo Mokgoka was driving that bakkie - that big lorry. We *approached* the security branch, because they were shooting with live ammunition. We chased them away with that truck. Things started to happen there. When we arrived at *ntate* Motsetse's place, the then principal of Kananelo.[1337] Because I was a leader I was told, I can't just recall the name of the person who told me that Matete Machese[1338] had been shot; he was dead - next to Bodibeng[1339]

The idea was to disrupt schooling on that day, but the situation got out of hand and the disruption spilled into the township. Some of the students, joined by non-school-going youth in the township, attacked and damaged shops and properties belonging to the councillors. Matli explains

> I was part and parcel of the people who went to the Phomolong shops. We were throwing stones at cars, particularly police vans. They had to retreat. There was this, eh, we called them *Matadiana* (Italians) buses. I believe this man was an Italian. That's why they called *the buses Matadiana.* So, those buses we burned – some of them. We smashed their windows. At first it was only students. But then there were people who were unemployed and those who were not schooling. I finally landed at the crossroads. That was when the police came. That was the first time I saw a police Jeep[1340]

Similarly, Masizane remembers

> There was a school next to our school, a lower primary school called Phuleng. We got there and dismissed the children. We attacked the delivery vans by stoning them and burning whatever we came across. I remember one delivery van belonging to a certain man called *ntate* Kuto - there is this township called Marabastad - that's where we burned that delivery van[1341]

[1337] Douglas Motsetse's house and car were burned. *Sunday Mirror, 17 February 1985*

[1338] Matete's surname is spelled differently. It is sometimes spelt 'Matches' or Machis. See Twala and Seekings 'Activist networks', p.788; UWL HLP AK2117/S6.16 'Delmas Treason Trial: Statements relating events in Seeisoville, February 1985' - particularly the 'Statement by Terror Lekota – accused No. 20 – on funeral at Kroonstad, 18 February 1985'

[1339] Interview with George; also see interviews with Masizane and Seheri; Masizane contends that Matete Mechese was not part of the demonstration. He was shot and killed while walking with his friend Khaya, on their way to work as caddies at the golf course. See interview with Masizane;

[1340] Interview with Matli (My emphasis)

[1341] Interview with Masizane

Sesomo Samuel Seakhela, a former councillor in the Maokeng Town Council, recalls that properties belonging to councillors were destroyed. "… Our shops were stoned and burned", he remembers.[1342] Other councillors whose property was damaged included Koekoe and Madlala Nkomonde.[1343]

Some of the non-school going youth who joined the revolt did so to assist the students but others had ulterior motives. Abram Ditseki Moeketsi, who had returned to Maokeng in 1985 after he had passed his matric level in Bothaville, in the Orange Free State, remembers "being a youth of that time, I joined in protests".[1344] And Mamorena Florence Taje, who had long left school and was pregnant in 1985, recalls

> When these things (student riots) started on the 11th (February) I was a pregnant woman who didn't know anything. But you'll find that as people were running … I would be also running as a pregnant woman. We'd come across [a truck carrying] maize-meal or whatever, I also looted. I'd go around the whole township because this thing was nice[1345]

To halt the revolt, the local police, reinforced by the Riot Squad from Welkom, responded with great violence. *The Friend* reported "A strong contingent of Riot Squad policemen moved into the township and opened fire with rubber bullets. Batons and teargas were used to disperse the swelling mob".[1346] They detained, shot and killed some of the young people in the township. Machese was not the only person shot and killed on that day. Andrew Makoko was another victim.[1347] Police actions angered the students, who had now been joined by non-school-going youth from the township. They continued attacking and destroying properties, including the house of the ambassador of Qwaqwa, Mr D.A. Thejane.[1348] A newspaper report covering the riots in Maokeng led with the headline 'Town of horror', and reported that the home of the headmaster, the mayor's house, and 27 shops in the township were gutted, while 12 more businesses were stoned and set alight. It estimated the damage to be more than R500 00.[1349] Dintsho Serotho, whose chain of stores in Maokeng were gutted, was reported to have lost property to the tune of R214 000.[1350]

[1342] Interview with Seakhela, Maokeng, 28 October 2008
[1343] *Sunday Mirror, 17 February 1985*
[1344] Interview with Ditseki Mooketsi, Mphefela, Maokeng, 22 May 2009
[1345] Interview with Mamorena Florence Taje (LHPR), Gelukwaarts, Maokeng, 25 September 2009
[1346] *The Friend, 12 February 1985*
[1347] Interview with Seheri; also see *The Friend, 14 February 1985*
[1348] *The Friend, 13 February 1985*
[1349] *The Friend, 12 February 1985*
[1350] *Sunday Mirror, 17 February 1985*

Sebetoane blamed the "elements whom we did not know where they were coming from [1351]." And Masizane saw this as the work of criminals. He explains: "The situation was that we planned to bring down the apartheid system. Others were using the opportunity to further their own desires, you see. As I said, that even during the protests there were the criminal elements which targeted black owned shops, by burning and looting them."[1352] The opportunistic involvement of non-school-going youth during the riots in the townships was a widespread phenomenon. In some of the townships they were called 'com-tsotsis'. According to Monique Marks, "… [these] were elements whose concerns was not solely the achievement of political justice. They were more interested in the personal gains they could make from joining political organizations."[1353] It is, however, important to note here that not all non-school going youth were 'com-tsotsis'. The latter were in minority and their objective was to cash in on the riots. Simon Mateza, a retired businessman, relates how his shop was constantly invaded by young people demanding goods or money long after the 11 February. This ended in a rather comical note when the young people and himself exchanged letters of demand. He explains

> I remember there was a time when I received a letter from a certain group, demanding some money from me. They told me to put R1000 in an envelope and to take it to … There is a school called Moepeng. They wanted me to leave it on the ground there. They didn't say who they were. They just gave the letter to a child who came to buy. They instructed her to pass it to me. And when I opened it, I realized it was a letter of demand. I then took it to the police. The police did not tell me to hand in the money, but only told me they would handle the matter. I then decided to reply to the letter and told them they should come out so it would be easy for me to deal with people that I know, because I cannot just give my money away to people that I didn't know. I took the letter to the place where they instructed me to leave some money. I left it on top of a rock. The following day they received my letter and replied again[1354]

By the end of the day on 11 February, a number of students and non-school going youth had been detained. *The Friend* reported that in the afternoon of that day police had already arrested 14 males and eight females, aged between 14 and 37 on charges of public violence.[1355] This number included some of the student leaders. George and Makau were detained on the same day. Makau recalls that he was detained at his home: "Remember I had attended a rally that Sunday. So, I was very tired and decided to go and sleep only to find that the police were waiting for me at home. Yes, they were waiting at the back opposite as I entered through the front door. That

[1351] Interview with Sebetoane
[1352] Interview with Masizane
[1353] Marks, *Young Warriors,* p.52
[1354] Interview with Simon Mateza, Phomolong, Maokeng, 8 July 2008
[1355] *The Friend, 12 February 1985*

was my first 14 days detention."[1356] Mohapi, managed to evade the police for a few days, but ran out of luck and was finally arrested. He remembers

> When we started fighting the police other students were taking other roads, going to disrupt at Kananelo. And that's how the whole thing started. And a couple of police houses were burned and shops were looted. It was havoc that lasted for a couple of days. Then, I remember, I was one of the people to be arrested - two nights later I got arrested. What happened … I decided to go and stay at home. So I got arrested about, I think, three days later or so … charged with public violence. So, that was my first encounter with the police[1357]

Students responded by boycotting classes and organized a march to the magistrate's court to demand the release of Thulo Makgoka and others. Masizane recalls that the idea of the march came from some of the 'progressive' teachers at Bodibeng. He explains

> We never attended classes. There were other students like the late comrade Thulo. They were arrested and other guys were also arrested. We couldn't just make a decision of going back to classes. Our demand: we were now planning for a march that we were going to court on that particular court date of theirs, to demand the release of those comrades. The likes of Mr. Ntombela would, maybe, call one guy and ask if we talked about certain issues, you know. Then they would inform the students that we were supposed to talk about those issues. Even the idea of the march to demand the release of our comrades was from these teachers. I don't remember the date of our march. All the guys from the other schools came and we started at Bodibeng … and went via Marabastad. And we joined the main road and went down. Before the end of Marabastad there was this blockade, casspirs (police vehicles) of the boers, soldiers and policemen[1358]

In order to curtail the interference by 'com-tsotsis', Masizane recalls that student leaders had emphasized to all the students that no one would be allowed to participate in the march if they were not wearing their school uniform. He continues

> And we even stressed it. There was not even a single guy who would be allowed

[1356] Interview with Makau; on the 10th of February 1985 Makau and other comrades from Maokeng had attended the UDF rally at the Jabaluni Amphitheatre, in Soweto, to celebrate Archbishop Desmond Tutu's winning of the Nobel Peace Prize. In the same rally Zindzi Mandela read a message from her father, Nelson Mandela, who was in prison, declining then President P.W. Botha's conditional release.
[1357] Interview with Mohapi
[1358] Interview with Masizane

> to march without their white shirts on; that all of us must put on their uniform. We went to demand the release of Thulo and others. We marched. When we arrived there … here were the *police* demanding to see a student leader to come forward to address them. There was a certain lady called Mama Seheri. She marched forward. Mama Seheri, Tabs Motlogelwa, George and others. Other leaders were acting as marshals, you see. They went to address those people (police) and told them that we were going to court. And they told us that our march was illegal, and that they will give us five minutes to disperse[1359]

Nthabiseng "Mama" Seheri concurs with Masizane, but remembers certain details differently. She explains – at length

Thulo Mokgoka was … arrested. We stayed at home, without attending school. February passed. But we started attending in March. In March we stopped going to school again. … During that time we had elected the SRC. We used to have meetings on Wednesdays. We pointed out that "We were attending school even though there won't be any lessons. What about those who got arrested because of what we did together?" They (students) asked what should be done so that they could be released? We told them that all the students should meet, including students from Kananelo. We agreed to set up a date to meet. Six students were detained. But only Thulo remained in custody, because the magistrate said he was stubborn and he talked too much**.** We had to organize a march so that Thulo could be released.

Seheri claims that some of the students from Bodibeng went to see the magistrate (she could not remember the name of the magistrate) to demand the release of Thulo Makgoka. But the magistrate ordered them to draft a petition, with more than five thousand signatures from both students and non-students. "Any person in town could sign", she contends.[1360] However, none of the other former students at Bodibeng who were interviewed for this thesis remembered being instructed to petition the magistrate for the release of Makgoka. And there is no evidence that students attempted to collect the five thousand signatures. It is possible that the idea of a petition was raised by students themselves in one of their many meetings before the actual march to demonstrate to the authorities in the Justice department the massive support for Makgoka's release.[1361] They may have copied the idea from the UDF's 1984 million signatures campaign against the introduction of the tri-cameral parliamentary system and support for the UDF.[1362]

[1359] Ibid.
[1360] Interview with Seheri
[1361] On the 17th February 1985 students at Bodibeng had planned a meeting to discuss their demand for the withdrawal of police from the township as a condition of returning to school. See *Sunday Mirror, 17 February 1985*
[1362] Seekings *The UDF,* p.100

Although the UDF was unable to collect million signatures, the campaign helped to popularize it within the black residential areas.

Seheri recalls that the students held a meeting on Wednesday after school where she was chosen, together with someone, to go and inform students at Kananelo to come to Bodibeng the following day at seven in the morning. We inform[ed] them: "you should know that we would be marching from Bodibeng to the magistrate's offices to hand over a petition. I don't remember the date. On Thursday we went to Bodibeng with our books. We waited for students from Kananelo and they did come. We addressed them. We said "For us not to cause violence, we are going to walk nicely out of the township and there were students we had chosen to be marshals in order to prevent people from the township from joining us. It was myself and Sonnyboy Maloka who would be able tell the police the reasons for our march so that they could not shoot at us? I volunteered. I would go and explain to them".[1363]

Despite the peaceful march arranged by the students, the police declared it illegal and ordered the students to disperse. Seheri adds

We marched along, holding each other's hands. And the SRC was walking in front. We marched until where Sasko (Bakeries) is. In front of Traido we saw the police. We didn't know how they had found out. They had already blocked the subway. It was black and white police officials. As we got closer to the police, we told the students "Comrades, you know that we don't want to cause any violence and we need to do everything in order".[1364] Myself and Sonnyboy approached them. They asked for our names. I told them my name and they also asked for Maloka's name. They asked us if we were the leaders. They wanted us to tell them that we were the leaders, but we did not. We told them that we were students. Therefore, we were elected to represent all the students because we cannot all speak [at the same time]. They asked us what we wanted. We told them that we were taking the petition to court, the magistrate ordered us to draft a petition and here it was. We showed it to them and told them that we were not fighting: "We only want this person to be released and come back to school, so that schooling could resume".[1365] They told us that they shall take the petition. So we must ask the students to go back to school and they would bring the magistrate's reply. It was *ntate* Manyatso - but he is late now. They were in front. And *ntate* Nthako Maponyane.[1366]

[1363] Interview with Seheri
[1364] Ibid.
[1365] Interview with Seheri
[1366] Ibid.

As expected the police did not keep their promise. Instead, not long after the dispersed march they invaded Bodibeng High and beat everyone in the school and threatened to arrest some of the students. Seheri remembers

> The Standards 9 and 10 classes were situated on the top floor. We heard doors of cars opening down there and the police came out wearing helmets to beat us up. We tried to run away. Because they were coming up the stairs, we had no chance but to run back into our classes. In the presence of teachers, we were beaten by the police[1367]

Matli remembers this incident differently. According to him

> I am not sure when, but it was in March. But I remember clearly it was on Tuesday. Police came and *sjambokked* us. What happened on that day? Teachers were not there. But some comrades had information that something was going to happen. 'Then comrades [said] let's leave'. As we *left* we were in this soccer field at Bodibeng, behind the main block. There was a white … No, a blue Ford Sierra standing somewhere next to Phuleng Primary. It had closed us in. And make no mistake we wanted to leave but that police officer had a gun in his hand. It means he had drawn the line. Nobody was going to pass. As we were standing there, hardly forty five minutes, there came in cars – police Jeppes, *tjha, tjha, tjha* (sound of screeching wheels). They came in Mellow-Yellows (police casspirs). Ah, we were *sjambokked*[1368]

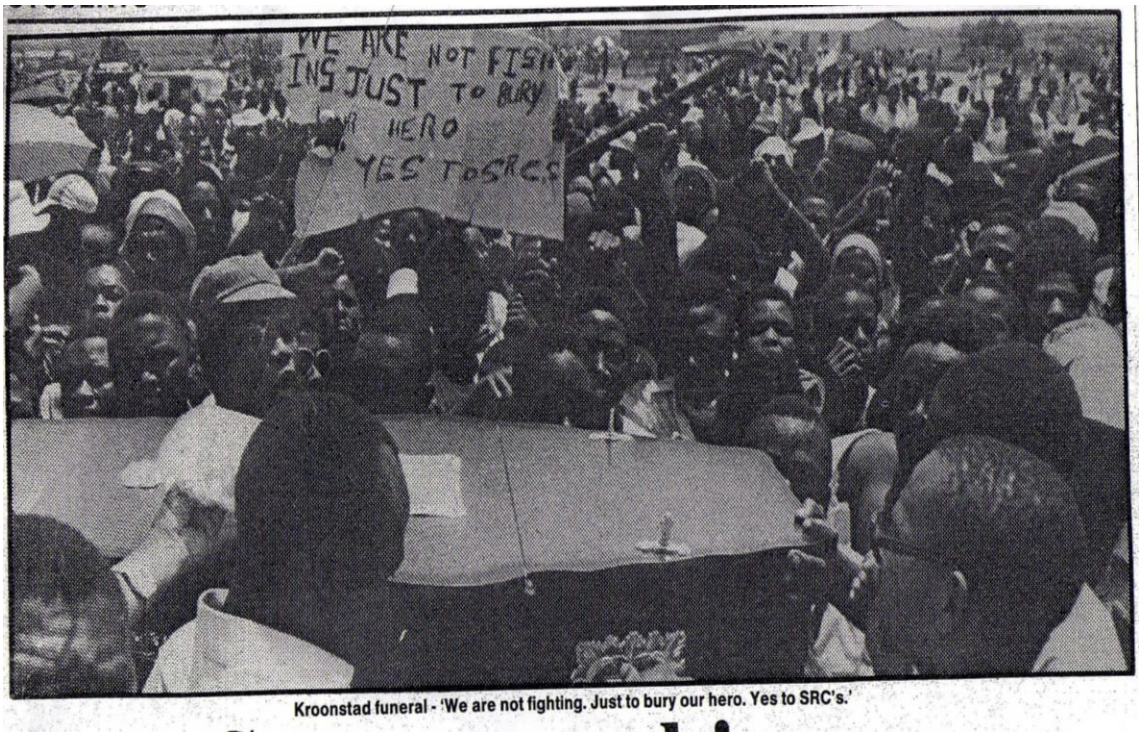
To root-out student leaders, police invaded Bodibeng High School to arrest them. Mohapi recalls that the police came into his classroom with the intention of arresting him. But his quick thinking saved him. He explains

> I was sitting in the classroom. Tommy was there and Moses Masizane. Bodibeng was surrounded by police and they walked straight into my class and I thought [Jacob] Ramotsoela had called them … because he had a two-way radio. Fortunately, it was only white police officers who didn't know me. The ones who knew me were standing outside, and those who knew Tommy and Moses. My classmate was Tommy. And they said "Frank Mohapi, *staan op* (Stand up). Tommy Makau *staan op.* In front of me there was one girl whose father was a police officer and I said [to her] "You turn your head,

[1367] Ibid.
[1368] Interview with Matli (Italics my emphasis)

> I'm gonna strangle you". And I responded and said *Frank is nie hierso nie. Frank het weg gehardloop* (Frank is not here. He ran away)[1369]

Police harassment and funerals of victims of police brutality mobilized the residents of Maokeng, particularly the youth. According to Chabasiele Makume, who became active in student politics from 1985, "We attended the night vigils and that's where we were told about a lot of things".[1370] For example, Bloem, in his mitigation statement at the Delmas Treason Trial, wrote "The funeral of Matete Matches on the 18th of February was attended by 20 000 people."[1371] In the absence of normal schooling, some of the students became engrossed in reading political materials and debating political issues to expand their political knowledge.



Kroonstad funeral - 'We are not fighting. Just to bury our hero. Yes to SRC's.'

'Comrades' carrying Matete Machese's coffin (Source: *SASPU National, Vol.4, 1985*

[1369] Interview with Mohapi; Jacob Ramotsoela was the acting-principal during this police raid. Mohapi suspected Ramotsoela to have called the police because he had a walki-talki (two-way radio). Civilians owning or using walki-talkies in the mid-1980s were perceived as informers. See, Carter, 'Comrades and Community', p. 240
[1370] Interview with Chabasiele Makume, Seeisoville, Maokeng, 29 June 2010
[1371] UWL HLP AK2117/S6.16 'Delmas Treason Trial: Statement by Dennis Bloem'

'Each One Teach One'

In the course of the demonstrations, protest marches and police harassment, students, particularly members of COSAS, began to engage with political literature to develop their political awareness. They read banned materials and discussed them. Matli recalls

> We were never taught seriously then. I think we only went to school most[ly] when we were writing exams. There were some teachers who wanted to teach us, but one of the key issues was that it was when we were studying politics – very seriously. Vandalizing of property was over. We were learning politics. We were then arguing politics[1372]

This had become a common practice within COSAS. Reading and engaging in socio-economic and political, and even cultural debates was encouraged. Carter's study illustrates this trend. He notes that the 'Mdakane' and 'Freedom Charter' camps, largely made up of members of the Alexandra Student Congress (ASCO) held Sunday workshops "at which one member of the group would present a topic or paper, and this would be followed by general discussion".[1373]

Matli admits that before this he (and probably many of his comrades as well) had a rudimentary understanding of politics. He observes

> One had this basic understanding of politics that whites [were] enemies. Whites [were] oppressing us. That's why we don't have better education. By then I never had something tangible. Somebody was feeding me the information. But after the 11th [February] I wanted to learn those things. Why do you say we are being given inferior education? Politics were beginning to filter into us. That is when we were able to identify (distinguish) between the ANC, BCM and AZAPO[1374]

Echoing Matli, Masizane recalls that he was made to develop a better understanding of politics by the activists from Welkom. In his words

> We never attended classes. There were other students, like the late comrade Thulo, they were arrested … We couldn't just make a decision of going back to classes. We had joined with other groups from outside. There was a house … called Ha MaModikoe. There was a certain guy from Welkom called Brand, who was related to those people. The comrades were housed there. During the meetings we were conscientised by them.

[1372] Interview with Matli
[1373] Carter 'Comrades and Community', p.216
[1374] Interview with Matli

> We would talk politics. That's when all these political things became clearer to our minds and we started understanding … Because at the time we had been thinking PAC and AZAPO was one thing, because they were talking about our mother country, *AZANIA*. And the the ANC [was] the umbrella body of all these organizations. That was our thinking then. … These people were explaining the formation of the ANC, the eventual PAC split, you see. The era of the silence after the Rivonia Trial of comrade Nelson Mandela and them; the era of Steve Biko's - the 1968 era. We saw that picture and realized that that's how those things were working. I was lucky to have an understanding of those politics[1375]

Members of COSAS were not aware where the political materials came from. When they received the materials they read them as quickly as possible and passed them on to the other members. Matli adds

> I'm not sure where we got the materials.[1376] But we were getting materials. You read. You take it and give it to another person. Because we were supposed to make sure that the police didn't get you with that material, you were reading it as quickly as possible and "dish" it out. It was on rare occasion when we were reading in a group. The only thing was that when we met we were debating and then, maybe, explaining to say 'comrade, what do they mean by this particular concept?' We read *Mayibuye*, *New Nation.* I forgot some of them. Black Theology written by Desmond Tutu and Allan Boesak[1377]

Some of the members of COSAS became so engrossed in reading and engaging the political materials, that they became less vigilant. This was evident when Mamokhele Sebetoane was arrested and the police confiscated some of her materials – although these were not banned. In August 1985 the following were taken from Sebetoane:

1 x File (these were probably notes) titled 'Bodibeng Student Rep' Council
1 x File titled 'Hand grenade stick'
1 x Learn and Teach, No. 2, 1985
1 x Speak, Vol.3, No.1, March 1985
1 x File titled 'May day in South Africa'
2 x Files titled 'Meeting at Bodibeng, 1985 May 22[1378]

[1375] Interview with Masizane
[1376] It was different to the situation in other townships where members of COSAS received political materials direct from the ANC in exile. Mpetsi Morake, a member of COSAS in Bloemfontein, claimed that he was responsible for collecting political materials from the ANC in Lesotho. See Twala and Seekings 'Activist networks', p.778
[1377] Ibid.
[1378] UWL HLP CA27 'Delmas Trial: Evidence'

The police also confiscated Sebetoane's handwritten notes, where she was complaining about the South African government's use of force against the neighbouring states and blaming the Ronald Reagan government for not doing anything to stop it.[1379] Furthermore, she accused [Mangosuthu] Buthelezi of working hand-in-hand with the *boer* government. She wrote "Every time a member of any organization is taken by police (I've experienced this) for questioning, they will try to convince him that Inkatha or Buthelezi is our real leader. Why only him?" In conclusion, she declared "My leader is [Nelson] Mandela. My defence force is Umkhonto we Sizwe. My school is COSAS. And my teacher is UDF".[1380]

From Sebotoane's notes it is clear that students in Maokeng, although at the time there were no formal UDF structures and there was an absence of MK's sabotage acts in the area as was the case in other places, students were however aware of the existence and roles of the UDF and MK.

As the students' resistance heightened country-wide, the state responded by banning COSAS on 28 August 1985. Students countered by renaming their organizations. For example, in Alexandra Township COSAS was re-launched as Alexandra Student Congress (ASCO).[1381] In Maokeng it was renamed Maokeng Students Congress (MASCO).[1382] MASCO does not seem to have existed except in name. There is no evidence to suggest that MASCO embarked in any campaign during this period. This was because student activists, particularly the leaders, were in and out of detention after the state declared the partial State of Emergency on 21 August 1985. Although Maokeng was not on the list of the affected 36 magisterial districts, a number of political activists in the township were detained after they had organized a consumer boycott (see below).

From educational issues to fighting apartheid

It was during this period that political resistance in Maokeng shifted from educational matters and encompassed national politics. Students, who had by now reconstituted themselves, *inter alia*, as the defenders of the community and disciplinarians, especially against the *tsotsis*,

[1379] It is possible that Sebetoane was referring to the raids conducted by the SADF at Matola, Mozambique, in 1981; Maseru, Lesotho, in 1982; and at Gaborone, in Botswana, in 1985. In all these raids the SADF attacked the ANC's bases in these countries. For an account on the Matola raid, see Manghezi, N. *The Maputo Connection: ANC life in the world of FRELIMO* (Auckland Park, Johannesburg, Jacana Media, 2009, Chapter Seven; Naidoo, P. *Le Rona Re Batho: An account of the 1982 Maseru massacre* (Verulam, South Africa, 1992); and Gaborone's raid, *Daily News, Gaborone, 21 June 1985*

[1380] Ibid.; Marks, in her study, demonstrates the rigorous political education and training taking place within the youth movements. See Marks *Young Warriors,* p.56; also see Carter 'Comrades', pp.125-28

[1381] Carter, 'Comrades and Community', p.120

[1382] Interview with Mohapi; some people refer to MSC as Maokeng Student Organisation (MASO). See interview with Makau and the Nhlapo's evidence in the Delmas Treason Trial

actively led the resistance. Political commentators have labeled these 'comrades'. However, 'comrades' have been defined in two different ways by various commentators. Ari Sitas notes "Sociologists have largely discussed 'comrades' (or *amaqabane*) within the parameters of two broad indicators: black youth unemployment and 'anomic' behavior".[1383] This view is grounded on the belief that 'comrades' were nothing but troublemakers. Seekings argues that this was one widespread stereotype view of the [politically-active] youth, who were portrayed as rebels against political and social order. He writes that these youth were seen as apocalyptic, associated with violence and destruction.[1384] He also notes though that there was also the liberatory view, which perceived the youth as 'young lions', who were associated with 'struggle for justice and liberation'.[1385]

In Maokeng, just like in other townships, two kinds of 'comrades' also existed: defenders of the "community" and the *com-tsotsis* (or those who became involved in the struggle for personal gain). This thesis will, however, focus on the role played by former. As the defenders of the "community", 'comrades' were also perceived (and they also saw themselves in the same way) as 'disciplinarians'. They punished anyone who misbehaved or inflicted pain on others, especially members of the community. Matli remembers that in the mid-1980s the 'comrades' in Maokeng were revered even by the criminal elements. He explains

> Eh, you see, people were afraid to fight the … the comrades because we were very brutal. We would engage you. If you wanted to do it physically, we'd do it better. Because then in 1985, '86, we would *sjambok* you. If you have raped, if you have pick-pocketed somebody, we would deal with you. So, *tsotsis* would know that there was this element of comrades. And they were respecting us[1386]

Similarly, Monique Marks' study on the youth politics in Diepkloof, Soweto, demonstrates that the 'comrades' fought gangsters who attacked students. She writes "youth leaders felt the need to protect the Diepkloof school students and to put an end to the Kabasa [gang] phenomenon".[1387] But the 'comrades' did not mete out punishment indiscriminately. They made efforts to investigate whether the complainant was telling the truth or not. As a result members of the community preferred to take their cases to them and to the police. Matli adds

> Some people would go to the police. But because … of the long process they would immediately go to the comrades and we would deal with that particular person. [Did

[1383] Sitas, A. 'The Making of the 'Comrades' Movement in Natal, 1985-91', in *Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol.18, No.3, September 1992,* p.629
[1384] Seekings, J. *Heroes or Villains?: Youth Politics in the 1980s* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1993), pp.2-3
[1385] Ibid., p.4
[1386] Interview with Matli
[1387] Marks *Young Warriors,* p.44

> you try to find out the truth behind the allegations?] Normally we did. To some extent we were fair … because we would say, "Hey chief, did you try to rape this woman?" And he would say, "No chief. I was sitting here and she was naked". "But chief, did you try to rape her?" During that process of answering it would become very apparent that you were lying. Or the … the victim. Ja, we would find that that was not the truth. Maybe if few people and the kids were saying that this man has been drinking. He entered that house definitely, but he never took more that five minutes. Then we would say, "*Haai (*There's no way that this person did this)[1388]

In addition to defending the "community", the 'comrades' also engaged the apartheid system directly. At the height of student revolt in Maokeng, some of the student leaders were no longer attending school but involved in acts of violence inside the township and in other areas. The protests which started with students' grievances had now developed and were directed at dismantling the apartheid system. And where better to start than attacking the state's first line of defence? Police in the townships. Mohapi recalls that they were now operating in cells, attacking houses belonging to police. In his words

> We operated only at night with different cells. We divided ourselves into different cells. But the attacks didn't stop. So you have a situation where… *it was a* blanket attack on police. Where a situation was that "Okay, guys listen, this was what was
>
> going to happen. During the day everything gets normal. At night we had cells of about ten people. At least each cell can burn. If it goes and burn five houses, you go and sleep. That's fine"[1389]

Masizane concurs

> So, some of us we ran away. We were still around the township, but would only be seen during the night. We continued burning [houses]. This house that I'm staying in today, it was burned to ashes. *It was ntate* Msimang's house. Mr. Msimang was a police Captain[1390]

It is not clear where the idea of attacking and burning houses of the police in Maokeng emanated from. But what it apparent is that at this stage this had become a common practise in a number of townships across the country. In 1986 in Alexandra Township houses of members of the South

[1388] Interview with Matli
[1389] Interview with Mohapi (Italics my emphasis)
[1390] Interview with Masizane

African Police (SAP) and municipal police were attacked and burned.[1391] In the midst of all of this, some of the students from Bodibeng took the struggle to other areas. Masizane played a key role in such missions. He remembers

> I was involved in bombings in Viljoenskroon. And here in Kroonstad we blew up a house belonging to a certain policeman. Do you know these dynamites used at the mines? We got them from the NUM (National Union of Mine Workers) comrades, who worked at Orkney. And these things were not just supplied to any-one. I was identified as one of those people who were brave enough to do the job. So it happened that one day while we were in Viljoenskroon I saw a box of those dynamites, then comrade Thabo Mthimkhulu and other guys from Klerksdorp infor-med me that they brought the stuff. Then we went and tested one of them. We blew up a certain house belonging to a certain person in Viljoenskroon[1392]

Ditseki Moeketsi recalls that even homeland leaders' properties were attacked and vandalized. In his words: "I was accused of burning Mampoi [Mopeli's] house, from Qwaqwa? She had a type of an embassy house here, which we petrol bombed. We called it Mampoi's house. So we set it alight".[1393]

Additionally, some of the student leaders became involved in trade unionism. Sebetoane was such a leader and she explains

> You know we ended up helping in organizing for trade unions, because they were really not alive by then … because people were afraid, assuming that they would lose their jobs. After the riots I went for training by Black Sash. [I trained] for advanced office work. And when I came back I met trade union people. We were brave. I remember we even recruited domestic workers[1394]

It was in the mid-1980s when trade unions began to be formed in Kroonstad.[1395] Ishmael "Satch" Sefatole, who was born in 1958 in Maokeng, was one of the people who were sent back inside the country by the leadership of Umkhonto we Sizwe to mobilize workers and form trade

[1391] Carter, 'Comrades and Community', pp.148-50
[1392] Ibid.
[1393] Interview with Moeketsi
[1394] Interview with Sebetoane
[1395] In 1977 the Wiehahn Commission, investigating labour issues in South Africa, recommended, *inter alia,* that trade unions for blacks should be permitted to function legally. See Liebenberg, I. and Lortan, F. 'The role of the labour movement in the struggle for liberation', in Ian Liebenberg et al. (eds.) *The Long March: The story of the struggle for liberation in South Africa* (Pretoria, HAUM, 1994)

unions.[1396] Sefatole, after undergoing a brief military training in Mozambique in 1981, returned to Kroonstad to carry out this mission. He explains

> I was not in exile for long in Lesotho, because I then had to go for training. Chris [Hani] and … (pauses) Thenjiwe [Mtintso] came there and told us that they would take certain people to a particular [camp]. They sent us to Mozambique for training. They sent us back to Lesotho after six months after we had completed. It was in '81 when we arrived there. It was 'November '81. Chris had already selected people who would go to the army. He told us that we were young and could still help us by going back into the country: "You are going to organize the [trade] unions. You are going to organize the workers, to join the unions". He chose us because we were about 25 or 30 [years of age]. … Chris had already organized transport and how we were going to leave the country. And we returned to recruit workers to join the unions. That was when I arrived in '83[1397]

Sefatole remembers that it took a while before the African workers in Kroonstad could accept trade unions. For him, this was because they were afraid of loosing their employment. He explains:

When we returned I had to look for a job. A friend helped him find work in a flour factory. After working there for a while, he contacted the Food and Allied Workers' Union (FAWU) in Johannesburg to help him organize workers in Kroonstad. This does not seem to have yielded any results. But seemingly these officials advised him to apply for a vacant security post in that company, which would enable him to have easy access to the workers. He did that and was successful. He recalls: "I thought it would be best if I applied for the vacant post of a security guard - same company, because it [the security work station] was on a central place. I thought that I would call all the people going to the taps and so forth to recruit them. It was 50c to join at the time". After a three-week training course in Klerksdorp he returned to work. His initial attempts to recruit workers were unsuccessful. "Then I spoke to them [the trade union officials] and told them to give me forms and I started organizing. [How did the workers respond?] They were negative and were scared to join. They would say they don't know what unions are, because they only see them in Gauteng."

Because of the riots taking place in the township, workers residing in the township reported late to work, including Sefatole. He was summarily dismissed. It was at this stage that he contacted

[1396] Sefatole fled the country from Vanderbijlpark, in the Vaal Triangle, in 1979 and, first, went to Botswana, then Lesotho. Interview with Ishmael "Satch" Sefatole by Tshepo Moloi, for the 'Local Histories and Present Realities' Programme, Kroonstad, 9 July 2008

[1397] Ibid.; In their book, Thula Bopela and Daluxolo Luthuli describes Chris Hani's role while in exile in Lesotho. See Bopela, T. and Luthuli, D. *Umkhonto we Sizwe: Fighting for a divided people* (Alberton, Galago Books, 2005), p.189

the FAWU office in Johannesburg and coincidentally he spoke to Jan Theron, who was visiting the office from Cape Town. After explaining the situation to Theron, the latter came to Kroonstad to assess the situation. Sefatole recalls

> Then there was a crisis that took place in Kroonstad and people were not able to report for work and so forth. I was also one of them. And as a security [guard] I was supposed to report at 06h00 but got there at 09h00. The white foreman fired me when I arrived. I … called the Jo'burg region. Luckily, I found the General Secretary, Mr Jan Theron … who was based in the Cape but only came to help out. Jan Theron went to my work place around 13h00 and enquired about my whereabouts. One of the workers volunteered to bring him over to my place in the location. I just saw him coming in with Kleinboy Mokoena in the car. He told me to get in the car and we left. He told me to ask my manager if I was really fired and they will phone him as I am talking to him. There was a call as I was talking and Jan Theron spoke to the manager. He told the manager that he would like to know why I was fired because he was my lawyer. The manager denied everything … He called the foreman, who only spoke Afrikaans, and told me to go back to work.[1398]

This incident boosted the confidence of the African workers in Kroonstad. It was not long before they wanted to join the union. Sefatole explains

> They came in their multitudes, because they wanted to join Satch's union. But I told them to come one-by-one to me. I only made them fill in the forms … We launched at the Trinity Church

After launching FAWU, Sefatole and other office bearers of FAWU went on a recruitment drive. They targeted all the companies where African workers were dismissed without a hearing. Premier Milling Company was the first of such companies. Sefatole remembers

> It was Premier Milling. Two comrades were fired and there was a strike. They were accused of having stolen. But they denied this. I solved this case … We won it. I gave them recruitment forms. They recruited others and also launched. We went to the sweets factory, which was called Panorama. They had fired an employee who had worked for the

[1398] Jan Theron, who had been radicalized in 1968 while a student at the University of Cape Town during the Archie Mafeje Affair, was elected to the position of General Secretary of the Food and Canning Workers Union in the late 1970s. Hamson, D., Legassick, M. and Ulrich, N. 'White Activists and the Revival of the Workers' Movement, in SADET *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol.2, 1970-1980* (Pretoria, Unisa Press, 2006), p286; On 1 December 1986 FAWU was launched from the merger of the FCWU, SFAWU (Sweets, Food and Allied Workers Union), RAWU (Retail and Allied Workers Union) and part of GAWU (General Allied Workers Union), Ndlovu, M.S. and Sithole, J. 'Trade union unity summits and the formation of COSATU, 1980-1990', in SADET *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* (Pretoria, Unisa Press, 2010), p.930

> factory for 19 years for allegedly stealing sweets. Okay, the union [members] called me. I told them not to go to work … I asked them to have a sit-down. They had a sit-down. We won the case and that comrade returned to work. That is when they just launched. We moved forward. We went to another one that was called Union Steam Bakery. Union Steam Bakery informed us that there was a worker who had smoked in the bakery, but right at the door. The manager came and swore at him and he also swore him back. They called me and I went to listen to the case. I told the manager that he must apologize to him because he was the initiator instead of him. They were both wrong. I told them to forgive each other. But it was only the black one who was willing to make peace. The white one wanted this guy to be fired. And I said 'never'. And we had to meet with management, while they were still on strike. I then met with their senior manager, Kraai, who then agreed that this worker should be reinstated. After this we gave them forms and launched them

FAWU also launched at Pioneer – the seed factory. Buoyed up by this series successes, Sefatole and the FAWU in Kroonstad decided to organize outside Kroonstad. Sefatole explains

> We went to Viljoenskroon. We organized there. We organized SASKO in Senekal. We came back to the SASKO in Kroonstad, organized it[1399]

After FAWU many more trade unions followed, including the South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU). In 1989 the latter embarked on strike action demanding recognition (see chapter six).

Realising that it was rapidly losing control of the state, the government declared the national state of emergency on 12 June 1986 - four days before the June 16 commemorations. In the early hours of the morning of the 12th police raided townships and detained political activists. Gerhart and Glaser point out "the best-known monitoring group estimated that 25 000 people were detained in the first twelve months of the emergency that began in June 1986 … and most detainees belonged to the ANC-aligned UDF or other political organizations or trade unions".[1400]

In Maokeng, as elsewhere in the country, political activists were detained *en masse.* And a number of them spent long-term spells in detention. George remembers that he was detained on 13 June 1986 and only to be released on 10 June the following year. To make matters worse, he was banned from Kroonstad for two years (although he defied the banning order and returned to Maokeng).[1401] And Mohapi spent 13 months in solitary confinement in Viljoenskroon Police

[1399] Interview with Ishmael "Satch" Sefatole (LHPR), Kroonstad, 9 July 2008
[1400] Gerhart and Glaser *From Protest,* p.32
[1401] Interview with George

Station.[1402] Similarly Bloem was detained and he (and his wife, Edith) spent a year in prison.[1403] Makau recalls that after detention he did not return to school.[1404] And Masizane, after managing to evade police for some time, finally handed himself over (because of pressure from the family) to the police on 22 August [1986] and was released the following year on 10 June.[1405]

Masizane's testimony about his detention reveals the unbearable impact police harassment had on many activists' families. To force Masizane to hand himself over, the police detained his mother. The family turned against Masizane and demanded that he give himself up. Masizane takes up the story

> One day that *boer* called Jappie Herbs slapped my mother and told her that if I'm not behind bars in two days' time, they would arrest her. After two days she was taken to the police station. I was aware that it was just a threat in order to get me to surrender. There was pressure from my father, worried about his wife. My siblings also were worried that their mother was being harassed because of me. And my then girlfriend wanted nothing to do with me. You know our family structure. For blacks it is not only your father and mother and your siblings, even the uncles. We call them family. There was pressure from that side, too. They blamed me that their sister was being harassed because of me. Even my granny suggested that I surrender to the *boers.* And I asked them what if they were going to kill me. They replied by saying "What if they kill my mother?" So, there was this thing that Billy Chabalala got a beating from the *boers* at the police station, and *ntate* [Lewele] Modisenyane … I had this fear that they were going to kill me, because here were people who were arrested just for their involvement in the struggle. What about me because they knew that I was involved in bombings in Viljoenskroon … And here in Kroonstad we blew up a house belonging to a certain policeman[1406]

Trade unions and trade unionists were not spared either. In Kroonstad, the South African Railway and Habours Workers' Union (SARHU), an affiliate of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU),[1407] offices were forced to close.[1408] In Pietermaritzburg, two officials of the Transport and General Workers' Union (T&GWU) were seriously injured after being

[1402] Interview with Mohapi
[1403] *The Star, 24 August 1989*
[1404] Interview with Makau
[1405] Interview with Masizane
[1406] Ibid.
[1407] COSATU was launched in December 1985
[1408] *New Nation, 14 to 20 May 1987*

attacked allegedly by members of the United Workers' Union of South Africa (UWUSA)-Inkatha backed union.[1409]

The detention *en masse* of the leadership had unintended consequences. It left leadership vacuum which was filled by young and inexperienced leaders, who engaged in ill-advised campaigns and encouraged students to disrespect the teachers. This caused generational tensions between the students and teachers.

Generational struggle and the decline of student politics in Maokeng

In the 1980s inter-generational struggle was mainly caused by the introduction of young people to politics. But most importantly it was because of the leadership role the younger generation assumed in the violent street battles between their communities and the security forces, and their role as enforcers of alternative structures of authority in the townships. In most cases the older generation took exception to this. It was for this reason that in some of the townships the older generation took up arms against the younger generation with the intention of "disciplining" them. For instance, Josette Cole, in her study of Crossroads in the Western Cape, points out that prior to the introduction of the Cape Youth Congress (CAYCO) in Old Crossroads young people in the area were under the strict control of the older generation. Young people were organised into choirs and sport clubs. In fact, Cole goes further to note that the Executive Committee under Johnson Ngxobongwana controlled youth organisations in Old Crossroads.[1410]

However, following the attempts to form a branch of CAYCO in Old Crossroads in 1985 by young people in the area sympathetic to CAYCO and the UDF, the situation changed. "Some of these youths", writes Cole "who by now were highly critical of the reformist nature of the Old Crossroads leadership, actively sought allies to topple the power base of the Executive Committee".[1411] It was at this stage that Ngxobongwana and some of the elderly members of the Executive Committee (known as the Witdoeke) mobilised against the youth, then labelled as the 'comrades'.[1412] Ngxobongwana's leadership worked closely with the Western Cape Administration Board and the security police to "… get rid of the 'comrades …".[1413] The struggle between the two came to be described as the "'fathers' of Crossroads against the comrades".[1414] According to Nicholas Haysom

> In Crossroads the resentment was also founded on the way the youth chose

[1409] Ibid.
[1410] Cole, J. *Crossroads: The Politics of Reform and Repression 1976-1986* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987), p.106
[1411] Cole *Crossroads*, p.108
[1412] Ibid., p.111
[1413] Ibid., pp.117-8
[1414] Ibid., pp.118-9

> to enforce discipline in the community – notably the 'people's courts' and the floggings administered there – as well as the enforcement of the consumer boycott of white shops. This included making returning residents eat their purchases including detergents, soap, raw meat, etc[1415]

In similar vein , in 1986 in Thabong Township, Welkom, older people turned against young people and forcefully drove pupils (or school-going students) back to school following a two-year spell of political mobilisation against the councillors and the Phakathis (a vigilante group). This mobilisation was led mainly by a branch of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS).[1416] Haysom writes "for the second half of 1985 Thabong was free of vigilante action, but fears of a revival were kindled in January1986 when sjambok-wielding parents and elders launched a violent attempt to get children back into school uniforms and behind their desks".[1417]

In other areas like Lingelihle, Cradock, inter-generational struggle was caused by the collapse of the long-established traditional institutions of controlling young people like social and cultural clubs initially founded by Canon James Arthur Calata. In the early 1980s this was exacerbated by the detention of leading political activists and the suppression of overt political mobilization in the township by police. Although there were incidents of ill-discipline displayed by young people, first, following the 1980 school boycott, when young people turned to crime, abused *marijuana* and disrespected the adult generation; and second when some of the young people in the township attacked Matthew Goniwe, an adult and leading political figure in the township, with rocks, rods and knives after he had sjambokked some of the ill-disciplined students for burning and looting the township's liquor outlet,[1418] unlike Thabong and Old Crossroads, the adult generation in Lingelihle did not organize itself into a vigilante group against the younger generation.[1419] Instead, in order to bring young people under the control of adults once again in 1983 Goniwe and Fort Calata formed the Cradock Youth Association (CRADOYA) to mobilize young people. Initially CRADOYA's aims were apolitical, and its executive included elders such as the Reverend Phezi and Goniwe.[1420]

Not long after its launch, local grievances such as rent issues forced CRADOYA to become involved in politics. Tetelman notes "by the end of 1983 the youth association had dropped its apolitical façade".[1421] CRADOYA's involvement in protest against the increased rent caused some of its executive members to be detained, particularly Goniwe and Fort Calata. As a result,

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[1415] *Mabangalala: The Rise of Right-wing Vigilantes in South Africa – Occasional Paper No.10* (Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand, Centre for Applied Legal Studies, 1986), p.104
[1416] Ibid., pp.18-9
[1417] Ibid., p.23
[1418] Tetelman 'We Can', p.206
[1419] See Lekgoathi 'The UDF in the Vaal', pp.602-3
[1420] Tetelman 'We Can', p.175
[1421] Ibid., p.182

some of the young people associated with CRADOYA became uncontrollable once again.[1422] On the one hand, they attacked the local councillors and forced them to resign, on the other they also turned against adults in the community they perceived as collaborators. Some of these included older church women and other elderly members of the community.[1423] The adults complained bitterly that "the cycle of resistance and repression exacerbated youthful crime and violence".[1424] The situation was remedied by Goniwe – following his release. Younger residents formed their own street committees as well.[1425] Order was once again restored in Lingelihle, and political mobilization revived.

The mediating role played by experienced political activists such as Goniwe helped the community of Lingelihle evade the possibility of an outbreak of inter-generational conflict. In Kagiso Township, conversely, a similar role was assumed by an adult-led civic organization, with the assistance of the South African Communist Party (SACP). Lekgoathi, in his chapter on political resistance in the Vaal Triangle and the West Rand, demonstrates that even though inter-generational tensions developed in Kagiso following the abuse of power by young people who were running some of the 'people's courts' in the township, open disputes were intelligently managed by members of Krugersdorp Residents Organisation (KRO), who, with the help of the SACP, established the Community Dispute Resolution Trust (CDRT). The latter was aimed at training community members to understand the intricacies and mechanisms of administering justice in the form of dispute resolution.[1426]

In Maokeng, in contrast, as will be shown below, inter-generational struggle was not between the younger generation and the older generation in the broader township. The struggle that emerged was between school-going students and the teachers in schools. This was evident when students disrespected and clashed, sometimes physically, with their teachers, and smoked *marijuana* openly, and refused to be punished. Some of the student leaders attempted to resolve this problem, but their efforts were thwarted by constant police harassment and detentions. In Maokeng, just as in Lingelihle, the tension between the older generation and younger generation did not cause an organised backlash by the former. But it caused irreparable damage to normal schooling in the township.

Following the detention of student leaders, a new group of less-politically experienced students likewise assumed the leadership role. However, there was no proper co-ordination and everyone seems to have operated as they wished. Makume, one of the students who took over the leadership reigns, recalls

[1422] Ibid., p.188
[1423] Ibid., p.195
[1424] Ibid.
[1425] Ibid., p.197
[1426] Lekgoathi 'The United Democratic Front', pp.602-3

> It was not a question of assuming leadership. During the State of Emergency there was no opportunity to go to, say launch a branch or you were going to elect someone. It was just a task team. All of us decided that we were a task team since we were all involved. We were members of COSAS and we were committed to the struggle. All of us were responsible. And all of us took the initiative. All of us took the leadership role. All of us were mobilising. All of us had to make sure that every campaign that we came up with was successful, the main one was the release of all the detainees. Another one was for free education[1427]

It was not long before the leadership started disrupting classes and calling for class boycotts. Makume continues

> In the morning when students gathered for the assembly we would sing freedom songs, *Siyaya ePitoli* (We are marching to Pretoria). Others were *Come Guerella, Toyi-toyi*. Or we would gather at short-break and decide that we would disrupt classes and no student would go back to class. There was this thing that every morning when we started singing inside the school's premises the police would come and other students would get scared and would go back to classes. So we would wait until short-break. We would go behind the toilets and decide that we would start disrupting classes[1428]

Masizane believes the detentions and police harassment denied students its leadership and this had serious consequences for mobilization – and most importantly caused generational tensions. The 'rank and file' students, he argues, lost confidence in their leaders and they took matters into their own hands. They began to misbehave and do as they pleased. He observes

> You'd find that now others [students] were uncontrollable and didn't want to co-operate. And would just fight, you see, with teachers for no apparent reason. Others would come and smoke *dagga* publicly. Others would come to school and go out on drinking spree. There was a "watering hole" there. On Mondays students would flock there. That shebeen was owned by a certain woman called Mankhi[1429]

[1427] Interview with Makume. In fact, in 1986 COSAS had long been banned but the name was changed to Maokeng Student Congress (MSC or MSCO).
[1428] Ibid. Khotso Sesele's testimony also reveals the innovative methods students used to disrupt learning and teaching at Bodibeng. See interview with Sesele
[1429] Interview with Masizane; In the first week of May 1986, students at Bodibeng failed to report to school, claiming that they were preparing for a funeral which was to take place on 13 May 1986. See Bodibeng High School Logbook, May 1986

At this stage abnormal schooling became a common practice. For example, from 23 May to 6 June 1986, the principal of the school noted that "practically no teaching took place. Very few pupils (or students), about 20% reported and left at about 09h30".[1430]

Barbara Mazibuko, who started teaching at Bodibeng in 1987, like Masizane remembers students smoking *dagga.* She remarks

> When I started teaching that's when I started seeing boys smoking *dagga.* It was just those who complained and left the classroom and went outside of the class. And also that thing of going home after break, without permission was now a common practice. I don't remember any problems we encountered with girls. The only problem with girls was pregnancy. It was a major problem[1431]

Mazibuko concurs with Masizane

> … Something happened at some point. One of the teachers at that school fought with a student. He was beating a student. But they were fighting each other literally[1432]

The situation deteriorated to the point where teachers had to carry guns to schools to protect themselves. For example, in 1992, although outside the scope of this chapter, Mr Clayton Ntloko was forced to draw his gun when a student, Petrus Ntema, attacked him with a knife.[1433] The DET blamed students from outside Kroonstad for the ill-discipline displayed by students and lack of normal schooling at Bodibeng. The circuit inspector, Mr P.K. Moloi, forbade the school from admitting students from outside Kroonstad. During his visit to the school, he warned the staff and principal "under no circumstances should pupils from outside be admitted in the school. Only bona fide children of Kroonstad get preference".[1434]

The school's logbook for 1987 is full of entries of complaints of students threatening to physically assault their teachers.[1435]In March of the same year, Makhetha, a student at Bodibeng, stabbed the deputy principal with a knife, because he did not want to accept corporal punishment.[1436] Realizing that the situation was getting out of control, the staff at Bodibeng turned to the parents. A meeting as held between the teachers and parents, where a committee

[1430] Bodibeng High School Logbook, May 1986
[1431] Interview with Barbara Mazibuko, Kroonstad, 31 October 2008
[1432] Ibid.
[1433] Bodibeng High School Logbook, 10 June 1992
[1434] Bodibeng High School Logbook, 19 January 1987
[1435] Bodibeng High School Logbook, 13 February 1987
[1436] Bodibeng High School Logbook, 3 March 1987

was elected to help the teachers run the school effectively.[1437] Amongst the resolution adopted in that meeting was that corporal punishment should be applied to pupils as a measure to correct pupils' behavior and that the parents would assist in monitoring attendance and payment of school fees, and that expectant girls should be suspended from attending school.[1438]

Furthermore parents embarked on a 'back to school' campaign. Lebone Holomo, former member of the Justice Office of the Catholic Church and secretary of the Ministers' Fraternity in Maokeng, remembers that they organized the 'Back to School Campaign'. He recalls

> … That's how we got to that [Maokeng] stadium. We would have an interim committee with the principals' association, teachers' association, parents' association, and school committees, to say as parents we have to take responsibility. You have to talk to these kids: back to school. I remember one day as I was getting out of my car one child shouted and said "There's *ntate* back to school campaign!" People like Modisenyane were pushing the back to school campaign. Everybody [attended]. They [students] were singing revolutionary songs. And Terror [Lekota] was there as somebody to say "Look, when you say 'Liberation First [and Education Later]', we who were on Robben Island, arrested for this liberation, we were at school there. We were educating each other. And you are fortunate because you have a desk, a pen and a paper. Unlike us we didn't have desks". Then they [students] shouted back "Go back to Robben Island to that school". There were students who were saying we are going back to school and there were those who were saying no ways. And those who were saying they are not going back to school some were the people that were being used by these *Boer* boys, because they're …*tsotsi*-comrade. They enjoyed it when there's disorder, you know, burning houses, stealing things. Students went back to school; teachers went back to school[1439]

Evidently the 'back to school' campaign was unsuccessful in convincing all the students to return to school. It was the re-admission to school of the politically experienced student activists who had been released from detention that seemed to help return the situation to normality – albeit briefly. In 1988 Masizane and Mohapi, after being refused re-admission at Bodibeng, were finally allowed entry. They re-established the SRC. Masizane remembers: "we sat down with the management of the school and presented our constitution; the one that I drew up with Frank [Mohapi]. We elected the SRC. I was elected the president and Frank became the general

[1437] Mrs L. Setai, Mrs Kau, Mrs Banda, Mr Setai, Mr Mohoje, and Mr Matsepe were elected into the committee. Bodibeng High School Logbook, 17 May 1987
[1438] Ibid.
[1439] Interview with Lebone Holomo (LHPR), Seeisoville, Maokeng, 30 October 2008

secretary; and each class had its own representative.[1440] For a brief moment the relationship between teachers and students improved. The new SRC promised parents and teachers that it would help encourage other students to go back to school … The situation began to normalize once again at Bodibeng. "What I liked", Masizane recalls, "whenever it was break, the guys (students) would go for break and when the bell rang they were the first to get back to class".[1441]

However, this normality did not last long. A group of students would leave school during school hours to attack and destroy delivery vans in the main road and when chased by the police they ran back into the school.[1442] This not only disrupted lessons, but also landed the student leaders in trouble with the law. According to Masizane

> You know, sometimes you would find that there were people who liked taking advantage of the situation. They would just go out of school and throw stones at the delivery vans and run back to school. And when the police came in they don't say so and so threw stones; they would harass the whole student community. Then the problem started. Between 1988 and 1989 me and comrade Frank were arrested many times, because of those *people*[1443]

It was not long before even some of the most committed student leaders gave up and gave in to the temptations of "good and exciting" life in the township. And this "good and exciting" life could be found in taverns. Although some of the young activists strongly believed that the taverns were the state's strategy to undermine their efforts to liberate the country, they, nevertheless, also spent most of their time in them and having good times. Masizane recalls

> When we were in detention, the police came in and called three of our comrades: comrade Nomvula and others. We thought the guys were going to be interrogated, only to find that they took those guys for a trip around the township, to the taverns. They were told "you're wasting your time in prison. Look how nice was the place. People are enjoying themselves here". Then these guys came back to report to us how nice taverns were. We couldn't wait to go and see that. … The South African Council of Churches used to take care of us. It would give younger guys something like R50 and older guys received something from R100 to R200 for sustenance. For us young guys when having R50 in the 1980s was good. You'd buy a pair of trousers for R20 and the rest – a beer was R1.50. Ja, we used to hang out in a group of, maybe,

[1440] Interview with Masizane
[1441] Interview with Masizane.
[1442] In February 1988, for example, students at Bodibeng abandoned their lessons after 10h00 and left the school's premises. Bodibeng High School Logbook, 11 February 1988
[1443] Ibid. (Italics my emphasis)

> six and buy six beers each. Most of us concentrated on this venture: we drank. Tomorrow we were tired. So, we couldn't fight[1444]

This disrupted student mobilization in Maokeng – and by extension political mobilization in the township. The matters were made worse when some of the politically experienced student activists were deployed to regional and national structures. Makau was elected treasurer of the Free State Youth Congress (FRYCO), an affiliate of the South African Youth Congress. FRYCO was launched in 1987 to coordinate youth activists in the OFS but "conduct[ed] much of its activity outside the OFS."[1445] White Mohapi, attendee at the launching of FRYCO, had the following to say about its formation

> I think it was established in 1987 … It was during the height of the State of Emergency, because many comrades by then had gone [into] hiding. I was also hiding … in Johannesburg. On my arrival in Johannesburg I reported to Winnie Mandela … she had left Brandfort in 1985. I used to go to Ishmael Ayob because Ishmael and Associates [were] people responsible for our defence. I remember I Met Rapu Molekane who said I must go and meet certain comrades who were said to be at the Century Plaza. He told me the comrades were organizing a conference. There was an explanation that the formation of FRYCO was going to take place. Because of my availability I volunteered to assist … In the conference I became one of the facilitators. I think FRYCO was more of a co-ordinator[1446]

Makau recalls, after they had launched FRYCO, he spent time in Botshabelo opposing the Qwaqwa government's decision to incorporate Botshabelo.[1447] In his words: "I remember immediately after launching the Free State Youth Congress, there was this thing about TK Mopeli from Qwaqwa. He wanted to incorporate Botshabelo into Qwaqwa. So, we went to Botshabelo and mobilized people. Fortunately, we won that war. He was unable to incorporate Botshabelo into Qwaqwa."[1448] Mohapi was also, initially, deployed in the region but later in the national structure. He remembers

> In 1987 I was the organizer of the UDF. Then in 1988 and 1989 I had to go to school and finish schooling. That's when I became the secretary of COSAS in the province – the Free State Students Congress. And in the 1990s, after the unbanning of [political]

[1444] Interview with Masizane
[1445] Chaskalson and Seekings 'The Awakening', p.36
[1446] Interview with White Mohapi
[1447] For a detailed account about the intended incorporation of Botshabelo to Qwaqwa, see Twala, C. Resistance and Conformity in the Qwaqwa Homeland, 1975–1990', in SADET, *The Road to Democracy, Volume 4*, chapter 15
[1448] Interview with Makau; also see Chaskalson and Seekings, 'The Awakening', p.37

> movements, I was called by Shell House, the then headquarters of the ANC. I was to re-launch COSAS nationally. That's when I worked with the late Thami, who died at Turfloop (The University of Limpopo). That's how we re-launched COSAS nationally[1449]

Having sketched the rise and fall of students' mobilization and protests in Maokeng in the mid-1980s, the chapter will finally look at the confusion and division within the community of Maokeng caused by the split between the Activist Forum and Maokeng Democratic Crisis Committee.

AF and MDCC

The split between members of the 'progressive' structure in Maokeng, which led to the formation of the Activist Forum (AF) and Maokeng Democratic Crisis Committee (MDCC) caused tensions, confusion and divisions within the community, and this further affected political mobilization in the township.

> They called themselves Activists Forum (AF). It was Bizza, [Holomo] Lebona, and others. … Somehow they couldn't keep up with the pace … They sabotaged us (Maokeng Democratic Crisis Committee – MDCC)[1450]

> Dennis (Bloem) mobilized a group of students and handed them petrol and tyres. The following day it was chaos. What happened thereafter was that even innocent people were affected[1451]

The two quotations, drawn from interviews with former members of the MDCC and AF, respectively, demonstrate the extent of the division between the two factions in Maokeng in the late 1980s. This division was caused by disagreements over the appropriate strategy to adopt in the struggle for liberation. The AF opted for a moderate approach and the MDCC followed a militant line. The roots of this division can be traced back to the ANC's call for 'ungovernability'.

Luli Callinicos, in her biography of Oliver Tambo, writes "On 8 January 1985, Tambo summed up the ANC methodology of people's insurrection: 'Render South Africa Ungovernable!'" "The broadcast had an electric effect in townships", she adds, "Young people in particular thrilled to his words. 'When we heard OR's voice that evening', recalled one young man, … '*Ey!* – our

[1449] Interview with Mohapi
[1450] Interview with "Sakkie" Oliphant
[1451] Interview with Joseph Litabe (LHPR), Kroonstad, 14 January 2009

eyes were opened".[1452] "'Ungovernability', meant that a situation", Marks observes, "should be brought about where the organs of civil government collapsed or were rendered inoperable by mass resistance and opposition".[1453] Tom Lodge, in his analysis of the decision by the ANC to 'turn-to-the-masses', suggests that it was after the Nkomati Accord, signed by the South African and Mozambican governments, which "denied the ANC's guerrillas transit through Mozambique",[1454] and the realization by the ANC that it had heavily relied on the MK to liberate the oppressed masses in South Africa and had neglected the masses themselves inside the country to take forward the struggle. As a result of the Accord, there was a pause in the MK's sabotage between September and February (1984), and this led to the admission by Tambo reported in the *International Herald Tribune* in January 1985 that 'we have had to be very careful over the past three months … Nkomati … affected our communications systems … We have got to be economic with our manpower.[1455] It was, partly, because of these factors that the ANC looked to the masses inside the country to disrupt the regime's organs of governance.

As we have seen, at this point activists in Maokeng, particularly students and youth, had already been introduced to Radio Freedom and were also receiving ANC's political literature when Tambo made the call to make the country 'ungorvenable.' Like the young man cited by Callinicos, activists in Maokeng welcomed the challenge and vowed to implement it. Ditseki Moeketsi, who became part of the MDCC, recalls "we decided to form an organization which would focus on challenges that people were facing, because our main call was to render the country "ungovernable". And we then came up with the MDCC, which would deal with almost everything that was happening in the location".[1456] From the oral testimonies with former members of the AF, the latter also accepted Tambo's call but, unlike the MDCC which followed a militant line, the AF strongly believed that this could be achieved using moderate means.

In 1986 a group of activists led by Wilfred "Bizza" Makhathe, supported by the branch of AZAPO in Maokeng, organized a consumer boycott, protesting against the detention of 60 students, 43 dismissed workers, and the death of a Viljoenskroon activist Meshack Letsabo.[1457] Joseph Litabe, who was in the group supporting Makhathe, which later constituted itself as the AF, remembers that the consumer boycott was well planned, and the residents were well informed. But most importantly it had a limited duration and no coercive measures were used to enforce compliance. He explains: "… Together with Bra Bizza, we organized a consumer boycott. It was peaceful and successful. It was for three days. We distributed pamphlets to

[1452] Callinicos, L. *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeleni Mountains* (Claremont, David Philip, 2004), pp.548-9
[1453] Marks *Young Warriors,* p.42
[1454] Lodge, T. Mayihlome! – Let Us Go To War!': From Nkamati to Kwabe, The African National Congree, January 1984-June 1985', in *South African Review 3* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1986), p.226
[1455] Ibid., p.229
[1456] Interview with Moeketsi
[1457] *City Press, 10 February 1986*

mobilize people not to buy in town. You know, even when we came across someone who had bought in town, we did not fight and intimidate them."[1458] Supporting Litabe, Khotso Sesele, also in the Makhathe group, remarks "… We would notify people in time. Like if today it's Sunday, we would inform them 'Next week Monday there will be a consumer boycott. Our programme will start next week on Sunday morning from 5 o'clock up until next week Saturday'. Before it starts, it was announced first".[1459]

But when Litabe was probed on how they sustained the boycott, he admitted that in the pamphlets they inserted a threatening warning to all who might not comply. The warning read: *Lihlo le nchoncho le ho shebile. Oa tseba ho tla etsahalang* (A vigilant eye is watching you. You know what will happen to you). [1460] Litabe and Lewele Modisenyane, another member of the Makhetha group, claim that the boycott was well supported, because the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) Local, youth and teachers' organizations also participated. After three days, as stipulated in the pamphlets, the boycotted was called off. A point had been made, although it is not clear if the boycott yielded any desired results.

Roland White writes "among the many forms of struggle which have characterized the upsurge of resistance among the oppressed classes in South Africa over the past year (1985), the consumer boycott has emerged as one of the most prominent."[1461] He notes that consumer boycott involved "the with-holding of purchasing power by black, particularly African people, from all white (and some Coloured and Indian) retail outlines in the affected towns and cities".[1462] He argues that the intention of the consumer boycott, particularly of the white retailers, was to adversely affect them in order to force them to apply pressure on the relevant authorities to address the expressed demands. "The assumption is that", he adds, "given the racist and undemocratic nature of the apartheid political structure, whites will be able to use their exclusive access to political power and representation to pressurize the state into responding positively in this respect".[1463]

Not long after the consumer boycott called by the Makhetha's group had ended, Bloem, Butana Khompela, currently the MEC for Police, Roads and Transport in the Free State, and their supporters countered and organized their own consumer boycott. Unlike the first boycott, Bloem and his supporters did not specify the duration of the boycott. It went on indefinitely. And when the residents ran out of patience and ignored the boycott, Bloem's supporters intimidated people

[1458] Interview with Litabe
[1459] Interview with Sesele
[1460] Ibid.; also see interview with Modisenyane
[1461] White, R. 'A Tide has Risen. A Breach has occurred: Towards an Assement of the Strategic Value of the Consumer Boycotts', in *South African Labour Bulletin, Vol.11, No.5, April-May 1986,* p.69
[1462] Ibid., pp.69-70
[1463] Ibid., p.71

and used violence to prolong the boycott.[1464] Moeketsi explains "When we announced a consumer boycott we meant what we said. Those who insisted on going to town to buy had their groceries destroyed".[1465] And Modisenyane, referring to the Bloem's group, adds "[they were] hard core - the ones that would make people drink cooking oil during consumer boycotts".[1466]

The police responded by arresting all those suspected to having been involved in the consumer boycotts. Bloem, Litabe, Khompela, Makhathe, Modisenyane were all detained. However, before the arrests, an ugly incident occurred. In January 1986 *Sowetan* reported a failed attempt to assassinate Bloem. The latter informed the paper that at 6:30 on Friday he was shot at by four prominent community leaders in Seeisoville. They accused him of being a trouble maker.[1467] Although he did not specify, it was suspected that the attack was orchestrated by members of the opposing faction. But, again, it could have been some of the members of the Town Council of Maokeng, especially those whose properties had been damaged during the student riots. Litabe, on the other hand, relates the devastating story of Mitah, his neighbour, who was murdered allegedly by supporters of Bloem simply "because she had quarreled with the sister of the well-known comrade within the group and had also befriended the alleged mistress of the mayor (Caswell Koekoe). Because of this, she was labeled an *impimpi* (sell-out). Mitah was burned inside her house".[1468] Although these allegations cannot be substantiated, it is however, clear that tensions between the two factions had spiralled out of control. The leaders of the boycotts were released without being charged.[1469] But their freedom did not last long.

In June 1986 the police raided Moakeng and arrested a number of political activists. This was after the state had declared the national State of Emergency. The two factions: Bloem's and Makhetha's took their differences to prison with them. Litabe remembers: "This division was also visible in prison during the State of Emergency, where one group from Kroonstad deserted the other group in a cell called Lybia (occupied mainly by comrades from Kroonstad) and settled in another cell named Cuba".[1470] Fezile Dabi, an activist from Tumahole, Parys, tried to bring the two factions together but once outside of prison differences surfaced once again. Recalling Dabi's attempt at promoting peace and unity between the two factions, Litabe remarks

> [Bizza] told us that he had a meeting with Fezile Dabi and that the latter told him that the people of Kroonstad should unite and have peace. So that when we leave we should work together. There shouldn't be any divisions. And when

[1464] Interview with Litabe
[1465] Interview with Moeketsi
[1466] Interview with Modisenyane
[1467] *Sowetan, 13 January 1986*
[1468] Joseph Litabe's personal notes. I am grateful to Litabe for giving me his notes
[1469] *The Star, 24 August 1989*
[1470] Litabe's personal notes

> we got into action, we should do it together. So, we didn't want to argue with him, because we realized that he had already made an undertaking to Fezile Dabi[1471]

From Litabe's testimony it does not seem that activists in the Makhathe's group were ready to work with Bloem's group. But felt obliged to do so after Dabi's intervention. Litabe claims that an attempt was made to bring peace and unity between the two factions, but this was thwarted by Bloem's intransigence. According to him, "three days after they had been released, Bizza Makhathe, Modisenyane and Litabe himself met and agreed that Modisenyane and Makhathe should meet with Dennis [Bloem]. So, Dennis informed them that he was busy in his business and doesn't want to get involved."[1472] For Litabe (and probably others in Makhetha's group) the problem started when Bloem heard that Lekota and others were about to be released from prison (1989). "They were no longer going to serve the 12-year sentence"[1473] following their conviction in the Delmas Treason Trial for their part in the township revolt.[1474]

It is not clear why Bloem changed his mind after learning of the release of Lekota and other Delmas trialists. Rumours making rounds in the township was that he suddenly became involved in politics because he did not want to disappoint Lekota. In fact, some of the activists remember Bloem as Lekota's political protégé: "Dennis Bloem is the protégé of "Terror" [Lekota]. That's why when "Terror" le[ft] the ANC, Bloem followed and joined COPE".[1475] As noted above, Bloem and Lekota's close friendship started in 1982. Recalling how he met Lekota, Bloem narrates

> In 1982 December, [Patrick Mosiuoa] Terror Lekota was released from Robben Island. I did not know this person. He asked one prison warder [who] was his friend at school. They both went to a school in Marrianhill (actually it was in Mariazell, in Matatiel). 'Can't you organise transport for me? I'm having a lot of things.' He spent … time on Robben Island so he had a lot of luggage there. They [had] transferred Terror from Robben Island to be nearer home a month before he was released. From Robben Island to Kroonstad. Because of my shop, people were coming to buy and then standing there and talking. As we were standing and talking he said 'I'm having a friend of mine and this person needs transport and I have asked this one and that one, and these people are refusing.' And he asked me. I said 'Who's this?' He said 'No, man, this friend of mine is from Robben Island and now they've brought him to be released on the 15th of

[1471] Interview with Litabe, Kroonstad, 14 January 2009
[1472] Ibid.
[1473] Ibid.
[1474] See Seekings *UDF,* p.290
[1475] Interview with Mamabolo Raphesu (LHPR), Vanderbijlpark, 11 July 2009

> December.' I said, 'No, I'll go and pick him up.' I went to the Kroonstad Prison with his wife. Nine o'clock security police were there, and he was released. He went into my Kombi and we were talking. And since that day I was detained more than 18 times after I met Lekota[1476]

Two years after the state had declared the national State of Emergency, on 24 February it banned the UDF and partially restricted COSATU.[1477] The UDF responded by building a new broad alliance with COSATU, and in 1989 the two formalized their alliance through the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM). The MDM embarked on a defiance campaign, *inter alia*, calling on its supporters to organize consumer boycotts and defy laws discriminating against Africans to force the government to abandon apartheid policies. Most importantly, however, the MDM's campaign blurred the community and worker struggles. It was at this point that Makhathe's group, which by now included youth, students, women, and some members of COSATU, reconstituted itself as the AF, which Bloem's group did the same as the MDCC. The leading figures in the AF included Lewele Modisenyane, Paseka Nceleni, Bushy Lakaje, Joseph Litabe, Ramoninki Makhoka, Khotso Sesele, and Wilfred Makhetha. The MDDC, on the other hand, was formed by Bloem and Thami Phaliso, a South African Railways Union (SARU) organizer. Some of its members included Stoffel Mofokeng, Thabo Maqeba, Jan Mohapi, and Solly Madiba.[1478] Like the AF, the MDCC also had support from the youth, students, women organizations, and trade unionists. According to Bloem "We capitalized on organizing people around the 'bread and butter' issues.[1479]

Moreover, in line with mobilizing people around 'bread and butter' issues such as rent, electricity, sewerage, and the bucket system,[1480] the MDCC most significantly demanded the disbandment of the Town Council of Maokeng (TCM). However, when it failed to convince the residents to unseat the TCM, it resorted to violence (or 'action', as its members put it). This was what distinguished the MDCC from the AF. Sebetoane, who was part of the MDCC explains

> The MDCC was for people who believed in action and the Activists Forum was for the negotiators. It was for the learned people. You know, those people made us to develop an attitude towards them, because we viewed them as theorists and we saw that as a waste of time. We wanted to take action. In my view it was too much about that. Obviously, I was in the MDCC[1481]

[1476] Interview with Dennis Bloem, Sheraton Hotel, Pretoria, 14 January 2008
[1477] Seekings *UDF,* pp.228-9
[1478] Interview with Matli
[1479] Interview with Bloem
[1480] Ibid.
[1481] Interview with Sebetoane, 13 August 2009

Echoing Sebetoane, Matli remarks

> What made the AF to fail, as I am saying, they were talking politics not applying politics. So, with us we were addressing … We were organising as the MDCC, rent boycotts, consumer boycotts. And what else? Stayaways[1482]

Matshidiso Rantie, who was in the MDCC camp, recalls that the AF was largely comprised of the literate "people who did not want to fight".[1483] And just like the previous consumer boycotts, and stay-aways were violently enforced. Matli remembers that he was compelled to inform on his father who insisted on going to work during the stay-away. He recounts

> He never liked whites, but he never joined the union. You see, the path leading to freedom he was not participating in it. He was just talking from the sidewalks. He would refuse not to go to work, like stay-away. Ja, he would go to work at the Shell Depot. Even my mother. But there was a time I decided to report him to the comrades. I was asleep then. Then he went out with the van. Comrades were waiting at the Anglican Church. As he was there they threw stones at the van. Hey, he then surrendered. He went back home and he was very cross. He was saying "This is shit. They are dealing with me[1484]

For Daniel George, the AF's reluctance to engage in militant action was largely influenced by its leader, Bizza Makhathe. Describing him, he observes: "I don't know how to put it. *He* was somehow one person who hated violence. When it comes *he'll* try to calm us and say 'hey, banna *(men),* this is not how it's supposed to be done. And as youth, we said nobody had planned it but apartheid is coming to us. So, we are doing it our own way now, yes."[1485] Litabe, conversely, in trying to explain the pacifist approach adopted by the AF, he also stressed that it was a strategic approach because they wanted to win their 'enemies' support rather than alienate them. He remarks: "The AF's approach said he (Koekoe) should be removed peacefully, together with his council. So, that he could join us."[1486]

The division deepened and spilled over to the students, youth and women's organizations. This affected mobilization in the township. Chabasiele Makume, who in the late 1980s was a leading figure in student politics and in the AF faction, claims that the split between the student activists was caused by the supporters of the MDCC, who disrupted schools and disrespected activists belonging to other formations. He remarks

[1482] Interview with Matli
[1483] Interview with Rantie
[1484] Interview with Matli
[1485] Interview with George, 18 August 2009
[1486] Interview with Litabe

> Members of MAYCO (Maokeng Youth Congress) an affiliate of SAYCO (South African Youth Congress) were disciplined cadres of the movement. Maokeng Democratic Crisis Committee (MDCC) comprised of six people. Their mandate was to resolve community issues. So when they were not elected to the leadership positions in SAYCO, youth organisations and other UDF-aligned structures, started to mobilise under the banner of the MDCC. So they would organise rent boycotts, consumer boycotts, class boycotts, and all those things. And they were not part of schools' structures … When we asked them why they were doing all those things, they didn't give us clear answers. They recruited children who didn't want to go to school and others like them. That's where the split started. The leadership was in disagreement. There was a meeting held at [Mzimase] Gozongo's place - Pastor Gozongo - at the Presbyterian Church. There was a sign that factions were forming, because when one person was talking a group of people would start to sing. And when another person talks they would listen. It was such things. I remember one time it was Youth Day, June 16. It was in 1990, if I am not mistaken, at Seeisoville Stadium. We had organised a youth gathering there. Then they decided to meet at Constantia hall. From there they came to disrupt our gathering[1487]

Similarly, women activists were divided into two factions: the AF and MDCC. Mamorena Taje, who was in the MDCC faction recalls an attempt made to promote unity between the two women's factions. In her words

> I became an MDCC member and also its Women's League. At that time there was this AF thing. I was elected the chairperson of the Women's League. Masoka was the organiser of the MDCC. Masoka said we should unite and become one thing, because they didn't want this thing of the AF and MDCC[1488]

It seems at this stage some understanding was reached between the two women's factions. This was evident when they all went to Bethlehem to elect the provincial leadership. This was probably in preparation for the re-launch of the ANC Women's League after organisations had been unbanned. In that conference, Taje was elected the Provincial Secretary of the Women's League and "Maureen was the chairperson".[1489] To cement the relationship, a delegation comprising women from the AF and MDCC was nominated to attend a conference in Durban. From the MDCC's side Taje was nominated and Patty Mohapi from the AF. However, Mohapi remained behind. Taje remembers "They chose me and Patty Mohapi. But when we were

[1487] Interview with Makume; MAYCO was launched in 1989, see Krog, A. *Account of a murder* (Johannesburg, GAP Books Heinemann, 1996)p.5
[1488] Interview with Mamorena Taje
[1489] Ibid.

supposed to leave for Durban, she refused to go. I didn't think there were some disagreements that I didn't know about".[1490] On her return from Durban, Taje was instructed to continue with the efforts to promote unity between the two women's factions – but these were unsuccessful. She recalls

> After we had returned, because I was the Provincial Secretary I was supposed to unite the AF (and the MDCC) and they should no longer be on their own. At that time the chairperson of the AF was Ma-Hleli (Mrs Hleli). I went to Ma-Hleli and Ma-Monikadi … I met them and told them that I had been sent by my elders (i.e. leaders) that things should not be like this. They no longer wanted divisions. So, I think that thing hurt some people, because I was close to people like Mamokhele (Sebetoane), Ma-Paballa, Ma-Rantie. I noticed that they have changed; they didn't like it[1491]

Following this attempt, there is no evidence that more efforts were made to promote peace and unity between these two factions. The situation soon changed when the fight against the Three Million Gang started, and Taje was marginalised because of her relationship (and possibly her involvement as well) with the leader of the gang, George "Diwithi" Ramasimong – who was her brother.

At this stage it would seem that the AF enjoyed support among the adults in the "community". Probably this was because of their members' standing in the "community" and their moderate approach. To counter this and change the community's perception, the MDCC decided to recruit respected adults in the community to leadership positions. Some of the older and respected leaders to be recruited to the MDCC included Itumeleng Lefafa, a former schools' inspector. Isaac "Sakkie" Oliphant explains

> I said to teacher Lefafa, *die pa van Nanaile* (Nanaile's father), he used to be an inspector of schools "Look here guys, we want you to join the committee – *ons soek groote mense* (we want old people). You are going to do the fatherly kind of thing. When people see you, you must be wearing ties. Forget about these young people wearing t-shirts. We would marshal them and try to organize them that the struggle must not be diverted into a *tsotsi* kind of thing. Because that was already happening[1492]

However, the MDCC leadership was quick to warn the older generation not to be conservative in their approach. Oliphant adds

[1490] Ibid.
[1491] Ibid.
[1492] Interview with Oliphant

> And this was when these old men took up the leadership. And in the evenings we would come and tell them that when they were making decisions they should consider these children's feelings and ours, too. *Julle moenie decisions vat* (You mustn't make decisions) which are so conservative and make concessions with the *boers*. When the people call for consumer boycotts, they mean it[1493]

Another elderly person who joined the MDCC was the Reverend Mzimase Gozongo, of the Presbytarian Church (more about his role in the next chapter).[1494]

The reason for the MDCC turning to the elders it seems was also influenced by the growing perception that the majority of the residents of Maokeng distanced themselves from its activities. Mamorena Taje recalled her conversation with Stoffel Mofokeng after she joined the MDCC, where Mofokeng explained the reason for this. She remembers

> You see, I talked too much and followed. But I didn't know what was going on. Then I asked Stoffel and said: 'Tell me, I hear that there's the Activists' Forum. We are the MDCC's members. But people are saying they don't want the MDCC. They want the Activists' Forum. Why? And he said 'You know what, people don't understand politics. You see, what the members of the Activists' Forum are saying, they just wanted us to talk and talk. And talking doesn't help. We in the MDCC fight so that things can change[1495]

In a show of force, the MDCC organized the biggest march ever from Maokeng to town to demand an end to detentions and discriminatory use of force by the police. Oliphant explains: At one stage Walter Sisulu[1496] was invited. The whole of Kroonstad, I'm counting easily 70 to 80 000 people were marching. This was towards the time when the ANC was to be unbanned. Unknown to the leadership of the MDCC, Sisulu had been invited to Maokeng to intervene (in the on-going faction fighting between the AF and MDCC). Oliphant believes that the rival faction had informed Sisulu that because of the MDCC's supporters who misbehaved there was going to be a bloodbath in Maokeng.[1497] When Sisulu arrived he asked "where are the people who are fighting?"[1498]

[1493] Ibid.
[1494] Interview with Mzimase Gozongo, Vosloorus, Johannesburg, 26 May 2009
[1495] Interview with Taje
[1496] Walter Sisulu and others were released from prison in October 1989; In December 1989 the chairman of the AF wrote a letter to the allied organizations complaining about the comrades in the MDCC who "…have wormed their way to some of the released comrades …" see Twala and Seekings 'Activist networks, p.806
[1497] Interview with Oliphant; This view is shared by some members of the AF. See interview with Makume
[1498] Interview with Oliphant

Differences between the two factions continued unabated. Two incidents happened which further deepened these differences. Firstly, the AF and MDCC disagreed on who should be funded by the UDF/MDM to attend the Harare Declaration Conference in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1989. Litabe writes "Bloem wanted the UDF to finance his group and Bizza would not agree. However, in the end both groups were represented, with the AF sending 15 delegates and the MDCC 10.[1499]The Harare Declaration was adopted at a meeting of the Organisation of African Unity in Harare.[1500] Seekings notes that it specified five preconditions for negotiations: lifting the State of Emergency, removing restrictions on political activity, releasing all political prisoners, legalizing banned organizations, and stopping all political executions."[1501] And secondly, a rumour made rounds in the township that the Three Million Gang (TMG) did not attack members of the AF but attacked members of the MDCC because they had confronted it. Rantie, whose son, Solomon, had been murdered by the TMG remembers that she physically confronted Modisenyane when he informed a meeting that it was indeed true that the TMG only attacked people who challenged it.[1502]

Athough, after the unbanning of the ANC, the AF and MDCC disbanded and became part of the ANC, their differences were too embedded. They surfaced again within the ANC (see Chapter Seven). This situation made it possible for the Town Council of Maokeng to continue managing Maokeng until the introduction of the Transitional Local Council in the 1990s. It created confusion amongst the residents and divided them. But most significantly the split between the AF and MDCC disrupted mass political mobilization in Maokeng.

The following chapter will look at the role of the Three Million Gang in diverting the attention of political activists from mobilizing the residents.

Conclusion

In the early 1980s many black townships were organized and the residents were protesting, *inter alia*, against rent and service charges increases, the demolition of squatter settlements, and the tri-cameral parliamentary system and local black councils. At this stage, in some of these townships civic organisations, students, youth and women's organizations had been established, and a significant number of these became the UDF affiliates. By 1985 most of the black townships across the country were already 'ungovernable' even before the ANC made that call.

[1499] Litabe's personal notes
[1500] Seekings *UDF,* p.245
[1501] Ibid.
[1502] Interview with Rantie

Kroonstad's black townships, conversely, were quiescent and tranquil until 1985. This chapter has tried to chart and examine the factors that caused this situation. Furthermore, it demonstrates that when the residents of these townships, particularly Maokeng, finally embarked in mass political mobilization and protests, they were gravely disrupted by constant police harassment, long-spells of leaders in detention, and later the deployment of experienced political activists outside, and finally the split within the 'progressive' structure that caused the formation of the AF and MDCC.

First, the chapter illustrates that Kroonstad's black townships lacked political events such as a funeral of a political activist (or political veteran), commemorations of historic days, and pressing socio-economic grievances which could be used to galvanize and mobilize the residents. Second, it shows the important role played by some family members and church-based youth groups in introducing young people to politics. But it argues that it was the individuals from outside Kroonstad who played a significant role in agitating young people in these townships to mobilize and protest. To a lesser degree, mobility between Kroonstad and townships in the Rand also played a similar role.

Finally, the chapter has attempted to demonstrate that the introduction of students to politics and the constant police harassment and detention of the politically experienced student leaders created a leadership vacuum, which caused inter-generational tensions between the students and teachers. Students blatantly disrespected the authority of the teachers, and occasionally physically assaulted them. Unlike in other townships, in Maokeng, however, the adult generation did not mobilize itself and take up arms against the younger generation.

CHAPTER SIX

From Gang Warfare to Political Violence, Maokeng Township, 1990 to 1992

Introduction

On the 25th February 1992 Ramodikoe George "Diwiti" Ramasimong was shot and killed near the taxi rank, in Kroonstad. After learning of "Diwiti's" death, women in town and in Maokeng ululated and danced in jubilation; taxi drivers blasted their hooters.[1503] For many in Maokeng, this meant the end of a reign of terror by the notorious Three Million Gang (TMG), which had terrorized the community for almost two years.

Violence in Maokeng was, in the initial stages, apolitical but gang related. It was, however, not long before it turned political following the TMG's collaboration with the councillors, police and later Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)[1504]. Various scholars have extensively and painstakingly researched political violence in South Africa, particularly in the 1990s.[1505] However, a survey of the literature on political violence in the period under review has revealed that the relation between gangs and political violence has been largely ignored. The notable exceptions are Liezmarie Johannes' honours essay and Gary Kynoch's published paper.[1506] Johannes' case study in Wesselton, Ermelo (Mpumalanga Province), demonstrates the relation between the 'Black Cats' gang, the police and the IFP.[1507] Similarly, Kynock's work, drawing largely from

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[1503] See *City Press, 8 March 1992.* Ramasimong's nickname "Diwiti" is spelled differently in newspapers and other publications. Sometimes it is spelled "De Wittie", "Diwiti", or even "The Wheetie". For the purpose of this paper, I will use "Diwiti".

[1504] Inkatha was launched as a political party on the 14th July 1990 in Sebokeng. See, Sparks, A. *Tomorrow is Another Country: The Inside Story of South Africa's Negotiated Revolution* (London, Heinemann, 1995), p.138

[1505] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus;* Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra;* Sparks, A. *Tomorrow is Another Country*; Kentridge, M. *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town, and Johannesburg, David Philip, 1990); Minnaar, A. 'Patterns of Violence: Case Study of Conflict in Natal During the 1980s and 1990s', in Anthony Minnaar (ed.) *Patterns of Violence: Case Studies of Conflict in Natal* (Pretoria, HSRC Publishers, 1992); Sitas, A. 'The Making of the 'Comrade' Movement in Natal, 1985-91', in *Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol.18, No.3, September 1992* ; Ka Xeketwane. B. 'The relation between hostels and the political violence on the Reef from July 1990 to December 1993: A Case Study of Merafe and Meadowlands hostels in Soweto (University of the Witwatersrand, MA Dissertation, 1995); Simpson, G., Mokwena, S., and Segal, L. 'Political Violence:1990', in Robertson, M. and Rycroft, A. (eds.) *Human Rights and Labour Law Yearbook 1991, Vol.2* (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1992). This article can also be found in the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation's (CSVR's) website: http://www.csvr.org.za

[1506] Johannes, L. 'Do experience of political violence emanating from youth movements influence political culture? : A Case Study of the 'Black Cats' movement in Wesselton 1989-1994' (University of the Witwatersrand, Honours Research Essay, 2009); Kynock, G. 'Crime, Conflict and Politics in Transition-Era South Africa', in *African Affairs, 104/416,* 1995; See Sithole, J. 'The ANC underground, armed actions and popular resistance in Pietermaritzburg and the surrounding Natal Midlands townships', in SADET*'s The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol.4, 1980-1990* (Pretoria, University of South Africa, 2010). In this chapter, Sithole alludes to the backing of the gang called Iziphemane by the Security Branch in Sobantu township, p.248

[1507] Johannes 'Do experience of political'

the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, alludes to the roles played by the Khumalo gang in Thokoza, on the East Rand, and the Kheswa gang, in the Vaal Triangle, in the political violence that ravaged the Reef in the early 1990s, with the assistance of the police and IFP.[1508]

A closer look at the factors that caused political violence in Maokeng demonstrates that this township was different compared to the other areas where political violence erupted. First, the political violence that engulfed other areas at the beginning of 1990 missed Maokeng. Violence in Maokeng only turned political after July 1991. Second, in Maokeng there were no hostels, which came to be generally perceived as bases for the IFP and AmaZulu-aligned to the IFP, and squatter camps seen as the UDF/ANC and AmaXhosa strong-holds. Relatedly, Maokeng was (and still is) predominantly a South Sotho-speaking township. AmaZulu and AmaXhosa are in the minority and many have been assimilated into the South Sotho culture.[1509] Therefore, what started in other areas as a 'war' between AmaZulu and AmaXhosa, and later turned to the UDF/ANC and IFP 'war', was absent in Maokeng. Finally, what distinguished political violence in Maokeng was the active and combative role played by women. Again, existing literature on political violence in South Africa from the 1980s to the 1990s has tended to portray women as submissive and powerless victims. And most significantly, as people who only played auxiliary role in political violence.[1510]

The cause of political violence in Maokeng in mid-1991 cannot be understood without comprehending the changing political situation from 1989. This was the year when Frederik Willem (F.W.) de Klerk, first replaced the obstinate Pieter Willem (P.W.) Botha as the leader of the National Party and, then in August of the same year, as the head of the government[1511]. Unlike Botha, De Klerk was open to negotiations with the ANC. But 1989 was also the year, as already shown, when the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) was established and its structures countrywide embarked in a defiance campaign. In line with this, the 'progressive' structures in Maokeng began a vigorous offensive against the City Council of Maokeng (CCM) and its councillors, demanding the disbandment of the Council and the resignation of the councillors. In this chapter I will contend that it was at this stage that signs of vigilantism became visible in the

[1508] Kynock 'Crime, Conflict'; Craig Charney alludes to the material support offered to the AmaSinyora gang, linked to Inkatha in Durban, by the South African Defence, South African Police, and KwaZulu Police. Charney, C. 'Vigilantes, Clientelism, and the South African State', in *Transformation 16, 1991,* p.17

[1509] Moses Masizane's oral testimony illustrates an example of non-SeSotho-speaking people who were assimilated to the Basotho culture. He recalls that his grand parents left KwaZulu to work in Kroonstad, where they settled permanently. Over the years due to the Sesotho culture the members of their family, particularly grandchildren and great-grand children, learned and preferred to speak Sesotho. He explains "The old ones spoke a lot of IsiZulu. But now the young kids … they hardly speak Isizulu. They don't know and understand it. They prefer Sesotho, because the area is dominated by Sesotho-speaking people". Interview with Masizane

[1510] See for example, Ka Xeketwane 'The relation''; Kentridge *An Unofficial War*

[1511] Gerhart and Glaser *From Protest,* p.190

township. Elements within the CCM took advantage of a personal difference between 'comrades' to foment political violence. They, initially, explicitly supported gangsters who later constituted themselves as the Three Million Gang (TMG), and later facilitated the collaboration between the TMG and the IFP, in their efforts to sow divisions and destabilize the 'progressive' structures in the township. Inevitably, this disrupted political mobilization and protests in the township. But most significantly it nearly cost the ANC support.[1512]

In the forefront of political violence that engulfed Maokeng at the beginning of the 1990s were 'youth'. In line with Seekings, in this chapter I will use the term 'youth' descriptively rather than analytically.[1513] However, before attempting to analyse the cause(s) of political violence in Maokeng, a brief review of the literature on 'youth politics' is necessary.

'Youth Politics'

According to Seekings "most accounts of South African resistance politics in the 1980s emphasise the importance of 'youth'. Yet there is little agreement as to who or what this constitutes".[1514] He argues "this was due to the underlying conceptual confusion and ambiguity".[1515] For him, this was because "the category of youth in South Africa [was] a political rather than a sociological or demographic construct".[1516] Age, as it is applied the post-apartheid South Africa[1517], was not a determining factor for one to be classified youth. Any person active in resistance politics, particularly in the street battles with the security personnel and vigilante groups, was perceived as youth, irrespective of their age. Interviewees interviewed by Seekings in Tumahole, Parys, in 1990-1991 suggested that an active person remained a youth even when aged fifty, sixty or even seventy. Some even cited Nelson Mandela as an example of an elderly youth.[1518] Furthermore, in the 1980s (and in the early 1990s) 'youth' was a term associated with blacks. David Everatt, cited by Seekings, observed "South Africa has white teenagers, but black youth".[1519]

[1512] In Alexandra Township when Prince Mokoena, who was a mayor in the Alexandra Town Council, felt that his position was threatened he aligned himself with the IFP and was instrumental in the formation of its branch in the township. This caused political violence in the township. See Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* p.359-69
[1513] See Seekings *Heroes or Villains,* p.2
[1514] Ibid., p. xi
[1515] Ibid.
[1516] Ibid.
[1517] Post-1994 youth were categorized as those persons between the ages 15 and 35 (some of the authors restrict the limit to 30). See for example, Frederick van Zyl Slabbert et al. (eds.) *Youth in the New South Africa* (Pretoria, HSRC, 1994), p.13
[1518] Seekings, p.11
[1519] Ibid., p.xii

The conceptual confusion alluded to by Seekings, was also compounded by lack of clarity on the composition of the youth. In fact, Seekings writes "the composition of the youth in the period of township revolt (1984-1986) [was] either avoided or inadequately dealt with in … the literature".[1520] Both Seekings and Ari Sitas reject, for example, suggestions that 'youth', as described above (any 'young' person involved in resistance politics in townships), comprised only of unemployed young people, a 'lost generation', young people prone to violence.[1521] Sitas, in his study on 'youth comrades' in Natal, explains

> It is true that most 'comrades' … came from embattled working-class homesteads and households; that most of their cultural codes emerge outside households and kinship relations; and that many are unemployed. But among the phenomenon called 'comrades' there are full wage-earners, informal sector vendors, university graduates, political activists, school-children, shop-stewards, petty criminals and lumpenproletarians[1522]

In similar vein, Seekings notes "in reality, so-called youth in the mid-1980s included politically astute as well as violent individuals … with wide range of goals and motivations".[1523] And Peter Mokaba, president of the South African Youth Congress (1987-1991) and then of the ANC Youth League (1991-1994), argued in an interview that

> A youth can be a person who is married, who is working, a person who is still a student … There are women, there are workers, there are intellectuals … But there are characterustics which would always distinguish them from all other sectors of the community … The militancy is part of it. ... They have a critical approach to life. They are not afraid to confront new situations[1524]

It was these youth, who, from the mid-1980s (the period when township politics shifted from quiescence to confrontation), took on the state and its agents in their efforts to eradicate the apartheid system. For example, Monique Marks, in her study of youth politics in Diepkloof, Soweto, writes "drawing from [Oliver] Tambo's call for the people inside the country to take up arms against the state, Diepkloof youth who were part of the Charterist movement took this call seriously. They indentified 'targets' – primarily referring to the security forces: the police and

[1520] Ibid., 50
[1521] See for example, Bundy, C. 'Street sociology and pavement politics: some aspects of student/youth consciousness during the 1985 schools crisis in Greater Cape Town', in *Journal of Southern African Studies,* Vol.13, No.3, 1987; Moller, V. 'Lost Generation Found: Black Youth at Leisure', in *Indicator South Africa,* Issue Focus, May 1991
[1522] Sitas, A. *The making of the 'comrades',* pp.629-30
[1523] Seekings *Heroes or Villains,* p.56
[1524] Ibid., pp.8-9

the military".[1525] The latter (and the corrupt and unsympathetic councillors) were attacked, and sometimes even killed. The youth, both in Diepkloof and elsewhere across the country's townships, pursued this dangerous task, not because they "… wanted to be involved in violence,"[1526] but because they felt obliged to engage in collective action, especially against police harassment.

But most importantly, the youth embarked on such a perilous mission of confronting the state and its agents because they believed that they as the 'young lions' and 'shook troops' of the struggle it was their duty to protect their communities from police and vigilante harassment and similarly it was their responsibility to defend the 'morality' of the townships. Their role(s) contrasted with that of the gang youth, which robbed and terrorized members of communities.

In 1983 youth organizations, affiliated to the Charterist movement, were formed.[1527] These were established to cater for the needs of young people not at school, young workers and the unemployed youth.[1528] In the initial stages, youth organisations failed to attract large numbers of youth to their ranks. Two factors help explain this. First, due to lack of clearly defined campaigns youth organizations found themselves becoming involved in campaigns waged by student and civic organizations. For example, according to Bonner and Nieftagodien, one of the first campaigns the Alexandra Youth Congress (AYCO), formed in 1983, engaged in was to mobilize a boycott of the BLA elections, and in 1984 AYCO formed an alliance with the Alexandra Action Committee, a civic organization, led by Mike Beea, and became involved in the bus boycott after PUTCO announced a 12.5 per cent increase in bus fares.[1529] And second, state's repression (in 1985 and 1986 the state declared two state of emergencies which resulted in mass arrests, particularly youth leaders), severely disrupted the activities of youth organizations.

After numerous unsuccessful attempts to form a national youth organization, finally SAYCO was launched in 1987.[1530] SAYCO attempted to focus the youth's campaigns. Among its campaigns included: the 'Save the 32' (later renamed 'Save the Patriots'), focused on the youth on death row; isolate the police, especially the kitskonstabels; and popularize the Freedom Charter campaigns.[1531] Two years after SAYCO's formation, the Maokeng Youth Congress (MAYCO) was launched. Just like other youth organizations, MAYCO's membership included students, former students, young workers, who were also involved in trade unionism, and the

[1525] Marks *Young Warriors,* p.89
[1526] Ibid., p.126
[1527] The Azanian National Youth Unity (AZANYU), a PAC youth wing inside South Africa, was formed in 1981. See Moloi 'Youth Politics', p.103; Ka Plaatjie, T. 'The PAC's attempt at internal revival in the 1980s', in *SADET The Road to Democracy in South Africa* (Pretoria, Unisa Press, 2010), Chapter 23
[1528] See Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* p.257
[1529] Ibid., pp.261-2
[1530] Seekings *Heroes or Villains,* pp.51-6
[1531] Ibid., p.55

unemployed.[1532] There is no evidence, however, to suggest that MAYCO became involved in any of the campaigns announced by SAYCO. There are two reasons for this. First, after the students' leading role in the politics of resistance in Maokeng since 1985, to stamp its authority in the local politics MAYCO prioritized political education. It "educated" its members about the ANC and its leaders. Mamokhele Sebetoane explains

> Here there was MAYCO. Yes, we had members, because it was that time when people were in high spirits. There was a time when I used to be its chairperson, and I was the only female chairperson at that time. I remember we recruited members and drafted a constitution. And there were meetings where ultimately the committee was elected. I still remember there was … Mustapha Mantsho. The other one was George Daniel. It was organizing the youth around issues affecting them, and politicizing them at that time. It was more about teaching them about the ANC: how it came about and about [Nelson] Mandela ... [Interrupted][1533]

Second, the 'war' that erupted in Maokeng between the 'community', led by members of MAYCO, and the TMG inevitably diverted MAYCO's activities and its members solely focused their energies to fighting the TMG.

Not long after the TMG had re-appeared in the local scene in 1990, SAYCO merged with the ANC Youth Section, and in October 1990 the ANCYL was launched.[1534] According to Seekings, "different regions of the ANCYL were launched from mid-1991 onwards"[1535] – and so were branches of the League. It was at this stage that MAYCO changed and became the ANCYL Maokeng branch. At the height of the fight against the TMG, supported by the IFP, the police and councillors, members of the ANCYL Maokeng branch were at the forefront (see below). Members of the ANCYL in Maokeng, as the 'defenders of the community and the custodians of morality' in the township, felt obliged to fight and defeat the TMG, because they viewed the TMG's activities as obstructing their objective of achieving liberation. This view is aptly captured by Marks when she notes "The recipients of political violence carried out by the comrade youth could include anyone or anything regarded as obstacle to the goal of 'liberation'".[1536]

The ANCYL Maokeng branch's violence was not only meted out to the TMG, but it was also directed to anyone who caused disunity and confusion in the 'community. This included *tsotsis* and some of the members of the ANCYL Maokeng branch who contravened the constitution of

[1532] See interviews with Sekonyela, Daniel, Sebetoane and Ditseki
[1533] Interview with Sebetoane, Seeisoville, Maokeng, 13 August 2009
[1534] Seekings *Heroes or Villains,* p.87
[1535] Ibid., p.89
[1536] Marks *Young Warriors,* p.88

the organization and involved themselves in unbecoming behaviour. These were severely punished. According to Marks, youth activists in Diepkloof used both the 'revolutionary' and 'mechanical' methods to discipline their comrades. The 'Revolutionary' method involved speaking to comrades whose behavior was 'out of line', trying to show them the 'right way' of conducting themselves. However, if the comrades continued to conduct themselves in an unbecoming manner, upstanding youth activists resorted to 'mechanical' discipline, which referred to physical punishment. Thabo, one of Marks' interviewees explained

> We don't encourage that but sometimes we are forced to use that. We tell ourselves that we are fighting for liberation of the people … So if we feel that he or she is mis-using their (people's) trust or misusing the name of the organization, or discrediting the name of the organization, we say that mechanical discipline must be used because we are fighting for the people and not for ourselves[1537]

Seemingly, members of the ANCYL Maokeng branch used both these disciplinary methods on their members. However, the reluctance by some of the members of the branch to discipline one of their own, because of his leadership position in the organization, after he had allegedly contravened the constitution of the ANCYL by causing disunity and confusion in the organization, became one of the contentious issues which caused the 'war' between the TMG and the ANCYL.

Some insights on vigilantism

"1985 saw an increase in the number of extra-legal groups (or vigilantes)", writes Nicholas Haysom, "as well as their forceful emergence in the urban areas".[1538] Both Haysom and Craig Charney assert that the upsurge of vigilantes particularly in 1985 was caused by the "deepening political crisis in South Africa …"[1539] From 1984 up to 1986 the National Party government was faced with countrywide protests led by civic associations and COSAS under the banner of the UDF.[1540] These popular organizations, *inter alia*, opposed the government-created local councils and also demanded changes in the educational system. Consequently, in some areas government-created governing structures were replaced by organs of 'people's power', such as 'people's courts. In such cases, residents (or their organizations) took over the management of the

[1537] Ibid., p.94

[1538] Haysom *Mabangalala: The rise of right-wing vigilantes in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1983), p.4; Of course, vigilantism was not a new phenomenon. In the 1970s adults formed *makgotla* ('community courts) in areas like Soweto and Thembisa to discipline delinquent young people in the townships. See Seekings 'Quiescence', pp.73-6; Moloi 'Youth Politics', p.56; Again in 1983, the Ciskei homeland government used vigilantes to quell bus boycotters, see Charney 'Vigilantes', p.4

[1539] Haysom *Mabangalala,* p.4; Charney 'Vigilantes', p.2

[1540] "Far from resolving the political and economic crises, the reforms of the early 1980s laid the groundwork for the next round of anti-apartheid protest, which began in July 1984", writes Charney, 'Vigilantes', p.3

townships, and in the process marginalized local councillors' and, sometimes even the police's authority.[1541]

Haysom, for instance, points out that the Huhudi Civic Association (HUCA), established in 1983 to resist the forced removals of the residents of Huhudi next to Vryburg, in the Northern Cape, to Pudimoe, in Bophuthatswana – a homeland "… set up projects designed to help residents … make their homes habitable and to prove their urban residence rights".[1542] Immediately after Huhudi was reprieved, "The community council", adds Haysom "was increasingly marginalized in the face of the energetic approach of HUCA activists".[1543] What followed were severe and unrestrained attacks on members of the HUCA and their supporters by vigilantes, assisted by the police.[1544] The protests in black areas extended countrywide. This severely constrained the government's ability to enforce law and order through its security personnel. Furthermore, according to Haysom "the South African Police and South African Defence Force [were] limited by potential publicity and hindered by legal considerations in their ability to perpetrate the deliberate terror and violence needed to combat popular organizations".[1545] It was against this backdrop that vigilantes emerged.

Vigilantes were part of the apartheid 'system'.[1546] They were established to intimidate and attack political activists. In other words, their role was to maintain the *status quo*. There is evidence that in 1985 vigilantes worked closely with the embattled town (or village) councillors and the police to eradicate political activists opposing apartheid policies. In Thabong, Welkom, for example, the Phakathis[1547] or 'A-Team' included township councillors in its ranks and "… made use of the property of the council"[1548]. Between February and June 1985 the Phakathis unleashed a reign of terror in Thabong, "…me[ting] out arbitrary assaults and severe floggings to residents".[1549] Their task "seemed to be to 'clean up' organized resistance to apartheid".[1550] Worryingly, the police colluded with the Phakathi group. This was evident in their attitude to the residents' complaints

[1541] During this period in many townships activists formed street committees and 'people's courts' to deal with the daily grievances of the residents
[1542] Haysom *Mabangalala,* p.28; today Vryburg is part of the Northwest Province
[1543] Ibid.
[1544] Ibid.,pp.29-32
[1545] Ibid., p.7
[1546] Seekings, J. 'Vigilantes and the State: Probing Links', in *Work in Progress, 40, 1986,* p.26
[1547] The Phakathi group was named after its leader and councillor Albert Phakathi. See Twala, C. 'The emergence of the student and youth resistance organizations in the Free State townships during the 1980s: A viable attempt to reorganize protest politics', in the *Journal for Contemporary History*, Vol.32, No.2, December 2007, 45-46
[1548] Haysom *Mabangalala,* p.18
[1549] Ibid.
[1550] Ibid.

about this group. They refused, for example, to prosecute the group for any of the misdemeanors they committed.[1551]

Another vigilante group, also called the 'A-Team'[1552], was established during this period in Tumahole, Parys. This was after the residents had decided to march against the Orange Vaal Development Board's (OVDB) decision to increase rent. On 15 July 1984 the residents of Tumahole, led by the Tumahole Student Organisation, took to the streets.[1553] Not long thereafter, the residents embarked on a consumer boycott.[1554] A year later the 'A-Team', led by Sehlabako Masoge[1555], was formed and, like other vigilante groups, also unleashed a reign of terror in Tumahole. It had strong associations with the police. In fact, Seekings cited in *Now Everyone is Afraid*, observed

> Three families make up most of the members of the 'A-team' … One family includes a black policewoman … and her brothers. Two particularly brutal vigilantes, alleged township residents, are the policewoman's lover and his brother, once a COSAS member. The second family are close friends of the first. The brothers in the third family played in the same football team as members of the first two families[1556]

"In November … the 'A-Team'", writes Twala, "claimed the life of youth activist Lefu Rasego who was hacked with garden implements".[1557] The police were alleged to have turned a blind eye to vigilante violence. Members of the community responded by applying for a Supreme Court interdict against the vigilante group. This was granted in February 1986 – on a temporary basis. The 'A-Team' ignored the interdict and continued with its acts of violence. It specifically targeted political activists and anyone suspected of belonging to the UDF-affiliates in the township.[1558] This undoubtedly affected the community's political initiatives and "left the Board (OVDB) free to move ahead with its own plans".[1559] The 'A-team's' reign of terror was finally

[1551] Ibid., p.22; In Huhudi, the police also refused to lay charges against alleged vigilantes. See Haysom *Mabangalala,* pp.27-32
[1552] Named after a series of the American TV do-doogers broadcasted on the South African Broadcast Corporation (SABC) in the 1980s. See Charney 'Vigilantes', p.12
[1553] Seekings, J. Political Mobilisation in Tumahole, 1984-1985', in *Africa Perspective: Agrarian Struggles in South Africa – The Debate Continues, Vol.1 (7-8), 1989*
[1554] Haysom *Mabangalala,* p.25
[1555] *Now Everyone is Afraid: The Changing Face of Policing in South Africa* (A Catholic Institute for International Relations Publication, 1988), p.232
[1556] Ibid., p.233
[1557] Twala The Emergence', 51
[1558] *Now Everyone is Afraid,* 232-3; Orange Vaal Development Board (OVDB)
[1559] Ibid., 237

brought to an end by a combination of efforts, but most importantly through the group's fierce fights with the 'comrades'. Some of the group's members were killed.[1560]

In KwaZulu, Inkatha assumed the role of a vigilante group. After enjoying sole support in KwaZulu and parts of Natal since 1975, Inkatha felt threatened following the launching of the UDF. It therefore attacked everyone who threatened its support base. Muzi Sikhakhane's oral testimony corroborates this view.

Sikhakhane was born in eMangwaneni, in Bulwer. He grew up in an area under the absolute control of Inkatha. Failure to show support for Inkatha meant losing some of the basic but necessary benefits dispensed by the KwaZulu homeland government – effectively controlled by Inkatha.[1561] Sikhakhane remembers

> Inkatha *Ye Nkululeko ye Sizwe* (National Cultural Liberation Movement) had a presence where we lived [and] that forced our parents to be members. You see, Inkatha-controlled government had *Ubuzwe* Card (Citizenship Card). It was not a membership card of Inkatha, but it served the same purpose. It made it possible for our parents to receive pension and to receive services[1562]

After matriculating, Sikhakhane enrolled at Indumiso College of Education, in Pietermaritzburg, in 1984. He immediately joined AZASO (Azanian Student Organisation), and in 1985 he was its leader.[1563] In the same year, he was recruited by Reggie Hadebe into the underground structure of the ANC. Sikhakhane remarks "he informed me that this structure was a network for the ANC".[1564] Sikhakhane also joined the UDF in Midlands.

After completing his teachers' training course, he was employed as a teacher at Gala, in Bulwer. In his words: "In 1987 I started to teach at a secondary school in Bulwer called Mahlahla". It was at Mahlaba Secondary that he came into direct confrontation with members of Inkatha, and this inspired some of his students. He recalls

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[1560] In the Orange Free State vigilante groups were also established in Phomolong, Harrismith and Meloding, Virginia. See *Now Everyone,* PP.238-46; Haysom *Mabangalala* pp.25-6

[1561] According to Sitas, the 200 young people who formed part of the Youth Unemployment Project in Natal confirmed that 65 per cent of their elders used to be Inkatha supporters, but had stopped after Inkatha's vigilante mobilization after 1985 and 12 per cent of them continued to be Inkatha's supporters. Sitas 'The Making', pp.633-4

[1562] Interview with Muzi Sikhakhane by Tshepo Moloi, for the SADET Oral History Project, Sandton, Johannesburg, 5 July 2011; "The slightest insubordination could cut a party member off from Buthelezi's patronage. Teachers and doctors working in the homeland could lose their jobs for refusing to join Inkatha, and party membership was a requirement for traders seeking business licenses". See Gerhart and Glaser *From Protest,* p.28

[1563] AZASO was launched in November 1979 as a BC-aligned student organisation, but by 1982 it had shifted to the congress movement. In 1986 it changed its name to the Azanian National Student Congress (AZANSCO). See Badat, *Black Student Politics*, Chapter Six

[1564] Interview with Sikhakhane

> Members of Inkatha would come on Wednesday and whether I was teaching my learners or not they would demand that the learners must assemble outside or in the hall. I was critical of Inkatha, and I think the learners picked that up and they also became critical[1565]

To dispel dissent, the Inkatha-controlled government expelled all the teachers who opposed Inkatha and its activities. Sikhakhane was in the group of teachers dismissed in October 1987. However, before this an attempt was made on his life. On November 12, Sikhakhane claims, a learner warned him that her father, a leader of Inkatha in the area, together with other members of Inkatha were on their way to the school in two busses to kill him. He takes up the story

> As I was leaving at the gate I saw a woman doing gardening opposite our school. She was waving her hand and I thought she was greeting me and I waved back. A few minutes later I realized that she was warning me to go back and run. When I turned I saw two buses carrying members of Inkatha. Before I knew it I was surrounded by more 100 people. Not far I saw a police van. I concluded that they had come with the police. I was attacked. They stabbed me with *intshumentsho* (i.e. a sharpened instrument made of steel) on my chest and shot me on my leg. I became a bit dizzy[1566]

Luckily, he was able to escape. "For some time I hid in the forest, then I went to a house where one of my students lived", Sikhakhane recalls.[1567] When his comrades in Pietermaritzburg learned about his ordeal, they decided that he should leave the country. Sikhakhane remembers

> I went to Pietermaritzburg. Himnal Mthembu and Reggie Hadebe organized that I should leave the country and I was told to go to Johannesburg to meet with Steve Tshwete. But that plan fell through because arrangements were not properly done[1568]

Sikhakhane stayed in Johannesburg and found employment as a teacher. He continued his political activism there as a member of the UDF and a Transvaal Unit of Umkhonto we Sizwe.[1569]

Sikhakhane's testimony illustrates two important factors, which were common in the 1990s. First, it is clear that Inkatha, as it was the case with vigilantes operating in Huhudi, Thabong and Tumahole, had the backing of the police. And second, vigilantes were determined to eradicate anyone challenging the *status quo.*

[1565] Ibid.
[1566] Ibid.
[1567] Ibid.
[1568] Ibid.
[1569] Ibid.

Maokeng, unlike other townships in the Free State and KwaZulu/Natal, did not experience the phenomenon of vigilantism in the mid-1980s, except for the sole attack on Dennis Bloem by three councillors.[1570] "In the papers before the court", writes Haysom, "the three councillors denied shooting at Mr Bloem but said they carried firearms to assist in the maintenance of law and order in the township".[1571] The reason for the absence of vigilantism in Maokeng would seem to have been because councillors were not violently threatened as was the case in other areas, where concerted efforts were made to attack and force them to resign. In fact, the Maokeng Town Council, as noted in chapter four, enjoyed a considerable support amongst some of the members of the community.

Although the violent actions by vigilantes, ostensibly with support from the state, instilled fear amongst the local political activists (and the residents in general) and disorganized protests directed at the apartheid policies, they, nevertheless, were unable totally to prevent activists from mobilizing and organizing members of their communities to continue with the struggle. Perhaps it was for this reason that the government resolved to exert its powers to maintain law and order.

In 1986 the government declared the national state of emergency and detained political activists *en masse*, sometimes for two or three years. Two years later, it restricted political structures in the country, including the UDF. This halted political protests in the townships. Only two organizations survived the crackdown, the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), although the latter was warned to focus its efforts on labour issues and not politics.[1572] During this period vigilantism subsided. But this was temporary. Vigilantism resurfaced again in 1990, leading Charney to write "the end of the political logjam unleashed an intense new outburst of vigilantism".[1573]

Revival of vigilantism, 1990s

Despite the 'unofficial war' between Inkatha and the UDF that was ravaging parts of KwaZulu/Natal, 1990 began on a promising note.[1574] On 2 February State President De Klerk announced in parliament the unbanning of the ANC, PAC, SACP, and other political organizations. Moreover, he proclaimed that the government had taken a decision finally to release Nelson Mandela from prison. Five months after this historic announcement, a rapid

[1570] Haysom *Mabangalala,* p.26
[1571] Ibid., p.27
[1572] For an account about the role played by these organizations during this period, see Gerhart and Glaser *From Protest,* pp.168-72
[1573] Charney 'Vigilantes', p.6
[1574] For a detailed account on the political violence in KwaZulu and Natal in the mid-1980s, see Kentridge, M. *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town, David Philip)

spread and escalation of political violence occurred in the country, especially in the Rand.[1575] There were two reasons for this. First, the National Party government, and its ally: the IFP, wanted to undermine the support base of the ANC and, second but relatedly, to cause confusion and sow divisions within the ANC, particularly between the 'hardliners' (i.e. those in favour of armed struggle) and moderates (i.e. those in support of the negotiations). This would boost the NP government's position during the negotiations.

At the beginning of 1990 the ANC and the government embarked on serious and open talks about the future of South Africa. For instance, in early May a high powered delegation of the ANC, including Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Thabo Mbeki, and others, met government delegation in Groote Schuur, Cape Town. "At the end of a three-day meeting", Mandela recalled "we agreed on what became known as the Groote Schuur Minute, pledging both sides to a peaceful process of negotiations and committing the government to lifting the State of Emergency …"[1576] Such talks followed years of secrete talks between the ANC and government, which were initiated by Mandela and Kobie Coetsee, then minister of Justice and Prisons, in 1985.[1577]

Although the National Party supported the negotiations for a 'new' South Africa, it was definitely not prepared to negotiate the end of the white rule. De Klerk, as the leader of the NP, was totally opposed to majority rule. According to Mandela "[De Klerk's] goal was to create a system of power-sharing based on group rights".[1578] This strategy should be viewed as a way of preserving the electoral support the NP still enjoyed and to gain more support. At this stage the white electorate was split between the NP and the white right-wing parties such as the Conservative Party and the AWB (Afrikaner Weerstandbeweging). The ANC, in contrast, favoured a majority rule. This caused some consternation within the NP's ranks. The latter feared that if the ANC, which undoubtedly had a large following through its alliance partners (UDF and COSATU), came to power, it would marginalize minority groups. Therefore, it sought allies who shared its Anti-ANC sentiments. These it found in the IFP.[1579]

Inkatha (later renamed IFP) was formed in 1928 by King Solomon Dinizulu as a cultural movement "to arouse public enthusiasm for the Zulu monarchy".[1580] After a slump from the 1930s, the organization was resuscitated in 1975 by Dinizulu's nephew Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi as the Inkatha *Ye Nkululeko Ye Sizwe*.[1581] The relationship between Buthelezi and the

[1575] Political violence flared up in the Rand after Inkatha was launched as a political on 14 July 1990 in Sebokeng. See Sparks *Tomorrow is Another Country*, p.138

[1576] Mandela, N. *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography f Nelson Mandela* (South Africa, Macdonald Purnell, 1994), pp.568-70

[1577] Ibid., pp.512-5; also see Gerhart and Glaser *From Protest,* pp.178-83

[1578] Ibid., p.569

[1579] Ibid.

[1580] Lodge, T. 'Other Political Forces: Inkatha and the Right', in Tom Lodge and Bill Nasson (eds.) *All, Here, and Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s* (Claremont, Ford Foundation and David Philip, 1991), p.153

[1581] Ibid.

ANC was cordial until 1979. A souring of relations occurred, according to Lodge, after Buthelezi "… had publicized discussions with the organization's leaders in London that the ANC had intended to be kept secrete".[1582] Their relationship further deteriorated when in 1976 Buthelezi criticized the student uprisings, and in the 1980s openly opposed the ANC's armed struggle and campaigned against the sanctions.[1583] An open violent clash between Inkatha and the ANC erupted in 1983 following the launching of the UDF, which Buthelezi accused of being the surrogates of the ANC.[1584] COSATU, which was also seen in similar light as the UDF, was not spared after it was established late in 1985. But it was the IFP's advocacy for "group rights" and federalism that intensified the violent clashes between the supporters of the IFP and ANC in the 1990s. For Buthelezi "federalism was a logical adjunct to the regional nature *of his* power base".[1585] He was well aware that outside of KwaZulu/Natal region his organization lacked support. Like the NP, the IFP and Buthelezi were wary of the majority rule under the ANC.

Matters reached boiling point when Inkatha attempted to expand its support base to other areas beyond KwaZulu/Natal. Its advances outside of its "natural" stronghold were strongly opposed by the UDF/MDM, and later the ANC. This set the ANC and IFP on a collision course which persisted until just before the 1994 national elections. It was for this reason that the NP, or some elements within its ranks, especially those within the security forces, found the IFP a natural ally to use to destabilise the ANC. It is to the violence between the ANC and IFP that many scholars writing about political violence in South Africa in the 1990s have tended to give special attention.

Bonner and Nieftagodien, in their book *Kathorus*, for example, trace the origins of political violence that ravaged the three East Rand townships: Katlehong, Thokoza, and Vosloorus, in the 1990s to taxi wars. They contend that the violent clashes were initially between the hostel-based taxi-operators and the township-based taxi operators, assisted by students (or the comrades, as they were known). Later the situation shifted from taxi-wars to political violence.[1586] This was after a taxi belonging to a member of the hostel-dwellers' taxi operators, Mr Ngobese, was burned, with passengers inside, on its way out of Thokoza to Nqutu, in the Free State Province. The reason for this gruesome act was that the passengers and the driver had ignored the stay-away called by COSATU, and enforced by township youth. Hostel-dwellers interpreted this as an attack on all the Zulu-speaking people, residing in the hostel – and by extension members of Inkatha – by the "komblese" (comrades), who were associated with the ANC.[1587]

[1582] Ibid., p.161
[1583] Ibid., p.162; Mandela *Long Walk,* p.565
[1584] Lowe, C. 'Buthelezi, Inkatha, and the Problem of Ethnic Nationalism in South Africa', in (eds.) Joshua Brown *et. al*.) *History from South Africa: Alternative Visions and Practices* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1991), p.196
[1585] Lodge *All, Here, and Now,* p.159 (Italics my emphasis)
[1586] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus,* pp.129-134
[1587] Ibid., pp.131-2

Furthermore, these authors, in their study of Alexandra Township, note that after a relatively tranquil period in Alexandra violent clashes erupted between the IFP supporters, based at Madala hostel, and the residents of the township – not staying in the hostel. These violent clashes, which caused loss of lives and immense damage to property, according to the authors, were precipitated by a fight over a girlfriend between a Zulu-speaking man and a Xhosa-speaking man. The latter killed the former, and the IFP members avenged his killing by attacking the residents of Freedom Park squatter settlement – associated with Xhosa-speaking group. And on 16 March 1991, after the IFP rally, violent clashes broke out between members of the IFP and the community, which resulted in the killing of 26 people in the first week.[1588]

Graeme Simpson, Steve Mokwena and Lauren Segal, in their study focused in the then Transvaal (today's part of the Gauteng Province), argue "One of the important factors explaining the outbreak of political violence in the Transvaal during 1990 was the context of negotiation".[1589] According to them "… It was clear that the escalating violence was having an effect of disorganizing and disrupting the ANC".[1590] They conclude "It suited the government to face a weakened rather than well-organised adversary (ANC)".[1591] Most importantly, the authors demonstrate that the political violence of the 1990s benefited some organizations and disadvantaged others. For them, for example, the ANC was "badly bruised by the political violence",[1592] because its attention was forced to oscillate between the negotiations and monitoring and finding solutions to quell this violence. It also came under enormous pressure from its supporters, "who were faced with the daily battles for survival", to reconsider negotiating with the National Party which was perceived as the orchestrator of this violence. Instead, the ANC supporters called for the return to the armed struggle.[1593] The benefits that accrued to the National Party as a result of the political violence was a weakened and disorganized ANC. And for the Inkatha Freedom Party it was a public acknowledgment of the party as the necessary part of the resolution to the problem of township violence and a long-term success of multi-party negotiations.[1594]

In spite of the illuminating reasons for the origins of political violence in different areas provided by the abovementioned authors, there is silence on the role of gangs in political violence. It is this matter that the chapter seeks to deal with. However, prior to doing this it is important to, first, gain some understanding what we mean by political violence.

[1588] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* pp.364-365; for more account on the fight over a girlfriend between a Zulu-speaking man and a Xhosa-speaking man see Lauren Segal 'The Human Face of Violence: Hostel Dwellers Speak', in *Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol.18, No.1, March 1991,* pp.224-225

[1589] Simpson, Mokwena and Segal 'Political Violence', CSVR, p.8

[1590] Ibid., p.10

[1591] Ibid.

[1592] Ibid., p.13

[1593] The ANC's leadership suspended armed struggle in August 1990. Gerhart and Glaser *From protest,* p.209

[1594] Simpson, Mokwena and Segal 'Political Violence', p.15; This was after the meeting between Nelson Mandela and Mangosuthu Buthelezi to discuss the continuing political violence in the country in 1991

Some views on understanding political violence

At this point, perhaps, it is advisable to pause and ask the question: what is political violence? And how does it manifest itself? Andre du Toit argues that prevailing discourses on political violence tend to be problematic in a peculiarly elusive way. According to him, they tend to see violence (or political violence) as 'obvious' and uncontested discourse.[1595] For him, the limitation of such discourse is that it is mainly a legitimist discourse. It tends to incorporate criteria for legitimate or illegitimate use of force into the very meaning of the crucial concept involved.[1596] Similarly, Graeme Simpson and Janine Rauch assert that "it is evident that one of the central problems which plagues any analysis of political violence in South Africa is the competing 'labels' through which the violence is described." "This problem", they add, "of 'labelling' is especially evident in the rhetoric of the various political interest groups themselves, as the political contest is waged in terms of who is responsible for the escalating political violence."[1597]

Taking a cue from these authors, it is not the intention of this chapter to exhaust discourses on political violence, nor does attempt to provide an all encompassing definition of political violence. What this chapter intends doing is to provide some understanding of political violence in South Africa in the 1990s. To achieve this, it will focus on the timing, scale, and opposing factions in the violence during this period. This, I believe will help us to comprehend the rationale for this violence (why did political violence flare up in Maokeng during this period?), the form it took and the character of the warring factions.

Various authors have attempted to provide definitions of political violence or tried to explain what political violence is. For Robin M. Williams, a sociologist, cited in du Toit, there is individual violence (or violence perpetrated by individuals) and organized or collective violence. He asserts that the latter includes the most important forms of political violence, both violence against the state such as rebellions, revolutions, insurrections, and so on, as well as the many forms of violence organized and implemented by the state such as wars, purges, counter-insurgency operations, political executions, and so on.[1598] And Jacklyn Cock, also a sociologist, in a chapter titled 'Political Violence' uses this phrase to mean "acts of destruction that impact on power relations in society".[1599] Monique Marks, using Ted Gurr's definition, writes "political

[1595] Du Toit, A. 'Discourses on Political Violence', in N. Chabani Manganyi and Andre du Toit (eds.) *Political Violence and the Struggle in South Africa* (London, Macmillan Academic, 1990), p.87
[1596] Ibid., p.88
[1597] Simpson. G. and Rauch, J. 'Political Violence: 1991'. http://www.csvr.org.za/index.php?option_content Downloaded, 29 September 2009
[1598] Du Toit 'Discourses, p.97
[1599] Cock, J. 'Political Violence', in Brian McKendrick and Wilma Hoffman (eds.) *People and Violence in South Africa* (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1990), p.44

violence refers to all collective attacks within a political community against the political regime, its actors – including competing political groups as well as incumbents – or its policies …"[1600]

Other commentators like Innes, cited by Simpson, Mokwena and Segal, define political violence in terms of the number of people who had died either as a result of action by security police or as a result of 'black-on-black' violence.[1601] Simpson, Mokwena and Segal argue that there are limitations with this definition, because "at best it only explains that violence was on the increase in 1990, at worst they mask thorough analysis by presenting description as explanation".[1602] For these authors a more workable definition could be that "violence which occurs between individuals or groups where the dominant motivation is based on political difference or the competing desire for political power".[1603]Most significantly, they add "a directly political situation may develop a dynamic and momentum of its own and certain violence may thus be political in origin, although the original motives have become displaced".[1604]

Williams, Cock, Marks, and Simpson, Mokwena and Segal's definitions highlight three important themes. First, for violence to be categorized political it has to be organized or collective violence, and secondly have an impact on power relations in society, and finally, be violence against the regime or its actors, or violence against the regime and its agents by their political opponents. These themes apply in the case of political violence that erupted in Maokeng in the early 1990s. Drawing from the above discussions I will define political violence in Maokeng as organized and directed against the state and its agents, with the intention of ameliorating the power-relations in society.

My interviewees in Maokeng, particularly former political activists, strongly felt the Three Million Gang (TMG) was not the main problem, but was a tool used by the state and its agents (the local councillors, the SAP and IFP) to try and derail the progress to liberation. It was for this reason that they believed that in order for them to achieve their liberation, they had to organize themselves against the TMG and defeat it. This would in turn weaken the state and its agents. Therefore, the violence in Maokeng was organized and had serious power relations.

It is against this background that the political violence that erupted in Maokeng and many other townships in the country should be understood. It was violence between organized factions for contrasting reasons. The TMG, councillors, SAP, and later, the IFP aimed to restore the *status*

[1600] See Johannes 'Do experience', p.12

[1601] The term 'black-on-black' violence was used by the state and the government-biased press to cover the direct role played by the government's security forces and its agents in the violence. It was intended for the international community and the local white electorate to conclude that black people cannot be left to govern themselves: they were barbaric and prone to resolving issue through violence. For estimates provided by Innes , see Simpson, Mokwena and Segal 'Political Violence', pp.5-6

[1602] Ibid., p.7

[1603] Ibid., p.8

[1604] Ibid.

quo and the ANCYL and the ANC opposed them with the sole aim of fighting and removing the unjust regime in power.

Gangsters, gangs and political violence

Literature on gangsters, gangs and their exploits in South Africa is in abundance.[1605] Equally, there is considerable work on gangs and political organizations, particularly in the 1950s and 1980s. For instance, Alfred Nzo, who had joined the ANC in 1945, claimed that all the gangs in Alexandra in the 1950s respected the ANC. They would even assist ANC members to distribute leaflets.[1606] Similarly, Gail Gerhart, cited by Glaser, notes that gangsters and gangs were more comfortable with the PAC during its legal existence in South Africa. This was because the PAC was action-oriented compared to the ANC (see chapter two).[1607] Furthermore, in the 1980s, the members of the Azanian National Youth Unity (AZANYU) in Thembisa recruited *tsotsis* because of their enterprising character.[1608] In an interview with Simon Mashishi, a founding member of the branch of AZANYU in Thembisa in 1985, observes

> Like I indicated before that we did not [recruit] everybody. We had a criterion that we used to judge people. [We recruited] intelligent people, argumentative people, brave people, and even thugs sometimes. We would know that this guy is a thug – he steals and hijacks. We would go to a particular thug and recruit him We would say to him 'look, we want a car and this car is wanted at such a time. And that car would be available. [Some of the *tsotsis* that] we recruited [were] people like Shadrack Mapalakanye and Tom Baloyi. We recruited them for specific purposes[1609]

Wilfried Scharf, on the other hand, in his study on gangs in Cape Town alludes to the relationship between gangs and the police. Scharf writes about the Ntsara gang, whose members named as their friend a policeman who had consistently exploited differences and precipitated

[1605] For example, see Van Onselen, C. *New Nineveh: Everyday Life on the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914* (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2011)*;* Bonner, P. 'Family, Crime and Political Consciousness on the East Rand, 1939-1955', in *Journal of Southern African Studies,* Vol.14., No.4, 1987; Bonner, P. and Segal, L. *Soweto: A History* (Cape Town, Maskew Miller Longman, 1998); Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra;* Glaser, C. 'When are they going to fight? Tsotsis, Youth Politics and the PAC', in (eds.) P. Bonner, Delius, P. and Posel. D. *Apartheid's Genesis 1935-1962* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1993); Bonner, P. 'The Russians on the Reef, 1947-57: urbanization, gang warfare and ethnic mobilisation', in Bonner, Delius and Posel *Apartheid's Genesis;* Guy and Thabane 'The Ma-Rashea' ; see also Kynock, G. *We Are Fighting The World: A History of the Marashea Gangs in South Africa, 1947-1999* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2005); Scharf, W. 'The resurgence of urban street gangs and community responses in Cape Town during the late eighties', in Desiree Hansson and Dirk van zyl Smit (eds.) *Towards Justice?: Crime and State Control in South Africa* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1990)

[1606] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* p.152

[1607] Glaser 'When are they going to fight?'

[1608] AZANYU was formed in 1981 as the youth wing of the PAC. See Moloi 'Youth Politics'

[1609] Ibid., pp.131-32

open conflict between sectors of the African community.[1610] In addition, Scharf notes "it has also been alleged that the police …. use gangs to provide information about illegal or politically-motivated activity in townships".[1611]

However, less known is the relationship between gangs and political violence.[1612] Johannes' study sheds some light about how gangs were drawn to political violence. Her findings illustrate that the 'Black Cats' gang which operated in Wesselton, Ermelo, about 250 kilometres from Johannesburg, was founded by Chris Ngwenya and Jwi Zwane after the two had a fall out with the community. In 1989 Ngwenya and Zwane led the Anti-Crime Campaign (ACC), a committee formed to fight crime and gangsterism in the township.[1613] The ACC worked closely with the police and the local councillors. But it also enjoyed support from the community. It targeted criminals and gangsters in the township; patrolled and searched them. All the weapons it confiscated from the criminal elements in the township were handed over to the police. It was not long however before some of the members of the ACC themselves began engaging in criminal acts and terrorized the residents of Wesselton. The residents' complaints fell on deaf ears. The police did not act against the ACC. A community meeting was called where it was resolved that the ACC should be dissolved. In the same meeting, the Wesselton Civic Association (WCA) was founded. This was a turning point in the politics of Wesselton.

The WCA tried to call the ACC to order unsuccessfully. At this stage the members of the ACC had renamed themselves the 'Black Cats'. During this period the WCA was also questioning the local councillors about the allegations of misappropriated funds in the council. The local councillors turned to the 'Black Cats' for protection. Mrs Dada, a member of the community, claimed "they used these children as their bodyguards". It was at this stage that the police and local councillors explicitly supported the 'Black Cats' to ward off attacks on the councillors by the WCA, and possibly by members of the newly formed Action Committee (AC). The AC was formed in June 1990 by some of the members of the community who wanted to end the violence ravaging the township. The AC called a community meeting and invited the 'Black Cats' and other gangs to discuss measures to end this violence. In that meeting a clash broke out between the Karateka Gang and the AC. The Karateka, in turn, joined the 'Black Cats' and terrorized the community, particularly the members of the WCA and AC. John Mndebele, testifying before the TRC Hearings, recalled "a spate of attacks on people and property ensued … Wesselton was subject to a reign of terror and … people who aligned themselves with the ANC were prime targets". The police failed to intervene and arrest the 'Black Cats'. To protect themselves and the

[1610] Scharf 'The resurgence', p.245
[1611] Ibid.
[1612] In the 1980s gangs in the Western Cape became involved in political protests, but, argues Scharf, cited by Seekings, "… they were more interested in looting and stealing than participating in 'political activity'. Seekings *Heroes or Villains,* p.45
[1613] During this period crime seemed to have been rampant in Wesselton largely caused by the Wire Gang and Ninja Gang

community, the WCA and AC fought back, ostensibly with the assistance of the ANC. Soon the 'Black Cats' felt cornered and "had no chance to survive in the township". It was during this period that they joined the IFP. Steve Ngwenya, testifying at the TRC Hearings, had the following to say about this development: "… the 'Black Cats' became involved in (sic) the IFP upon the instruction from the SAP".

Some of the members of the 'Black Cats' were taken to Ulundi, the then capital of KwaZulu, for military training as members of the IFP. After receiving training they returned to Wesselton to continue their reign of terror. Members of the community, who had links with Chris Hani, the Chief of Staff of MK, formed a Special Committee and this Committee nominated Gushu, a member of the ANC (and possibly an MK cadre as well) to carry out the task of murdering Jwi Zwane, one of the leaders of the 'Black Cats'. It was hoped that Zwane's death would end the violence. However, this was not to be. Violence continued unabated even after his death. Again, Gushu was given the responsibility to assassinate Chris Ngwenya, the 'Black Cats' second-in-command. Gushu executed his order in July 1991 and the violence ended.[1614]

Johannes' study demonstrates a clear collaboration between gangs, councillors, the SAP, and IFP in their objective to derail the struggle to eradicate apartheid and its agents. But it also illustrates how gangs took advantage of the political situation to advance their own personal interests. Kynock's work, like Johannes', shows the relationship between gangs, police and the IFP in fomenting political violence in Thokoza and Sebokeng in the early 1990s. He demonstrates how Mbhekiseni Khumalo, an Archbishop of the Light of Church of God in Zion and a member of the IFP since the 1970s, formed the Khumalo Gang to fight the supporters of the ANC in Thokoza during 1992 and 1993.[1615] Khumalo, testifying before the TRC Hearings, pointed out that before 1992 he was in good relations with the community of Thokoza, to the extent that they even nominated him to be part of a street committee.[1616] He claims to have declined the nomination on religious grounds.[1617]The situation changed after his daughter was abducted and raped by a neighbourhood gang, the 'Bad Boys'[1618] – which Khumalo strongly believed were ANC members.

[1614] This summarized version of political violence in Wesselton is drawn from Johannes' long essay. Johannes 'Do experience'

[1615] Kynock 'Crime, Conflict and Politics'; also see UWL South African History Archives (hereafter SAHA) AL2924 (Box No. A6.1.9) 'Sally Sealy Collection: TRC, Section 29 Hearings "In Camera", Mbekiseni Khumalo', Johannesburg, 29 May 1998. I am grateful to Professor Sekibakiba Peter Lekgoathi for bringing this source to my attention

[1616] Allegations have been made against him that in 1991 he was part of the people who planned the assassination of Sam Ntuli, a trade unionist and popular ANC figure in the East Rand. Kynock 'Crime, Conflict and Politics' p.504

[1617] Ibid.

[1618] Kynock 'Crime, Conflict and Politics', p.503; Testifying before the TRC Hearings, Khumalo makes no mention about his daughter, Grace, being raped. He agreed that the 'Bad Boys' gang indeed attempted to abduct her. TRC Hearings: Mbekiseni Khumalo

Khumalo and some of his family members and acquaintances – all supporters of the IFP – decided to take the law into their own hands and shot and killed members of the 'Bad Boys'. It was at this stage that the residents of Thokoza turned against him because "… he vented his rage indiscriminately on male township youth".[1619] Khumalo and his followers turned to Inkatha for protection "and the Archbishop soon became a notorious Inkatha strongman and attracted additional followers to form what became known as the 'Khumalo Gang'".[1620] The gang unleashed a reign of terror, maiming, killing the supporters of the ANC, and destroying property of his enemies, acts which Khumalo denied during the TRC Hearings. He even refuted allegations of his actual involvement in some of these acts made by former members of the gang, Themba Zimo and Nicholas Zweli Jamani.[1621]

Residents' suspicion of Khumalo's collaboration with the police were confirmed when the police offered him and his family protection round the clock. When asked why the police protected him, Khumalo responded

> I also asked the police the same question. They said "We heard that you are being attacked and the law says we should come and guard you, protect you so that we should not find you dead"[1622]

In addition to protecting Khumalo, the Murder and Robbery Squad in Benoni was alleged to have attended barbecues at different houses owned by members of the Khumalo Gang and supplied the names and car registration numbers of people they wanted killed to Archbishop, whose men would carry out the murders.[1623]

In 1993 Khumalo's wife, Sebeth Khumalo was murdered. Khumalo blamed the ANC's comrades. According to Kynock, a former member of the Self-Defence Units (SDU) claimed this was the case. In retaliation, Khumalo and his gang attacked the Ngema tavern because "it was frequented by ANC supporters …"[1624] Khumalo and his son were finally arrested for burning down their neighbour's house, possibly in retaliation for his wife's killing.[1625]

Furthermore, Kynock notes that the Kheswa Gang in Sebokeng, in the Vaal Triangle, assumed similar role as the Khumalo Gang. It targeted ANC members and supporters, and enjoyed the full support of the police before Kheswa was murdered in 1993. This gang was formed by Victor

[1619] Kynock 'Crime, Conflict and Politics', p.503
[1620] Ibid., pp.503-4
[1621] TRC Hearings: Mbekiseni Khumalo
[1622] Ibid.
[1623] Kynock 'Crime, Conflict and Politics', p.505
[1624] Ibid., p.504; TRC Hearings: Mbekiseni Khumalo
[1625] TRC Hearing: Mbekiseni Khumalo; for a detailed account about the political violence in Thokoza, see also Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus*

Khetisi Kheswa, a notorious gang leader who specialized in stealing cars.[1626] In late 1990 Kheswa clashed with the comrades over a shebeen brawl. "Kheswa resisted comrades' attempt to disarm him", writes Kynock, "and managed to escape, despite being shot".[1627] He sought protection from the IFP and moved in with them at the KwaMadala hostel. It was at this stage that Kheswa formed the Kheswa Gang, together with Vananda Mtwana Zulu. Ernest Sotsu, a leader of the ANC in Boipatong, claimed that after spending eight years in a prison in Umthatha, Transkei, for ANC's activities he returned to Boipatong where he came into contact with Zulu. The latter informed him that he was being threatened by the youth league and requested Sotsu to intervene. Within a week, Sotsu claimed, the police arrived and took Zulu to KwaMadala hostel.[1628] It is not clear why the police moved Zulu to KwaMadala hostel – the IFP's stronghold. However, it is possible that they feared that if Sotsu managed to call off the youth threatening Zulu, Sotsu would gain the confidence of the latter. And this would disrupt their objectives, that of disorganizing the ANC in Sebokeng. As soon as Zulu was taken to the hostel, the Kheswa Gang and the IFP started fighting the comrades, and in January 1991 Kheswa murdered Christopher Nangalembe, a leader of the local 'people's court'.[1629] On 12 January the Kheswa Gang attacked and killed people who had attended the night vigil held at Nangelembe's home.

The Kheswa Gang's notoriety grew. It was linked to several high profile killings, including the murder of Sotsu's wife, and the shooting incident at the Erik Tavern that resulted in five additional deaths.[1630] The Kheswa Gang seemingly had *carte blanche* to unleash a reign of terror in the Vaal Triangle. The police stood idle and did not arrest the members of the gang, including Kheswa. Sotsu, testifying before the TRC, alleged that Kheswa was in the payroll of the police. Kheswa was finally arrested for illegal possession of an AK47 in September 1991. He served four months and was released, pending an appeal. The residents of Sebokeng believed this was because of his close relationship with the authorities.[1631] Kheswa was again arrested for the attack and killing of Sotsu's wife. He was identified during the parade by Sotsu's grandchildren,

[1626] Kynock 'Crime, Conflict and Politics', p.505; this description was confirmed by Ernest Sotsu, a member of the ANC in Boipatong, whose wife was killed by the Kheswa gang. See Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Human Rights Violation, Submissions – Questions & Answers, Date: 06/08.96 Sebokeng. Ernest Sotsu. I am grateful to Dr Tim Gibbs for brining this source to my attention

[1627] Kynock 'Crime, Conflict and Crime', p.505

[1628] TRC: Human Rights Violations. Ernest Sotsu

[1629] It is alleged that Nangalembe and Kheswa had a long-standing quarrel over a girlfriend and when Kheswa and four of his gang members were brought before the people's court presided over by Nangelembe, the latter passed a death sentence on the five, but Kheswa managed to escape again. Ibid., pp.505-6

[1630] Kynock 'Crime, Conflict and Politics', p.506

[1631] Ibid., pp.506-7

who were also shot and wounded in the attack, as one of the attackers. While in police custody, he was murdered apparently by the police to cover their complicity on township killings.[1632]

Continuous attacks on communities by the IFP, assisted by gangs, corroded the ANC's support amongst its followers, and caused discomfort amongst some of the leading figures within the ANC. The ANC followers felt betrayed by the leadership of the ANC because it was continuing negotiating with the government that was killing them. Summing up the frustration of the people, Frene Ginwala, then head of research for the ANC, wrote

> Having begun with the perception that the National Party was led by a man of integrity and was genuinely seeking a negotiated solution, the feeling grew that in fact the levers of state power were being manipulated in order to weaken the ANC and hence to force it in whatever negotiations followed to make compromises over the types of changes believed necessary in any political dispensation. There was considerable anger at the grassroots and within the ANC leadership[1633]

There was also a growing disquiet amongst a certain section of the ANC's supporters in the townships that the ANC did not care. Hence it did not want to give them weapons to protect themselves against their assailants. Mandela remembers that at a rally he was addressing days after the Boipatong massacre, he saw a sign that read: 'Mandela give us guns'.[1634] Lodge writes "on East Rand, members of locally assembled 'defence units' told journalists that they had asked the ANC to provide them with guns, expressing disappointment that no guns had as yet been delivered".[1635]

And Medupi "Professor" Maboe, a founding member of the SDU in Bekkersdal, in the West Rand, recalls that during their (ANC) fight with the members of AZAPO, who were assisted by the IFP, they sought guns from Mandela but he refused. Dramatically, Maboe explains

> Comrade Nelson Mandela refused to give us guns. He said 'Comrades, I'm not going to give you guns because you've killed too many people in Bekkersdaal. If I give

[1632] Ibid; see also TRC: Human Right Violations, Ernest Sotsu; The gruesome attack on the community of Boipatong on 17 June 1992 by the IFP, and possibly the Kheswa Gang was involved as well, where 46 people, mostly children, were left dead forced the ANC to temporary pull out of the negotiations. See Mandela *Long Walk,* p.595
[1633] Marks *Young Warriors,* p.66
[1634] Mandela *Long Walk*, p.596
[16351635] Lodge, T. ,'The African National Congress in the 1990s', in (eds.) Glenn Moss and Ingrid Obery *South African Review: From 'Red Friday' to CODESA (*Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1992), p.63

> guns there would be no one left in Bekkersdaal'. We decided to ignore him and found other ways to get guns[1636]

Mandela also notes that within the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ANC there were those who were beginning to question the wisdom of suspending the armed struggle.[1637]

Although there were elements in Maokeng identical to the situation in other townships engulfed by political violence, there were also sharp differences. Maokeng Township had two distinctive features, which can help explain the different turn of events in the township. First, Maokeng, unlike other townships ravaged by political violence during this period, did not have hostels or squatter settlement(s).[1638] Literature on political violence in the 1990s shows the significance of these places in the violent conflicts that swept the Rand, in particular. Hostels became the IFP camps (or bases) and squatter settlements, the UDF/ANC's camps.[1639]

Relatedly, during this period in the townships hostels were seen by non-hostel dwellers (and this view was also appropriated by members of the IFP) as places where only the Zulu-speaking ethnic group – and by extension members of the IFP - resided. Babylon Ka Xeketwane, in his study of the relation between hostels and political violence in Soweto, writes "There were many local reports of 'Zulus being bussed in and taking over the migrant workers' hostels, then using them as bases from which to launch attacks on residents'".[1640] This view is supported by one of the interviewees in the study by Lauren Segal when he said

> I only started joining Inkatha last year (1990) because of the violence. Otherwise I wasn't interested. I joined because they said if you were Zulu, you were Inkatha. All Zulus who live in the hostel were classified as Inkatha and were killed. … I joined at Kwesine hostel in Natalspruit … [1641]

Interestingly, this interview reveals how some of the Zulu-speaking people were cajoled into joining Inkatha. Their 'Zuluness' was (mis)used to classify them automatically as members of Inkatha. This method was used by the leadership of Inkatha when recruiting new members. They took advantage of the fears and anxiety of the Zulu migrants living in urban areas during the

[1636] Maboe claims that they were able to find guns from their friends who were gangsters in Diepkloof, Soweto. Interview with Medupi "Professor" Maboe by Vusi Khumalo, for the SADET Oral History Project, Bekkersdal, 19 May 2011
[1637] Ibid.
[1638] In the early 1980s there were hostels, accommodating migrant workers, in Maokeng. However, because of the economic decline over the years, which caused companies to shutdown and forced others out of Kroonstad, there was no need to keep the hostels. See Kroonstad Community Council Minutes (n.d., but possibly 1982)
[1639] See Bonner and Nieftagodien *Kathorus;* Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra;* Ka Xeketwane 'The relation'
[1640] Ka Xeketwane 'The relation', p.27
[1641] Segal 'The Human Face', p.215; In 1992 the International Commission of Jurists (IJC) reported that "many hostels in the Transvaal are today used as Inkatha barracks", see Ka Xeketwane 'The Relation', p.39

violent clashes. This was not a new phenomenon, though. Prince (then Chief) Mangosuthu Buthelezi, leader of Inkatha, when discussing Inkatha for the first time in the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly in April 1975 shared similar sentiments: "… All members of the Zulu nation are automatically members of Inkatha if they are Zulus …"[1642] Conversely, this classification was also used by the Xhosa-speaking people (and members of other ethnic groups) when justifying their violent actions against the IFP. They contended that all Zulu-speaking people, living in the hostels, were members of the IFP. It is important to note that this was incorrect. Not all members of the Zulu-speaking ethnic group were members of the IFP. Neither were all members of the Xhosa-speaking ethnic group supporters of the ANC. A 1990 survey of political opinion in the black townships of the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vaal (PWV) by the McCann Advertising Agency found a staggering resentment of Inkatha by blacks outside Natal, including many Zulus, who seemed to consider it a greater danger than many radical white right-wing movements.[1643]

Beyond this, Maokeng was not divided on ethnic basis. Although there were Zulu-speaking and Xhosa-speaking ethnic groups in Maokeng, whose roots go back to the late 1930s, these were minority. Maokeng Township has always been dominated by the South Sotho-speaking ethnic group. This had a profound influence on the Zulu-speaking and Xhosa-speaking people to the extent that they ended adopting the South Sotho culture, like the language.[1644] Therefore, ethnic cleansing was never a problem in Maokeng. Because of these two distinctive features, the IFP only appeared after the violent conflicts between the Three Million Gang and Maokeng Youth Congress (MAYCO) had already broken out in Maokeng. It is important to note though that Inkatha had a presence, or enjoyed the following of few supporters in Maokeng in the 1970s, and in the early 1990s. In the 1970s amongst the most notable members of Inkatha were Mr Serote,[1645] who was once the chairman of the Maokeng Community Council, and in the 1990s Mr Lovers Petrus Lenkwane.[1646]

The chapter will now turn to the cause(s) of political violence and how this violence played out in Maokeng. It is important to note here that this violence can be traced back to gang warfare in the mid-1980s between the original TMG and Canada (Ma-Canada) Gang, and later between the 'new' TMG and MAYCO (an affiliate of SAYCO) – later renamed ANC Youth League (ANCYL) Maokeng branch. The activities and role of these gangs are reconstructed through oral testimonies, especially from a family member of one of the former members of the original TMG and from former political activists who lined up against these gangs.

[1642] Mare and Hamilton *An Appetite,* p.57
[1643] Simpson, Mokwena and Segal 'Political Violence', p.14
[1644] See interview with Masizane; This view also comes up in the interview with Parkies Setiloane, who made the example using the cultural background of Mpopetsi Jonas Dhlamini
[1645] See interview with Letsabo
[1646] See interview with Mamorena Taje (LHPR), Gelukwaarts, Maokeng, 25 September 2009

The original Three Million Gang

Commentators on gangs and gangsterism in South Africa seem to be in agreement that the main factors that cause gangs (or young people to join gangs) are dysfunctional families, lack of schooling, and unemployment.[1647] They attribute these to the crisis of capitalism and the apartheid system in general. A closer look at the Ramasimong family indicates elements of a dysfunctional family. This in turn will help us to understand the factors that may have forced Ramodikoe George "Diwiti" and his younger brother, Matsile, to the life in the streets and finally gangs.

The Ramasimong nuclear family comprised of the mother, Thandiwe Martha, and her four children: Mamorena, who was born in 1956; Buti, 1959; Ramodikoe ("Diwiti"), 1963, and Matsile, 1966. The children grew up without their father, Essau Rudolf Manus.[1648] Mamorena Taje recalls that their father was a Bishop at the St. John's Church and used to move around praying and singing in Malay Kamp (Cairo). Thandiwe worked as a nurse at Boitumelo Hospital, in Maokeng. She single-handedly raised her children. Like most mothers she tried providing the best she could for her children. She did laundry for them and made sure they always looked clean. Taje remembers: "Our mother liked working. She washed our clothes in the evening. We were always clean. When we came back from school, obviously, you would wear clean things. So, people said we liked acting (i.e. behaving) like whites, such things".[1649] The situation was normal. Both Buti and "Diwiti" played football and were star players for their teams, which earned them nicknames 'The Man' and 'M'jojana', respectively. Taje claims that "Diwiti" was even invited for trials at Bloemfontein Celtic Football Club, a premiership team.

[1647] See for example, Dissel Amanda 'Youth, Street Gangs and Violence in South Africa', in *Youth, Street Culture and Urban Violence in Africa,* proceedings of the International Symposium held in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, May 1997, pp.1-4

[1648] Interview with Mamorena Taje

[1649] Ibid.



Mrs Thandiwe Ramasimong
(*Source:* Mamorena Taje)

But because of the odd working shifts at the hospital at times, Thandiwe could not always be with her children. It was in such instances that the older siblings had to assume responsibility for the younger ones. Sometimes this arrangement ended disastrously. Taje recalls an incident when "Diwiti" stabbed a young girl living in their neighbourhood and this attracted negative remarks from some of the residents. She remembers

> Matsile, the youngest one, fought with one of the children staying opposite our home. As he was fighting with this child … I think instead of intervening people from that house came out and wanted to attack my brother. Then "Diwiti" went out and wanted to whip them. They took the whip from him. You see, the mischievousness? I think he picked up a bottle and stabbed one of the children … he stabbed the other girl on her breast. … They then called the police. He was young and already he was arrested. [You know people were saying] 'Those children are thugs! They kill people. My mother works at the hospital. And these things happened when she wasn't there[1650]

After completing her junior schooling in Brentpark and Maokeng, Taje was sent to Aliwal North, in the Eastern Cape Province, to attend school at St. Joseph. The boys remained in Maokeng and continued with their schooling. While in Aliwal North Taje fell pregnant and had to discontinue

[1650] For this offence, "Diwiti" who was eighteen years was sentenced to three months imprisonment and six months was suspended. Telephonic interview with Mamorena Taje, 22 October 2009

her schooling and returned home to raise her child. Lack of parental guidance also affected the boys, particularly "Diwiti" and Matsile. "Diwiti" had his second brush with the law when he was arrested on a rape charge. As a result he was found guilty and sentenced to 18 months in prison. Matsile, on the other hand, found a "home and comfort" in the streets. He founded, together with some of his age cohorts in the same neighbourhood, the "Three Million Gang", which started as a loose group of boys dancing and hanging out together, but then later gravitated towards crime.

Scharf trace the development of such groups in Cape Town back to the period of heightened political protests in the mid-1980s. Scharf argues "as the boycotts dragged on, more and more scholars dropped out of political organizations and sought other forms of entertainment".[1651] One form of entertainment that was not affected by ideological tensions", he adds "was that of competitions for dance-groups known as *mapantsula".*[1652] Dance groups were created and held competitions. "Rivalry developed into animosity", writes Scharf "when groups who thought they should have won, did not".[1653] According to Scharf, winning groups were accused of bribing the judges. It was not long before these groups, which usually composed of youths who resided in a particular geographic area, began engaging in skirmishes protecting their territories.[1654] "As the cycle of attacks and counter-attacks developed", notes Scharf "the dance-groups came to be seen as street gangs".[1655]

Without doubt it was against this background that the original Three Million Gang (TMG) was formed. It is not clear when this gang was formed. However, all of my interviewees are in agreement that it existed before the 1990s. It is possible that it was established in the mid-1980s. Originally, the TMG was made up of young males living in Seeisoville. Taje recalls

` Let me say, Seeisoville - our Seeisoville - was at the top and there was another Seeisoville at the bottom. Those at the bottom called themselves Ma-Canada. And those at the top called themselves Three Million. So, at that time our sibling was friends with Toko Lefafa. Who else can I mention? Oh, *batho ba Modimo* (Oh, people of God!) Sebuti, and others who stayed in our street. They had this thing of liking the Americanoes look. They wore things that looked like bell-bottoms, going around with walking sticks, doing like this (demonstrating with hand: swaying their walking sticks), competing with the other group. This happened until they started fighting each other. I think they were jealous of each other or whatever. But they had

[1651] Scharf 'The resurgence', p.238
[1652] Ibid.
[1653] Ibid., p.241
[1654] Ibid.
[1655] Ibid.

such a thing. "Diwiti" was in jail at that time[1656]

Similarly, Antjie Krog writes "Expert witnesses describe the Three Million, formerly known as the Americanoes, as a group of men who first became known for wearing smart suits and parading in the streets. They quickly became popular, attracting more and more members, because they offered protection against criminality that is endemic to impoverished societies."[1657]

At this point the young friends from Seeisoville had christened themselves the 'Three Million' after a musical group with the same name.[1658] Apparently, the latter enjoyed the song titled 'I've been robbed' by this musical group. Samuel "Bebeto" Taka, a former member of the 'new' TMG, explains

> Well, I heard there was another group of the Three Million that used to play a song called "I'll be rocked" (Actually it's 'I've been robbed'). I'll be rocked … (singing). Yes, I hear they liked that track, so they decided to name themselves after it. I no longer hear it on radios. And whenever you see them sitting in the streets, you would hear the track. They were *bras* (friends). People like Machangani, Masusu, Buti Kraag, Teboho[1659]

As Taje explains above, it was not long before tensions developed between the Three Million and the Canadians. Chabaseile Makume, a student activist during this period, remembers: "There was the Three Million and the other one was Canada. Actually, those were the people who used to fight for things like 'which group rules Seeisoville?' and over clothes, and such petty issues."[1660] Mamokhele Sebetoane and Bethuel Thekiswe provide a different view why these gangs fought each other. For Sebetoane, tension between the Three Million and the Canadians started during football matches and these developed to the extent that the Three Million began murdering some of the young people who were associated with the Canadians. She explains

> When this thing started apparently it was during soccer matches. So, there was another group here in Seeisoville called the Canada. Eh, clashes started between them (Three Million) and the Canada … and it spread throughout the entire community, especially now it also involved the activists. If you look at it carefully those guys, the Canada group,

[1656] Interview with Mamorena Taje; Mokwena provides a similar description of how the Zebra Force gang, in Soweto, was formed. Mokwena 'The Era', p.9
[1657] Krog, *Begging to be Black* (Cape Town, Random House Struik, 2009), p.160
[1658] The Three Million released the song I've been robbed in 1983 under the Citillion Records, see http://discogs.com/viewimages?release=185961 Accessed, 27 July 2010
[1659] Interview with Samuel "Bebeto" Take (LHPR), Mphefela, Maokeng, 13 August 2009; interview with Matli
[1660] Interview with Makume

> as I say they were staying at the upper part of Seeisoville. They (Three Million) killed a lot of children from that area. When I say children, I mean, the youth of that area[1661]

Thekiswe, who joined the South African Police (SAP) in 1982 and was stationed in Maokeng, contends that the two gangs clashed over territory and crime. Each gang felt challenged, and perhaps even insulted, when the other gang invaded their territory to commit crime. In his words

> 1983, 1984, 1985 that was the time of the Canadians in Seeisoville and Phomolong, because those locations didn't experience high crime rate … Before, crime was only taking place in the Old Location. But the Canadians invaded these places; people started experiencing crime … They would rob people at night and *do* housebreaking. It was people like Bra Shakespear and others. It was only until the Three Million stepped in and the two gangs would sometimes clash. You would find that the other gang had committed crime in the area where the second gang was based. Therefore, this other gang would want to do the same and go and rob in the other gang's area. And they would end up clashing[1662]

The fighting between the two gangs normally took place on weekends and in shebeens. Thekiswe explains: "They would only clash for that weekend. It wasn't a regular thing".[1663] And when asked why did they clash specifically on weekends? He noted that it was "because they used to meet at shebeens on weekends".[1664] From the late 1970s shebeens had become preferred places for relaxing and drinking in the townships. These had also become places where political discussions took place.[1665] In the early 1980s Maokeng Township, just like many other townships, was teeming with shebeens, albeit, illegal. Most of the shebeen owners did not have licenses legally permitting them to operate. And for this reason, Thekiswe recalls that they (SAP) had established a task team which patrolled the shebeens "… because that time they were not licensed. So the task team arrested the owners."[1666] Scharf contends that the rapid development of shebeens post-1976 was the state's strategy to create a black middle-class, which could act as a buffer between the disgruntled black masses and the state. Scharf writes

> When Verwoerdian apartheid proved unworkable following the Soweto uprisings, political strategy occasioned the state to seek out a group of fledgling entrepreneurs who could for the backbone of the newly nurtured black middle class. The only sizeable group that possessed entrepreneurial skills were the shebeen owners, and the state, with

[1661] Interview with Sebetoane (LHPR), Seeisoville, Maokeng, 13 August 2009
[1662] Interview with Bethuel Thekiswe (LHPR), Kroonstad, 26 March 2010
[1663] Ibid.
[1664] Ibid.
[1665] Interview with Greg Malebo with Tshepo Moloi, for the SADET Oral History Project, 14 October 2004
[1666] Interview with Thekiswe

> encouragement from liquor capital, thus focused on these shebeen owners and commenced a process of legalizing the distribution of liquor by Africans in townships[1667]

From the mid-1980s, shebeens were upgraded to taverns. Taverns were licensed and did not sell *mqombothi* (homemade beer). Most importantly, they were patronised by young people. Some of the popular and mostly frequented taverns by the gangs in Maokeng were Selolo's, Mametsi (or 'Sweet Waters'), Jimane, Ha-Stoko (Stock's Place), and Ha-Manki (Manki's Place).[1668]In an interview with Taje, together with Mametsi Moletsane (the former owner of 'Sweet Waters' tavern)[1669], both echoed Thekiswe's sentiments about the clashes between the two gangs taking place in the taverns. They recalled an incident in 1990 when "Diwiti" was stabbed 26 times by the members of the Canadians at Mametsi's tavern but did not die.[1670] Mametsi, takes up the story: "after he was stabbed one of his friends came and took him to the hospital". "Yes", she adds, "he was taken by 'Dozen'. When he got further up in my street at the corner he fell. We were scared to go, because there were too many thugs then."[1671] After this incident "Diwiti" moved in with his mother in Gelukwaarts (see below).

[1667] Scharf 'The resurgance', pp.234-5
[1668] Ibid.
[1669] For Mametsi Molotsane's profile, see Pherudi *Who's Who,Vol.1,* p.50
[1670] Interview with Taje
[1671] Ibid.



"Diwiti" (dark complexion and bearded man) enjoying himself in one of the taverns in Maokeng (*Source: Matshidiso Rantie*)

In addition to fighting the Canadians, the TMG also targeted members of the 'community', particularly men who worked for the Premier Milling Company. The reason for this is unclear. But it is possible that they wanted to rob them of their hard earned money to either purchase clothes or to finance their drinking sprees at the taverns. Recalling one incident, Taka remarks that the male labourers at the Premier Milling responded by forming themselves into a group in order to defend themselves. Taka remembers

> Then there was Premier [Milling Company] which also formed its group of workers as well. These ones [Three Million] were now abusing the Premier's group, taking their belongings like clothes, money and furniture. … In terms of clothing they nearly looked (wore) alike. So, they would do such things; fight and stab one another[1672]

Sobi "slove" Matli, who in the early 1990s was part of the self-defence structures in the township, concurred with Taka but went on to explain that the Premier Milling workers decided

[1672] Interview with Taka

to challenge the TMG because they felt that the police were ineffective in dealing with the gang. He explains

> There was the original TMG … somewhere in 1983 … Some of their members were 'Six-Nine', Mahlomola, Toko Lefafa, and many others I have forgotten. In 1986 the Premier (Milling) workers engaged this TMG because it was terrorizing the community. They went to the police, I can still remember, to say 'we're tired of these *tsotsis*, can we handle them?' The police said 'go and get them but don't harm them'[1673]

Without evidence it is difficult to substantiate Matli's claim that the police would allow the Premier workers to attack the TMG. However, it seems likely that the Premier workers reported the TMG to the police that this gang was terrorising them and when they realised that the police were not prepared to take proper action against this gang, they opted to defend themselves. Later the Premier workers' actions provided the police with an excuse to deny the SAP's involvement in the political violence ravaging Maokeng. Instead, the spokesperson of the SAP blamed the 'unrest' on the fight between the TMG, Canadians and Premier workers.[1674]

At this point it is clear that the TMG had gravitated towards crime. The reason for this, as in the case of the Zebra Force Gang, in Soweto, in Steve Mokwena's study, was to "… deal with their daily circumstances *and to survive economically*".[1675] Mokwena, again, shows that the Zebra Force Gang, which first caught the public's eye on 25 December 1990 after it had broken into the Salvation Army Girls Home in Killarney, Soweto, and abducted young girls to rape, began as "a loose group of boys who hung out in a house in Ngiba Street, smoking *dagga* (marijuana), slowly began to engage in criminal activities. First, by stealing bicycles …"[1676]

Realising the seriousness of the problem of gangsterism in the township, the 'comrade youth', the Ministers' Fraternal, and the South African Council of Churches (SACC) – Kroonstad branch - made attempts, first, to determine the reason for this problem and, then, to broker peace between the two gangs: TMG and the Canadians. The 'comrade youth' took the first step. Paseka Mpondo, a member of the Ditsekelekwas – a community self-defence structure comprising of young people under the age of 20 describes how they approached this issue

> It was two gangs. The one was Canada and the other one was [Three Million]…You know with the gangs you will never know what they're fighting for. They were just

[1673] Interview with Matli; for a brief personal profile of Matli see Pherudi *Who's Who in Maokeng,* pp.231-33; also see testimony by Dennis Bloem at the TRC Amnesty Hearing, Kroonstad, 1996. http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/kroon/kroon.thm
[1674] *The Citizen, 4 January 1991*
[1675] Mokwena 'the Era', p.9 (Italics my emphasis)
[1676] Ibid., pp.1-9

> being bossy. They just wanted to rule the township, do you understand? It's things like that. Then we met as comrades and discussed the issue that there was something happening in our township, in Maokeng. There are gangs fighting each other and people were dying. So, what do we do since we are here to protect the people? We were fighting for the freedom of the country. We decided that we would try to resolve the issues between them. We were not going to side with any gang; we were just going to go between them so that we could stop what they were doing. So, we divided ourselves as comrades. There would be other comrades who would go to the Three Million's base. They would stay there to prevent them from attacking the Canadians. We also did the same thing to the Canadians. Then we tried to engage them. We organised meetings so that they could talk and this thing must come to an end[1677]

It was no surprise when the 'comrade youth' took this position. The latter saw themselves as the protectors of their communities, as Mpondo alludes in the interview; but they also perceived themselves as upholders of 'morality' in the township. Therefore, it was their responsibility to encourage peace and unity among the members of the 'community'. As Marks observes

> Youth who engaged in the liberation struggle didn't only believe they were defending the community in a physical sense. They felt they were also defending the 'morality' of the township, and in doing so, building unity or homogeneity. They wanted to preserve what was good in the township. Being 'moral' meant not committing crimes against other community members[1678]

It was for this reason that whenever there were reports of misdemeanours committed against members of the community, the 'comrade youth' would discipline the culprit. Machabe Thulo, who was a leading figure in the ANCYL Maokeng branch and later the commander of the 'community' self defence structures in Maokeng in the 1990s, explains: "Remember that time we were the people who disciplined criminals. If someone broke into someone else's house, we would go and beat him up with *sjamboks* (whips)."[1679] Matli, also a member of the ANCYL Maokeng branch, concurs

> '90, '91,'92 ... the political programme was very active. So, there was no time for *tsotsis* to behave as *tsotsis*. And we were also vigilant, because we would say comrade so and so move from here to that particular place. We never thought about *tsotsis*. Make no mistake, if they get you, we would identify them. They are dead. I remember myself

[1677] Interview with Paseka Mpondo, Oupa Mokotla and Phankhe Mbona (LHPR), Constantia, Maokeng, 24 September 2009
[1678] Marks *Young Warriors,* p.125
[1679] Interview with Thulo; for Machabe's profile, see Pherudi *Who's who?',* pp.233-5

> dealing with few *tsotsis*. We dealt with them and they could not believe it. We sjamboked them[1680]

On the other hand, the 'comrade youth' also punished 'comrades' who misbehaved. However, when the 'comrade youth' failed to discipline Daniel George for seriously violating his rights, "Diwiti" felt betrayed and this, partly, forced him to seek revenge (see below).

The attempts by the 'comrade youth' to unite and bring between the two gangs do not seem to have been successful. Tensions and clashes continued unabated between the two gangs. Next, it was the Ministers Fraternal's turn to intervene. Alfred Nthai Matube, who was a member of the Ministers' Fraternal was born in Kroonstad in 1947, and was later ordained as a Minister in the Roman Catholic Church, reflects on their role in trying to end the clashes between the TMG and the Canadians. He explains

> The Three Million issue, it was a big thing in Kroonstad. There was nothing bigger than that ... In our street in the township, where I used to live ... the same street as Reverend Gozongo ... it is called Khumahadi Street, two young people died in that street because of that conflict [between the] ANC and the Three Million ... Not the ANC. There was this gang called Canada from Seeisoville. Now it was a battle that I can say it was Canada versus the Three Million ... Not long it was the ANC versus the Three Million. At that time this other boy from our street passed away in Khumahadi [Street] ... A child .... from the Malosi family, killed by the Three Million. And later the group of Canada ... came to this street and killed another boy called Josh Mofokeng. And that was bad, *ntate*. The other day they [TMG] were looking for a boy called George at his home. Immediately, they disappeared from the street they met him on their way and killed him. I saw his relatives running towards him. Others came back, saying we have found his teeth. They hit him with a stone. It was very bad. And as a result, truly speaking, the Ministers' Fraternal played a very, very big role. We had these meetings ... in the Methodist Church, between Seeisoville and Phomolong. It was Father [Gabriel] Setiloane's church at that time. So we held this meeting ... with the two groupings. Eh, I worked at the Correctional Services before, here in Kroonstad. And I knew this man, the leader of the Three Million very well. I knew him from prison. He was arrested most of the time – "Diwiti". Among this group of Canada there was a person there called Victor Masizane. This Victor Masizane and "Diwiti" were people who got arrested a lot. Now another thing that helped us talk at that time was the fact that these people from Canada were led by Victor Masizane, although he wasn't popular. And these other ones were led by "Diwiti". And they were both able to talk together and say 'Why did you send your

[1680] Interview with Matli

> boys to look for me?' And this one would say, 'No, but...' The two of them did not want to be enemies, because they knew how they both were. But then that thing carried on ... We tried to resolve and the fighting would decrease. But after a while you would hear that the same bad things were still happening[1681]

Following the Ministers Fraternal's important but unsuccessful attempt, finally the SACC joined and made similar attempts as the two organisations before it. The SACC was made up of many and different denominations.[1682] From the onset the SACC was opposed to apartheid. This was exemplified in its stance against the NP government's apartheid laws. In the 1970s, in its correspondence with the then Prime Minister, John Vorster, the SACC wrote: "… we must assure you that as long as attempts are made to justify the policy of apartheid by appeal to God's Word, we will persist in denying its validity…"[1683] Moreover, it was led by staunch adversaries of apartheid like Desmond Tutu, Beyers Naude, and Frank Chikane.

As one of the few organisations to have survived the government's crackdown in 1988[1684], one of the SACC's activities, according to Luli Callinicos, was to attend "… to the day-to-day problems of ordinary people, having regularly to provide shelter to men, women and children fleeing detention and violent harassment."[1685] In Kroonstad, the SACC's branch also took up similar responsibilities. Eunice Seipati Tsoaeli, who in 1988 worked as the Secretary of the SACC in Kroonstad, remembers that, amongst its duties were to arrange visitation rights for the parents and next of kin of the detained youth, and also to ensure that the latter were permitted to study while in detention. Because of the special attention it gave to youth, the SACC in Kroonstad could not stand idle on the sides and allow the TMG and the Canadians to continue battling it out. Amidst confusion at the SACC's offices in town, the SACC was able, finally, to broker peace between the two gangs. Tsoaeli recalls

> We had set-up a meeting for an hour with both gangs. But before the first group would come and then the next, the man that went to Seeisoville's side wrote down the same time as the other man on the other side. It was Reverend Maobane. The SACC gave tasks to these priests to say you go this side and you go that side. So, there was confusion due to the time. We wanted to interview the first group *alone*. Then when we were done with them, we would call the other group, because we knew that they were fighting each other.

[1681] Interview with Alfred Nthai Matube (LHPR), Kroonstad, 25 September 2009 (Italics my emphasis); A clarification needs to made here. At this stage "Diwiti" was not the leader of the TMG. It is possible, though, that because of his spell in prison and association with the TMG, through his relationship with Matsile and his friendship with other members of the gang, he was seen by the Ministers' Fraternal as the leader

[1682] Callinicos, L. *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains* (South Africa, David Philip Publishers, 2004), p.592

[1683] Kinghorn J. 'The churches against apartheid', in Ian Liebenberg, et al. (eds.)*The Long March: The story of the struggle for liberation in South Africa* (Pretoria, Haum, 1994), pp.151-2

[1684] For an account of the SACC's role during the state's crackdown, see also Kinghorn 'The churches'

[1685] Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo,* p.592

> We could not put them in the same room. Then they both came. I stood at the door and told myself 'I'm not going to stand for this'. They were not so many. I think about five or ten. Then they (my colleagues) quickly stopped the other group, the Three Million: 'Please leave right now. We will set a date for you'. They thought we deliberately invited them (Canadians), with the knowledge that they disliked each other. ... We spoke with the other group with relief: 'What was happening? We want this to end. If you agree that you want to end it, too ... If you do, we, as the SACC, can help. We didn't understand the cause but we didn't want people to die. Then the SACC was mediating between them until they both made peace[1686]

The Reverend Mzimase Humphrey Gozongo concurs

> … A fight began between a certain group from the Old Location and the Three Million Gang until we intervened. I remember the group's name … Canada, yes. I went there [Old Location] and found them sitting outside a house, drinking beers. I went in to greet them. They were tired and wild, and they offered me some beer. Yes, I also drank beer. Remember it's a public place where everyone knew that I was a Minister. I then asked them when will the fighting end? They told me they were also tired of fighting; that they couldn't even sleep at night and they would appreciate it if I could convince the Three Million to make peace with them. I told them I was going to look for "Diwiti" and would then arrange a meeting in my church. I left. I was in the company of some of the youth in my church. They knew "Diwiti" very well. We found "Diwiti" and greeted him. I told him I had spoken to the Canadians and they said they wanted peace. He replied and told me they also wanted peace. We then set a day to meet. I involved some church ministers in the matter. And I went to meet with the Reverend Makhethi and the other minister from the African Presbyterian. We met at Makhethi's church, the Seventh Adventist, and resolved the issue and the two groups made peace[1687]

The Rev. Gozongo was born in Soweto, where he started his schooling at Sholomane before proceeding to Morris Isaacson High. After completing matric he found employment at the Carlton Hotel, in Johannesburg, where he joined the Commercial, Catering, and Allied Workers' Union (CCAWUSA). Whilst working at the Carlton Hotel he was ordained to become a minister in the Presbyterian Church. In 1983 the church stationed him in Klerksdorp, West Rand. He established the branch of CCAWUSA there. Between 1986 and 1988 he was based in Qwaqwa, where he was employed as the Care Taker at Manthatisi High School, and later relocated to Bethlehem, where he continued his work as the minister. It was while in Bethlehem that he joined the Free State branch of the SACC. He arrived in Maokeng in May 1989. Amidst

[1686] Interview with Tsoaeli (Italics my emphasis)
[1687] Interview with Mzimase Humphrey Gozongo (LHPR), Vosloorus, Johannesburg, 26 May 2009

protestations from the elderly members of the church, Gozongo made the Presbyterian Church available to the different political formations in the township to use as a meeting place. This brought him closer to Dennis Bloem and others in the MDCC. It was not long before he joined the MDCC, and in 1990 he was the chairperson of the ANC branch in Kroonstad.[1688]

It seems after the peace settlement had been reached between the TMG and Canadians, the TMG ceased to operate. There is no clear explanation for this. But what is clear is that some of its members were arrested and sentenced to prison terms for their criminal activities, and others like Matsile found employment. These were to resurface again with the formation of the 'new' TMG.

The 'new' TMG and political violence

In 1990 Kroonstad was a different place. It was no longer tranquil and quiescent. Despite the heavy-handed response by the police, the residents of Maokeng, led by the MDCC, protested rent increases, boycotted shops in town, and called for the dissolution of the City Council of Maokeng. Similarly, the residents of Brentpark, also took to the streets, protesting police aggression.

The intensive defiance campaign in Kroonstad, particularly Maokeng, and the emergence of the "new" Three Million Gang can be traced back to the less spoken about but important South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) strike. In 1989 SAMWU took on the City Council of Maokeng. The SAMWU web-page carries the profile of Mthandeki Nhlapo, the current General Secretary of SAMWU, and in it it is noted that in 1989 members of SAMWU, employed by the Maokeng Black Local Authority, "downed tools".[1689] Nhlapo had started working for the City Council of Maokeng in 1988, and immediately joined SAMWU. The main reason for SAMWU's action was to win recognition from the Council. This was important for SAMWU (and for all other unions), because it could then "negotiate and maintain an agreement that ensures workers' rights ..."[1690] In spite of SAMWU's strike action, Nhlapo, in the same profile, asserts that by the end of 1989 "… we still had no recognition".[1691] Instead, the Council responded by dismissing all the members of SAMWU.[1692] According to the SAMWU web-page, up to 1992 SAMWU had not been able to get the dismissed employees reinstated, in spite of the legal case instituted against the Council.[1693]

[1688] Ibid.
[1689] http://www.samwu.org.za/index2.php?option=com.
[1690] Ibid.
[1691] Ibid.
[1692] The *Weekly Mail* estimated that 700 workers were dismissed. *Weekly Mail, 2 to 8 March, 1990;* The Reverend Gozongo, in his affidavit in the case against the Minister of Law and Order, his estimate place the number at 200. See UWL HLP AK2274 Gozongo and Others versus The Minister of Law and Order and Others
[1693] http://www.samwu.org.za/index2.php?option=com.

At the beginning of February 1990 the 'community' of Maokeng, led by the MDCC, had compiled a number of grievances against the Council. The Memorandum of Grievances put together by the Maokeng 'community' to the Council, read:

We, the residents of the said community, would like to voice our concern about a lot of irregularities that are taking place in this place. These shall not go any longer without being challenged by ourselves. We wish to highlight that yours is a minority body and the damage it has caused to us is irreparable and our differences have reached a stage where they cannot be reconciled. As a result of this (sic) conditions we demand the following:

1. The immediate and unconditional re-instatement of all dismissed workers
2. An end to all exorbitant rents and electricity and an end to the coupon system
3. An end to harassment of all people by your police
4. An end to the lodger's permit
5. An end to bribery in the allocation of housing and business sites should be in areas that can be reached by the people
6. The old-age people pay no more rent
7. The unsuitability of the soil (sic) the present cemetery be looked into
8. Your resignation with immediate effect[1694]

The 'community' marched to the Council's offices to hand over the memorandum of grievances. This demonstration caused the detention of some of the leaders of the MDCC on 8 February, under emergency regulations. The detained included Bloem, "Sakkie" Oliphant, Thami Phaliso, Daniel George, Thabo Modise and James Jani.[1695] Recalling how he was detained, "Sakkie" Oliphant had this to say

> Let me tell you, 12 o'clock at night I was in Brentpark, watching television and in the process falling asleep. I don't know what made me to wake up and I saw a torch light through the window. And there were makhaukhau, as well. These were people who were brought from Lesotho to come and kill people in Kroonstad by the Council in Kroonstad. I used to like body-building before I had an operation. I had my irons, which I lifted. I went to the door and had intended to open the door and smash one head, so that there could be blood. People would know that I wasn't taken peacefully. Hey, I

[1694] Minutes of the 72nd Ordinary Meeting of the City Council of Maokeng, held in the Council Chambers, Maokeng, 28 June 1990; for a brief but detailed account of the march, see interview with Matli
[1695] *The Star, 2 April 1990*

> held myself back … When I looked outside I realized they had come with many cars. There were hippos … They were surrounding my place just to arrest one person. When I went outside the whole *neighbourhood* was waiting outside. People said "You are not taking him anymore." I said "It's okay. So long as you've seen me, I'm safe". I got to the police station, which is next to Pick 'n Pay. When they brought me in I was alone, so I thought I was all alone. When I finally got into the cell I just sat without looking. Now 'Die Vos' is blind. I sat next to him and touched him. He's got this ability to immediately tell who was sitting next to him[1696]

To force the authorities to release them, the MDCC leaders had planned that they were going to embarked on a hunger strike. "Sakkie" Oliphant remembers 'De Vos' telling him that it was agreed that they should refuse to eat. He continues

> He went on *e bile ha reje* (We're not going to eat their food). I couldn't understand what he was saying. I asked him "What do you mean, Die Vos?" But I was careful that the police shouldn't hear us. He said *ee bare ha reje* (Yes, they said we shouldn't eat). I thought he was saying they were going to give us poisonous food. But the guy was saying they were going on hunger strike. He started it. I mean, everyone who was arrested that night in Kroonstad knew that we were going on hunger strike. I was surprised that I was the only person who didn't know about that plan. We ended up being there for three weeks. Then they took us to Bloemfontein, eh, at Grootvlei. Grootvlei is special in South Africa. Every hunger strike prisoner is taken there, because they have a special place where they treat prisoners who do not eat. We were there for five days[1697]

Amidst the union's legal battle with the Council, on 26 February 1990 SAMWU, in solidarity with the "community" of Maokeng, led by the MDCC, embarked on a protest march to the offices of the Council to demand, *inter alia,* the reinstatement of the dismissed workers, Koekoe's resignation as the mayor of the township[1698], and possibly the release of the detained leaders. The police shot and killed two youths.[1699] Giving account of what transpired during this protest march, the Rev. Gozongo explains

> It [the march] started off one day, though I'm not sure of the dates … It was the very same march where people were shot. So the union mobilized municipal workers to organize a strike. On that fateful day I was on my way to town with Butana Khompela and as we drove past there were people at the … municipal offices, next to Mphohadi

[1696] Interview with "Sakkie" Oliphant
[1697] Ibid.; also see *The Star, 2 April 1990*
[1698] UWL HLP AK2274 Gozongo and Others versus The Minister of Law and Order and Others
[1699] The deceased were Paul Rabonye (10) and George Mabitle (18), and eight people were injured. *Weekly Mail, 2 to 8 March, 1990*

> [Teachers' Training College]. I called Thami Phaliso and told him that the best thing was to go straight to the church, because the police were ready to take action any minute and would shoot them. Suddenly, there I was talking to Koekoe - I had a picture that we took together. Hey, my God! It was me, a certain Afrikaner guy, Phaliso standing right inside the yard with Koekoe. People demanded that he step down. He told them he wasn't going anywhere. He refused to step down. There he was sniffing his snuff. I then told them to forget about Koekoe stepping down because he just wouldn't. After Khompela and myself had left, because we advised Thami and the *others* to go to church, just as they were leaving the police started firing shots and about two of them died or got injured, I'm not sure...[1700]

The police's brutal response convinced Samuel Seakhela, a councillor, to resign his seat in the council. He argued that he was resigning because as a Christian he would not be party to the cold blooded killing of children in the township.[1701]

In an effort to mount pressure against the Council, the Maokeng Civic Association (MCA), established after the merging of all the street committees in the township, led the residents in the call for the dissolution of the City Council of Maokeng (CCM). The MCA's call was based on the Free State provincial administration's investigation which found that the CCM was corrupt. The investigation concluded that:

1. There was no proper financial administration;
2. Strained relations existed among staff in the treasury department;
3. Records of expenditure were not kept; and
4. There was rampant embezzlement of funds by councillors[1702]

Koekeo dismissed these findings and the call for them to resign. He blamed outsiders and jealous elements. He argued "the trouble is not confined to Maokeng. Obviously there are elements from outside whose mission is to see us out of office. These elements hide behind political discontent when in fact they are plain jealous".[1703] In April the leaders of the MDCC were released[1704]and they wasted no time in organising 6 000 people to march to the mayor's offices, and 1 500 of those to stage a sit-down outside the civic centre in Maokeng, demanding the resignation of mayor Koekoe and the council.[1705] The police responded by firing teargas at the

[1700] Interview with Gozongo; see also interview with Lindiwe Gladys Mwelase (LHPR), Constantia, 25 September 2009
[1701] *The Star, 9 March 1990;* Seakhela claimed that he was going to join AZAPO
[1702] City Press, 18 March 1990
[1703] Ibid.
[1704] The Star, 2 April 1990
[1705] Business Day, 24 April 1990

demonstrators.[1706] Pressure was mounting against the City Council of Maokeng and the councillors, particularly Koekoe. To quell the disturbances, on 10 May 1990 the police, hiding behind a truck belonging to a furniture shop, drove into the township and opened fire on the unsuspecting demonstrators killing two youths. This incident came to be known in the township and in the media as the 'Trojan Horse' killing.[1707] However, this incident failed to cow black people in Kroonstad. Protests now spread to Brentpark.



WEEKLY MAIL, May 18 to May 24 1990 7

How the Trojan horse drove into 'Vietnam'

In what has been called a second 'Trojan horse' incident, police hidden in the back of a truck opened fire on township youths, killing two and injuring eight. PHILIPPA GARSON reports

A RENTED truck drove through the streets of a "war-zone" in a troubled Free State township this week. It stopped, and a throng of youths surrounded it. Suddenly, the tarpaulin covering the back of the truck was lifted and several armed policemen sprang up and opened fire.

Two youths fell dead, eight were injured. The rest ran away.

Eyewitnesses to the shooting in the Free State township of Maokeng claim that police disguised themselves in a deliberate attempt to fire on an unsuspecting crowd of youths.

Police, who have launched a top-level investigation into the incident, deny this. They say they drove into the township in a private vehicle in order to identify arson suspects, and that the truck was attacked by a hostile crowd.

Maokeng residents say the police hired the truck from a local scrapyard dealer. The owner of the scrapyard, Barnett's Auto Spares, has admitted he hired out the truck to police.

Eyewitnesses said that a truck covered with a tarpaulin entered the township and cruised up to a T-junction in the "war-zone" youths call Vietnam at about 4.30pm on Tuesday.

Simon Tsotsotso, a panelbeater, said he could see the police in the back of the vehicle from where he was standing. He said the vehicle stopped at a "war zone" intersection known as "Vietnam", where regular clashes have occurred between police and youths since the community embarked on a rent boy-

Thirteen-year-old Joseph Tshabalala, injured in the incident, and the borrowed truck in which policemen hid before opening fire on youths in the Free State township of Maokeng

Pictures: JUSTIN SHOLK, Afrapix

One youth is reportedly in a critical condition in the Boithumelo Hospital, but medical superintendent Dr T Oosthuizen has refused to give any information.

A South African Transport Services worker, Shadrack Slevu, based at the railway station opposite Barnett's Auto Spares' scrapyard, told how he saw police fetch the

Residents say youths set six vehicles alight early this week after being harassed by police. Maokeng Democratic Crisis Committee (MDCC) general secretary Stoffel Mofokeng said since the Maokeng community embarked on a rent boycott three months ago, police have been harassing residents. The homes of three MDCC members

(*Source: Weekly Mail, 18 to 24 May 1990*)

Brentpark had for a while been a 'model' township because of its tranquil and quiescence, but in August 1990 about 600 residents took to the streets protesting police heavy-handed response.[1708] The principal of Brentpark High School told the media that the residents of Brentpark were angry because the police had disrupted a sports meeting between the local high school and Botshabelo High School.[1709] "Sakkie" Oliphant, the secretary of the ANC interim working

[1706] Ibid.; Sowetan, 24 April 1990

[1707] New Nation, 1 to 7 June 1990; The Rev. Gozongo opened a case against the Minister of Police. UWL HLP AK2274 Gozongo and Others versus The Minister of Law and Order and Others

1708 "Sakkie" Oliphant, who was a teacher at Brentpark High at the time, in the interview implies that he had a feeling that this situation was not going to continue forever. He claims that although he discouraged his students from fighting his "war", the students always "argued that they wanted to go and fighting because other pupils were fighting", referring to students in Maokeng. Interview with "Sakkie" Oliphant

[1709] The Daily Mail, 14 August 1990

group, informed the media that the police disrupted the sports meeting between the two schools after a Kroonstad mother had reported to the police in Kroonstad that one of the students from Botshabelo had "hassled" her child on the bus to Kroonstad.[1710] It is unlikely that the police really responded in a heavy-handed manner because of that minor incident. The reason for such a response could have been the presence of outsiders in Kroonstad who the police probably thought would agitate the locals in Brentpark to intensify the struggle already in the process in Maokeng.[1711]

On the day the sports meeting was disrupted, the residents of Brentpark demanded that police should explain and apologise for their actions. The police agreed. But when the students arrived at the police station on 6 August for the apology they were met by heavily armed police. The latter dismissed the students and gave them five minutes to disperse.[1712] The students responded by staying away from school. In the following week, about 100 residents of Brentpark marched to the Kroonstad police station in town to protest the police actions. The police, again, responded in a heavy-handed manner. They arrested four marchers, including House of Representatives Member for the Western Free State, Glen Rooskrans. In addition, they beat and chased the students away.[1713]

It was at this stage when the City Council of Maokeng, for the first time after it had taken over the reins in 1984, felt directly challenged by certain members of the community or organizations within the community. It is possible that the Council or certain members of the Council sought protection from "Diwiti" and some of his friends. "Diwiti" had just been released from prison for his criminal activities. It would seem that during this period "Diwiti" was operating on his own.

[1710] The Citizen, 4 September 1990

[1711] By the 1990s the residents of Botshabelo, particularly students and youth, had been politically conscientised after their role in the resistance against the Qwaqwa homeland government's intention to incorporate their area into Qwaqwa in the mid-1980s. For a detailed account on this issue, see Twala, C. 'Resistance and conformity in the Qwaqwa homeland, 1975-1990', in *SADET The Road to Democracy in South Africa* (Pretoria, Unisa Press, 2010), pp.842-64

[1712] *The Daily Mail, 14 August 1990*

[1713] *The Citizen, 4 September 1990*



George “Diwiti” Ramasimong (*Source: Mrs Matshidiso Rantie*)

But because of his close relation with his younger sibling, Matsile, and some of the members of the defunct TMG, he was labelled a Three Million. The reason certain members of the ‘community’ concluded that there was a connection between “Diwiti” in particular, and the Council was when the former (and his friends) abducted Mthandeki Nhlapo, a member of SAMWU, and interrogated him. Matube recounts

> Many people had lost their jobs in the municipality, because of Mr. Koekoe and his council. And now these people were fighting for their rights. And one of the people who helped Mr. Koekoe was “Diwiti's” sibling. His name is Buti. He helped him with protection from the Three Million; that the Three Million would instill fear in all the people that wanted to fight. People wanted to fight, that they should all go on strike. Now the Three Million would protect the workers there. And now there was this young man who worked at the municipality called Nhlapo. He was in the union, leading ... He was a Catholic. Yes, very strong. He told people at church what you are doing was right, fight for your rights. And he was leading the people who were on strike until such time “Diwiti” and his gang caught him, wanting to kill him. ... He told us, ‘Hey, man, it means the Lord is with me. I prayed all along after they had fetched me from my house and then they made sort of a circle and I was ... in the middle. They were saying 'Yes, we have

> found the person that we have been looking for, you see. And, eh, at that time I was just quiet and praying. And "Diwiti" just looked at me and said 'Hey, man. Why do you do these things? And I replied and said 'I am a worker. I'm in that union because the municipality does not satisfy me. ... I'm not fighting your brother. I'm not fighting anyone. I'm fighting with the one who hired me. I'm fighting with the municipality. I'm fighting for my rights!' After that he kept quiet and they swore at him. Then "Diwiti" said 'Let's leave this dog. Go then'. He went away[1714]

The suspicion that "Diwiti" and his friends were indeed protecting Koekoe and his Council was further fuelled when members of the 'community' saw "Diwiti" and his friends being transported by Koekoe's kombis (mini-buses), which were taxis. Machabe Thulo testified during the TRC hearings in Kroonstad that the TMG and the Council collaborated on many occasions. He asserted "we would see that the mayor's transport would be used by the TMG members to attack the 'community' of Maokeng."[1715] It is difficult to substantiate this claim without further evidence. However, the use of Council's or councillors' vehicles by members of gangs fighting 'progressive' structures within communities was widespread.[1716]

Another twist to this story is that it was also possible that "Diwiti" and his friends abducted Nhlapo for reasons other than intending to intimidate the opponents of the Council but because of personal reasons, especially on the part of "Diwiti". The latter could have seen Nhlapo as someone who wanted to cost his brothers their employment. Two of "Diwiti's" siblings, Buti and Matsile, were employed by the Council at the time of the strike. When the strikers demanded that all the workers "down tools", Buti reluctantly agreed and Matsile, who had been recently employed flatly refused. Mamorena Taje makes the following claim

> Matsile was working at the … municipality right here in Constantia. He was a clerk. Buti moved with it [the municipality office] from Seeisoville and came here [Constantia]. Buti was an [Assistant Town] manager then. So, there was that thing that they were having a strike … It was when our people (the community) had targeted Buti; that as soon as Buti participated in the strike, the office would collapse. And really they were able to talk to him. The thing is he's too quiet. But I think he understood that thing. So, when we were shouting … he came outside … The whites would say '*Ao*, Ramasimong, even you, when we had so much trust in you? And the other one was in a 'fix' (dilemma). The youngest one, Matsile, didn't want to strike because he had just started to work. They said, *ntate*,

[1714] Interview with Matube
[1715] See Machabe Thulo's testimony at the TRC hearings in Kroonstad.
[1716] See, for example, Johannes 'Do experience of political'; *City Press, 24 February 1991*

there's no other way. And he left. That was when they started the strike. Hey, I don't remember this strike happened in 19 what. There were too many strikes[1717]

Despite the appearance of "Diwiti" in the scene, at this stage there were no violent clashes reported in Maokeng. And similarly there is no evidence of retribution by the 'comrade youth' against "Diwiti" for his part in the abduction of Mthandeki. This incident seems to have passed without making an impression on many activists. But the few who were aware of it would remember it later. To redeem himself, possibly in the eyes of those who suspected him, "Diwiti" joined SAYCO and participated in its activities.

In 1990 the Regional Services Council (RCS) seemingly urged the Kroonstad Town Council (KTC) to grant the City Council of Maokeng access to more resources at its disposal.[1718] These included electricity and water. But these came at a price. When the residents of Maokeng refused to pay the rent increase, the KTC switched off electricity and cut water supply to the township. The MDCC reacted by intensifying the consumer and rent boycotts in Maokeng. For instance, newspapers reported that the consumer boycott called after the withdrawal of services from Maokeng had hit white traders in Kroonstad: "Shops in the white town were deserted and no blacks have patronized them following the start of an indefinite boycott on Monday."[1719]

There were different reactions to this boycott. No doubt the majority of the residents of the township supported it, but after a while also felt its effect. The residents had to walk about four or five kilometers to the nearest garage to draw water.[1720] Even though some of the members of the MDCC made efforts to provide members of the community with water, and reconnected the electricity illegally, the Council switched it off again.[1721] This action inconvenienced many people.

[1717] Interview with Taje
[1718] For a detailed account on the RCS, see Gerhart and Glaser *From Protest,*pp.16-7; Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra, p.305;*
[1719] *City Press, 11 November 1990; New Nation, 7 December 1990*
[1720] *City Press, 18 November 1990*
[1721] See interview with Ditseki



Kroonstad boycott bites

PD 367 C Press 8/11/90

A CONSUMER boycott called after the withdrawal of services from Maokeng township has hit white traders in the nearby NP-controlled town of Kroonstad hard.

Shops in the white town were deserted as no blacks have patronised them following the start of an indefinite boycott on Monday.

The complete water and electricity switch-off this week forced some residents to walk more than 4km to a garage outside the township for a bucket of water.

Residents claimed they had been harassed by police for drawing water from the garage and many were turned away before they could fill their containers.

People living in a part of the township known as Constantia had to walk about 3km to the Brent Park coloured township for water.

Until recently Maokeng residents were supplied with water from noon to 6pm – but the supplies have been cut for the past two weeks.

Several other townships in the Free State have been affected by water and electricity cuts and civic organisations are negotiating with the provincial administration for the restoration of services.

Civic organisations warned that consumer boycotts are likely to hit several Conservative Party-controlled areas in the Free State where there are switch-offs if an amicable agreement cannot be reached between residents and the authorities to normalise the payment of services.

By Friday white trade in Kroonstad had come to a complete standstill and traders complained that their shops were deserted and sales had dropped.

Electricity supplies have also been cut to the township and the area has been in darkness for the past two months.

Members of civic organisations this week said they supported the action taken in Kroonstad by the black community because the white local authorities persisted in cutting services to many townships even though attempts to negotiate resolutions to the problems had been made.

They said: "The unwillingness by the provincial authorities to facilitate a climate conducive to a resolution of the problems has resulted in residents deciding on a plan of action."

aokeng residents queue to fill buckets with ater after services to the township were cut.

Maokeng residents waiting for water (*Source: City Press, 11 November 1990)*

The 'community' of Maokeng continued living without electricity until the Ministers' Fraternal met and discussed the issue and a committee was appointed to negotiate with the Council to reinstate the services. Matube, who was part of the committee, recalls

> The committee was Father [Gabriel] Setiloane, Modisanyane Lewele and I, Alfred Matube, and Thebe Motshwedi, and Ms. Hleli. It was chosen at the MDCC and AF meeting. The MDCC walked out of the meeting, because it wanted to continue with this thing of fighting the councillors. ... *We* met with Mr. Koekoe and the *boers* in town so that the people could have lights again and be able to pay. We called the people to the stadium and we spoke to them. And then people agreed that they would pay. And we showed Mr. Koekoe that right now it would not work that you were asking people to pay in that way. Let them pay a flat rate. At least, they would be paying. And we said to the

> people 'We would leave them to go and pay'. ... The people started paying, and got electricity and water[1722]

White traders, on the other hand, reacted by threatening to boycott paying rent and services if the Kroonstad Town Council did not resolve the matter urgently. Greg Papapanos, shopkeepers' representative, was quoted as saying "we feel the boycott is hitting the white traders very hard. We have had a heavy drop in sales ranging between 30 and 90 per cent. If a solution cannot be found soon and things continue at this rate we will have no option but to *urge* all white traders to stop paying for water and electricity."[1723] It is possible that this threat by the white traders contributed to the Kroonstad Town Council's agreeing to the flat rate payment by the residents of Maokeng.

The pressure exerted by the residents forced the City Council of Maokeng finally to seriously deal with the demands tabled by the MDCC earlier in the year. According to the Minutes of the City Council of Maokeng, almost all the demands by the residents, compiled in the memorandum by the MDCC sent to the Council earlier in the year, were met. For example, on the dismissal and reinstatement of municipality workers the Council agreed to the MDCC suggestion that the matter should be settled out of court; on the issue of electricity tariffs, the MDCC had complained about the discrepancies *vis-a-vis* the rates as published in the Government Gazette and also with the exorbitant amounts charged, and the Council agreed to redress the errors; on the issue of lodger's permits, the Council's response was that these charges were illegal; it gave a similar response to the issue of unfair allocation of business sites.[1724]

It was during this period, in November 1990, that newspaper reports first appeared with the headline: 'Gang's bloody reign in OFS', referring to the "new" TMG.[1725] However, six months earlier violent clashes had erupted between AZAPO and the ANC in Maokeng. The ANC's Stoffel Mofokeng was reported to have claimed that "the strife began *on the 25 May* when AZAPO supporters expressed anger at not being allowed to participate in a night vigil held for two students shot dead during unrests."[1726] The clash between AZAPO and the ANC left seven people injured from both sides and one AZAPO supporter dead, Michael Lekitlane.[1727] Paseka Mpondo, Oupa Mokotla and Phankhe Mbona remember

[1722] Interview with Matube (Italics my emphasis)
[1723] *City Press, 18 November 1990* (Italics my emphasis)
[1724] City Council of Maokeng, 75th Ordinary Meeting Minutes, held in the Council Chambers, Maokeng, 27 September 1990
[1725] *City Press, 11 November 1990*
[1726] *The Cape Times*, 29 May 1990 (Italics my emphasis)
[1727] *The Cape Times*, 4 June 1990

> Before the Three Million, we had a fight with AZAPO. But it was resolved by the leaders. Walter Sisulu came to Maokeng to resolve the conflict between us and AZAPO. The conflict started in this way. Our two comrades were shot. But at that time when a person was killed we never said he belonged to the ANC or that organisation. He belonged to the community. As the liberation movements in Maokeng, we worked hand-in-hand so that we could bury the comrade. Now, we had two funerals: one was next to Boiteko [School] and the other one was in the 16s… next to Kananelo [Secondary School]. Then AZAPO said …They used to call us 'Mavarara'. They believed that they were Socialists and we were the 'Vararas'. We were negotiating and they didn't negotiate … Because if you remember 1990 -CODESA [Convention for Democratic South Africa] had started…So, this conflict became intense after they said that. They complained that we as 'Mavarara' wanted to take charge of every funeral in the community and that person who stayed in the 16s was a member of AZAPO. The conflict started in the 16s. We went to Boiteko so that we could reinforce our comrades. Then, Saturday morning, we went to the cemetery … When we came back from the cemetery, the other boys from AZAPO were hiding in the veld and some of our comrades were stabbed. I remember one of our comrades was stabbed by comrade Radu … Some of them carried shovels and other dangerous weapons to attack us[1728]

Violent clashes between AZAPO ('Zim-zims') and the ANC ('Mavarara') were widespread.[1729] For example, in Bekkersdal Township, in the West Rand, clashes between the UDF and AZAPO began in the mid-1980s. At this stage Bekkersdal was already an AZAPO stronghold.[1730] But this conflict intensified at the beginning of 1990 following the ANC's decision to negotiate with the government. Members of AZAPO interpreted this as tantamount to 'selling-out'. Mathole Maboe, who was part of the SDUs which fought against the 'Zim-zims', recalls

> The other thing that caused tension between BEYCO and AZASM was that AZASM said: 'Amavarara aya negotiator' (the Varara's are negotiating). In fact, they sung a song that goes like that … They taunted us in that way[1731]

[1728] Interview with Mpondo, Mokotla and Mbona; CODESA 1, a negotiating forum between the government and the ANC, assembled at the World Trade Centre, near Johannesburg Airport, on the 21 and 22 December 1991, to negotiate the route to a constituent assembly. See Sparks Tomorrow, p.130

[1729] For an in-depth account on the conflict between the UDF/ANC and AZAPO, see Mkhabela, S. *Remembering 16 June 1976: Open Earth and Black Roses* (Braamfontein, Skotaville Press, 2001), Chapter 11; for an account relting to the Eastern Cape, see Cherry, J. 'Hidden Histories', pp.398-403

[1730] Interview with Medupi 'Professor' Maboe conducted by Vusi Khumalo, for the SADET Oral History Project, Bekkersdal, 19 May 2011

[1731] BEYCO (Bekkersdal Youth Congress) Interview with Mathole Maboe by Vusi Khumalo, for the SADET Oral History Project, Bekkersdal, 19 May 2011; interview with Musiuoa Seleke by Mpopetsi Dhlamini, for the SADET Oral History Project, Maokeng, 6 May 2011

In Maokeng what caused the escalation of the conflict between the ANC and AZAPO was the allegation that AZAPO collaborated with the TMG. Molefe Papi Matie, the leader of the Azanian Student Movement (AZASM) at Kananelo Secondary in the early 1990s, refutes this allegation. According to him, this rumour started after the older members of AZAPO moved from the Old Location to Troubou. He explains

> Now if you can still remember some of the residents of the Old Location were paid money to vacate their homes and many of them relocated to sections like Gelukwaarts and Troubou. It so happened that some of the older members of AZAPO were now residing in Troubou where the TMG had established its base. So during the so-called 'black-on-black' violence whenever a member of AZAPO or AZASM visited their relatives in Troubou they would be labeled the TMG[1732]

In spite of this, Matie concedes that some of their ill-disciplined members joined the TMG. He observes

> But there were those who had always been troublemakers within the organization who were happy for the continuation of this violence because as thugs they were benefitting. Those [we]re the people who were former members of AZASM[1733]

As in the previous occasions, the Ministers' Fraternal intervened to resolve the conflict between AZAPO and the ANC in Maokeng. Matube, a member of the Ministers' Fraternal, felt particularly obliged to broker peace between the two organisations because the leading figures (or victims) in the clash were members of Roman Catholic Church. He explains

> It happened then that there was a battle between AZAPO ... *and* the ANC ... Others got stabbed and went to hospitals. They were in the ANC: it was Koma, Tshepiso Moeketsi, and Seele. And only to find that the people that were in the forefront in this fighting ... were Catholics in AZAPO and in the ANC. Because in AZAPO it was ... Who is this boy? It was Ou Kop Seleke ... You see, as the [Roman] Catholic Church, we also had to intervene between these children ... Most of the members of AZAPO when the fighting started, they had established a camp. We had to go to AZAPO to speak to them. I did that. Eh, I was representing the church by going to talk to Hector Matie, Seele, and some members of AZAPO. When I got to them I showed them that, truly

[1732] Interview with Molefe Papi Matie by Mpopetsi Dhlamini, for the SADET Oral History Project, Maokeng, 8 May 2011

[1733] Ibid.; see also interview with Molefe Mogorosi by Mpopetsi Dhlamini, for the SADET Oral History Project, Maokeng, 6 May 2011

> speaking, we have all been fighting for our freedom – together. Now we identified, eh, what is this thing that made us not to be together; things that made us not to feel free and to be happy when I'm with you. But all this time we were able to be one, even though you secretly knew I'm AZAPO, I'm ANC. This other group would identify it and this one would identify it, and say 'if we live these things as they are to go on, it would be the end result in the church, in our homes. We would kill each other and so on. Do we want to kill each other?' No! So, what should we do? What could we do to end this? There were meetings and talks. And as a result, because we spoke to this grouping of Catholics who were there, we reported this to the Ministers' Fraternal and the Ministers' Fraternal then called [Pandelane] Nefolovhodwe and ... Mr. [Walter] Sisulu to come here[1734]

Sisulu (ANC) and Nefholovhodwe (AZAPO) addressed the joint meeting of the two organizations held at Seeisoville stadium. Sisulu explained to the large crowd in attendance that the "… ANC's one duty as a liberation movement was to create everlasting unity and build a nation."[1735] Echoing Sisulu's remarks, Nefholovhodwe said "AZAPO and the BCM took cognizance of other liberation forces …"[1736]



From L to R: Thabo Modise, Khahliso Moeketsi, Paseka Nceleni, Mamokhele Sebetoane, Stoffel Mofokeng and Thami Phaliso (*Source: Mamokhele Sebetoane)*

[1734] Interview with Matube; also see interview with Raphesu
[1735] *The Cape Times, 4 June 1990*
[1736] Ibid.; For more information on intra-organisational fighting between the ANC/UDF and AZAPO, see Carter 'Comrades and Community', p.247; Mkhabela *Remembering 16 June 1976*), chapters 11

Towards the end of 1990, the "new" TMG had fully emerged. Almost all my interviewees contribute this to the affair between Daniel George and "Diwiti's" wife, Alice Lesole. A few, however, viewed it differently. They argue that the affair was an excuse for the reign of terror by the "new" TMG. The latter, they contend, was used by the "system" to destabilize the progressive organizations in their opposition against the City Council of Maokeng and the apartheid regime in general.

As we have seen, after he was released from prison, "Diwiti" was recruited by members of Maokeng Youth Congress (MAYCO), which later changed to SAYCO Maokeng branch. Just about the time he joined SAYCO he found employment at the JCI, a steel-manufacturing company in Kroonstad. Mamorena Taje claims that when "Diwiti" started working at the JCI he "recruited fellow workers at JCI to join trade unions. The JCI workers held meetings at "Diwiti's" house in Seeisoville".[1737] Similarly, he opened his house to his 'comrades' in SAYCO to stay in and even to hide their weapons. Mpondo, Mokotla and Mbona, former members of Tsekelekwas (or Tsekele, in short) recall that "Diwiti" before he revived the TMG (although by association was believed to be a member of the original TMG) he was a member of the 'progressive' organization. They explain

> ... We got involved [in trying to resolve the fighting between the TMG and Canadians) to such an extent that some of their leaders, especially the Three Million, became close to us until were converted to be 'comrades', especially the leader of the Three Million, which was "Diwiti". He worked at the JCI, and became the shop steward in that company. It was manufacturing steel. That's where they used to make weapons for the Three Million. He became a 'comrade'. Then their fight with the Canadians stopped for a while[1738]

This view was supported by Thulo, when he added

> After we took the Caterpillars that belonged to the municipality, the *boers* decided to punish me, because I was the one who led that *campaign*. I was sentenced to eighteen months in prison, *subject to* a fine. When *some of the comrades* were busy raising that money … comrades happened to kill a policeman. At the time buses used to transport people here. Within (Amongst) those comrades there was this guy named George "Diwiti". That's where the mess started. They killed a policeman at Last Stop in Phomolong. And after that they camped at "Diwiti's" house. In fact, it was his parents' house in Seeisoville. His mother was working at the hospital and she bought a house in 'Selection Park'/Gelukwaarts. They left him in that house. He had just come back from

[1737] Telephonic interview with Mamorena Taje, 22 October 2009
[1738] Interview with Mpondo, Mokotla and Mbona

> prison, and his brother Buti Ramasimong asked us to incorporate him into the organisation so that he could be rehabilitated. But a thug will always be a thug, *ntate*[1739]

It is not clear what prompted "Diwiti" to kill the two policemen and disarm them. It is possible, however, that he wanted the guns for protection against the remaining members of the Canadians, or even to use them for his personal gains.

After "Diwiti" was stabbed at Mametsi's tavern, he relocated to Gelukwaarts, where he recuperated under the care of his mother. Taje remembers: "After he had been stabbed with a knife, obviously, he couldn't return to his house. His mother was supposed to come and take care of him. That's how he came to live here at [Gelukwaarts]."[1740] Gelukwaarts is opposite Troubou, which later became the "new" TMG's stronghold. Troubou was turned into a 'no-go zone' for anyone perceived to be anti-TMG for over a year.



Ramodikoe George "Diwiti" Ramasimong (*Source: Mamorena Taje)*

In another interview with Mamorena Taje, she explained how Troubou[1741] became the "new" TMG's base. In her words

[1739] Interview with Thulo (Italics my emphasis) Gelukwaarts, also known locally as 'Selection Park', because it was an area exclusively for professionals and those who could afford to purchase bank-subsidised houses
[1740] Ibid.
[1741] See interviews with Thulo; Taka

> While staying at his mother's place in Gelukwaarts, "Diwiti" would go to Troubou to drink at Pro's or Bazooka's taverns. It is possible that some of his friends also joined him. When the TMK (Tien Manne Kraag) and Tsekelekwas started attacking Troubou, the residents of Troubou, who were mostly elderly people, fled the area and "Diwiti" and his gang occupied the vacant houses. Troubou was from then on turned into the Three Million stronghold"[1742]

It is not clear when "Diwiti" heard about the affair his wife was having with one of his 'comrades', Daniel George. But after learning about it he attempted to have George charged and disciplined by SAYCO – because this was the norm. Taje recalls that "Diwiti" forced her to accompany him to meet with the Rev. Gozongo, who was then the chairperson of the ANC branch in Kroonstad. "Diwiti" went to Gozongo to complain about blatant inconsistencies practised by the 'comrades'. Taje explains

> He said I'm hurting reverend. These comrades … that we support. You're also giving them church and I put them up in my home are having an affair with my wife. When I try talking to them they fight me, *ntate moruti* (Reverend). Do I have to be killed for her, *ntate moruti*? No! He said, listen, *ntate moruti,* they always go around disciplining (i.e. beating) people saying they have "taken" other people's wives. It seems as if he had approached Makhanda [Ditseki Moeketsi] in the afternoon, saying they should go beat up George because they are always out beating people. They refused, saying he was a 'comrade'. He then asked why they were taking sides when they were supposed to go and … call George to order? He asked 'Am I not a human being? How many times have they left Kine [MDCC's headquarters], running around beating people up[1743]

Gozongo concurs, and went further to explain that he then suggested to "Diwiti" that a meeting should be called where all the affected parties would be present to discuss this issues and, possibly, also to try to resolve it. He remarks

> He came to me first to report the matter about finding Daniel [George] with his woman and that he had stabbed his woman … *and* he thought the woman was dead! I asked him if he really killed a person and he said "Yes, I killed her *ntate Moruti.* I killed her". He then took out his knife to show me and I got such a fright. His eyes were scary and wide open. He had the word monster written all over his face. He also brought with him a bottle of beer and offered me to drink. … I drank just a bit and gave it back to him. After we had spoken, I asked him what he thought the resolution could be? He told me

[1742] Telephonic interview with Taje
[1743] Ibid.

> that the ANC youth also intervened. I promised him I would arrange a meeting with Dennis and them. And we did[1744]

The scheduled meeting was held on Monday evening at the Rev. Gozongo's Presbyterian Church. The meeting failed to achieve its objective; it ended disastrously. Taje recalls

> … we went to that meeting on that Monday at Gozongo's place ... You see, when we got inside the church, he went to meet with the priest first. I think when he met with the priest he said '*Ntate moruti*, please pray for me. Now what was happening inside the church, hey, people were carrying weapons … Dennis [Bloem] then came inside. The priest and "Diwiti" came in after Dennis … "Diwiti" really cried … I don't like recalling that day. If that meeting had convened, there would have been nothing that had taken place in Kroonstad. So, they didn't want to hold the meeting. The priest … tried to explain to us what was going on … Oh, Dennis started. … Makhanda jumped up and Papi Sechele … the one of COSATU, who works at Kine … When they jumped up, you wouldn't believe the weapons I saw there. I saw too many weapons in that church. At that time "Diwiti" didn't have any weapon. He came with me and Buti. And I think with four friends[1745]

Mpondo, Mokotla and Mbona remember the meeting differently. They observe

> That day we were practising cast (drama). We were not even aware that something had happened the previous night; people were stabbed. We saw a lot of comrades and we thought that there was going to be a meeting. After that then came the Three Million. They came in a 1400 bakkie that belonged to "Diwiti'"s brother… Buti. After the cast we found those boys waiting for us. They were wearing their chiffons…They were red. So, when we got there comrade Bloem was there. Reverend Gozongo was also there, and other members of leadership at that time. Truly speaking, when our comrades got there the Three Million were already there. … Our comrades arrived later. So, there was disagreement in the hall to such an extent that our comrades decided to leave the hall, because the negotiations had reached a state where it was no longer possible to maintain order. The Three Million were fighting because they felt we were protecting George because he was one of our leaders….because he was one of our comrades[1746]

And recalling this meeting, Bloem, testifying at the TRC hearing in Kroonstad, remarked

> … "Diwiti" came to me and said that he wanted this thing to be resolved. He wanted to

[1744] Interview with Gozongo; After finding out about the affair, "Diwiti" beat his wife, Alice, to the extent that she had to be taken to hospital. But she did not die. See interview with Taje
[1745] Ibid.
[1746] Interview with Mpondo, Mokotla and Mbona

> tell the ANCYL's members what had happened and to sort it out. I convened a meeting with Reverend Gozongo, with the Three Million and the Youth League. … We'd just started with the meeting when some of the Youth League members said they … did not want to talk to a murderer such as "Diwiti". … I pleaded with them. I told them for the sake of peace in Kroonstad we simply had to talk and I noticed that the situation was becoming extremely tense and I said to "Diwiti" that we should rather move away from the church, because I did not want to see any blood in a church. Reverend Gozongo also spoke to these people … I got into my car, "Diwiti" also got into my car, his sister Florence (Mamorena Taje) got into my car, and one other person, Stoffel Mofokeng also got into my car. We drove out of the church yard ... to Brentpark[1747]

Former members of the ANCYL in Kroonstad I interviewed argued that the reason they strongly felt it was unnecessary to meet and discuss with "Diwiti" was because, before he attempted to resolve this issue through dialogue, he had taken law into his own hands and went on a rampage, together with some of his friends, killing and maiming everyone associated with the Youth League.[1748] Mpondo, Mokotla and Mbona remembered the turn of events as follows

Oupa Mokotla (OM): We had recruited "Diwiti". He was now part of our organisation. While he was in our organisation, we had two deaths (referring to the two policemen), isn't? You were in the same bus with "Diwiti". You went to Steynsrus.

Paseka Mpondo (PM): Yes, I went there with him.

OM: We had split ourselves. I went to Parys. I was in Tumahole. After you came back, we heard that there was a clash, because one of our comrades had slept with…

PM: With "Diwiti's" wife. *Eh*, but that thing didn't happen while we were still in Steynsrus. "Diwiti" discovered that after we came back from Steynsrus. What happened is that he went back to his gang so that he could attack comrade George. But the wrong thing he did was that he didn't go straight to the relevant person; the person he said did that thing. Do you understand? Whenever he went to look for him, he vandalised and stabbed other comrades.

OM: Let me add something.

PM: Yes, you can add.

OM: After we became aware of that thing, we approached one pastor…

PM: *Ya*, but that's what I was getting at comrade.

[1747] Dennis Bloem's testimony at the TRC Amnesty Hearing, Kroonstad, 1996. http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/kroon/kroon.thm; also see interviews with Taje; Mpondo, Mokotla and Mbona

[1748] There is no evidence that anyone had been killed by "Diwiti" at this stage. But some of the people associated with SAYCO had been stabbed by "Diwiti" and/or his gang members

OM: *Oho* [okay].

PM: You were quick to rush me. I was still outlining the whole process, what exactly happened until the point we approached the 'comrade'. Remember this thing happened at night. We came back. Then in the morning we heard that "Diwiti" had attacked other people. He even stabbed comrade Tshepiso Mpotle, the one who is singing [gospel] today.

OM: Sure. He fled after that, only to discover that he has talent [in Johannesburg].

PM: Then we questioned comrade "Diwiti" why was he stabbing innocent people, when he was fighting comrade George? Now, he was applying gang tactics. He stabbed every person he came across. Then the conflict started from that point. But now our leaders tried to resolve that. That's where comrade Gozongo became involved …[1749]

Daniel George recalls that "Diwiti" (or his friends) went around the township looking for him. Finally, they found him in a tavern but left him unharmed. They, instead, went around the township attacking innocent people. George recalls

> It was around September in 1990, there was a rally of NEHAWU (National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union) … the organization of the health workers. It was held in Seeisoville. So after the rally the Three Million Gang … Well, I was not even aware of the Three Million Gang. I was the then Organizing Secretary of SAYCO. Then I was called outside but my conscience said to me 'don't go outside'. It's a sheeben there. I was busy drinking my beer. I knew their leader … They left. Somewhere along the road they stabbed one of our comrades … But then in Phomolong when the report came was that George has been killed, that's myself. After some 45 minutes comrades came in rushing … and asking where's George? I went out and said 'hey, *ke nna ona* (here I am). They said 'someone said you had just been killed'. I said 'no, I am still alive'[1750]

After the failed meeting at the Rev. Gozongo's church, "Diwiti" is said to have canvassed the support of the taxi drivers in Maokeng. Mamorena claims that after spending a couple of days hiding at Bloem's house, in Brentpark, "Diwiti" decided to return to Maokeng and approached the taxi drivers to clarify the situation between himself and the 'comrades'. She explains

> We slept at Dennis' place. I think on the fourth day "Diwiti" said 'Dennis, no man, you said Peter Mokaba, you said so and so [were coming]. You've been going wherever and leaving us here. Hey *monna* (man), I am not a coward. You've put me here as though I'm a fugitive. Where's my mother? And those people (comrades) are just fighting people; people are dying. He left us scared there. Only to find that he

[1749] Interview with Mpondo, Mokotla and Mbona
[1750] Interview with George Daniel (LHPR), Constantia, Maokeng, 18 August 2009

> was going to call taxi drivers. Now this thing was taking another turn; it was becoming bad. Then I was back at my home. I was shocked to see so many people converging there at the [taxi rank]. What's going on? People were commenting 'Hey, you should see what "Diwiti" has done at the taxi rank. He had called the Kroonstad taxis and converged them at "Beirut", because they ('comrades') were involving taxis to fight us. He summoned people and made them aware that when they say the Three Million, they mean me. And let me tell you what's going on'. He told them. And that's why you could see that those people (taxis drivers) were divided. Others sided with one group and the others with the other group. People said *Haai* (No), you've been saying this person is merciless, killing people, only to find that you have taken this person's wife and you don't want to listen to him'. That's how that thing was[1751]

It is not clear why "Diwiti" approached the taxi drivers, but it is possible it was because he had calculated that without winning, at least some of them over, his movement to and from work (and town generally) would be seriously restricted. Indeed, this strategy won him some support and sympathy from some of the taxi drivers.[1752] Later the 'comrades' were faced with a mammoth task to convince some of the members of community to win them back to their side.

Meshack, M. Khosa writes "the phenomenon of black taxis can be traced to the turn of the century".[1753] Although, it took a long time for the black taxi industry to take off, because of discriminatory policies implemented through, for example, the Motor Carrier Transport Act of 1930,[1754]throughout the 1940s and 1950s African entrepreneurs were subject to a complex network of legal restrictions controlling the location, size and types of business they could undertake in urban areas.[1755] According to Khosa, "a major turning point in the fortune of black taxi industry occurred in 1978 when, with the advent of the Kombi, taxis were allowed to carry up to eight passengers instead of the previous maximum of four".[1756] In the late-1980s the industry was fully in motion. More licenses were granted. In 1986/87, for example, the number of Kombi taxi licenses issued rose dramatically from 7 093 to 34 378.[1757] Inevitably this situation led to vigorous competition between the taxi operators for routes, ranks, and most importantly passengers. In light of this, it is probable that some of the taxi operators in Maokeng felt that

[1751] Interview with Taje
[1752] Samuel "Bebeto" Taka, a member of the "new" TMG recalls that there were taxis which transported the members of the TMG for free because they had an understanding with "Diwiti". See interview with Taka
[1753] Khosa, M. 'Routes, Ranks and Rebels: Feuding in the Taxi Revolution', *Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol.18, No.1, 1991,* p.233
[1754] This Act was implemented following the recommendations by the Le Roux Commission in 1929. This was in response to the growth of the motor industry in the 1920s, which competed with railway transport. Khosa 'Routes', p.233
[1755] Ibid., p.235
[1756] Ibid.
[1757] Ibid.

siding with one of the warring factions would benefit them in terms of the volume of passengers that would use their taxis (but also their taxis would be protected). For instance, people living in the area which was later to be occupied by the TMG would use taxis exclusively belonging to the operators who supported the TMG and *vice versa.*[1758]

"Diwiti's" alleged erratic behavior, indiscriminate attacks on innocent people caused some of the 'comrade youth' to believe that there was more to "Diwiti's" sudden change of behavior than the affair between his wife and George. Their suspicions were further raised by "Diwiti's" *modus operandi.* He (and his friends) were not attacking George but were attacking other 'comrades'. George claims that he was instructed by the leadership to 'keep a low profile' and never to attend meetings.[1759] Not long after he fled Maokeng. Antjie Krog, in her recently published book *Begging to be Black*, writing about the incident involving George and "Diwiti", notes that Mishack (Daniel George) pitched up at her front door one evening, disguised, and requested her to offer him a lift out of Kroonstad and R50. He was on the run because "The Wheetie wanted to kill him, because he caught him with his wife.[1760] This probably explains why he was never attacked by "Diwiti" and his friends.

Still "Diwiti's" behavior concerned some of the 'comrade youth'. They concluded that "Diwiti" was being used by the police, in particular (and the 'system' in general). Sebetoane explains

> Some of us were asking ourselves questions that: 'He is not the first guy to be 'dumped' for another guy and does it mean that the whole world should die for that thing, because so and so took his girlfriend?' You know, at that time we were trying to talk some sense into those people who strongly felt that the Three Million Gang was justified ... We had to convince people that this thing was larger than what they had thought it was. It was not about so and so took so and so's girlfriend and, therefore, people should die. It's not about that. No, no. The way we understood it, it involved the police[1761]

[1758] For a detailed account on the role of the taxi operators in politics and political violence, see Khosa 'Routes', pp.237-47

[1759] Interview with George

[1760] Krog, A. *Begging to be Black* (Cape Town, Random House Struik, 2009), p.16; The state wanted to use Krog as its witness against Dennis Bloem and others for the murder of "Diwiti", *Weekly Mail, 10 – 16 July 1992*

[1761] See interviews with Sebetoane and "Sakkie" Oliphant; "Diwiti" had managed to convince some of the taxi operators that he was fighting George and the "community", because of his affair with his wife. See interview with Taje



"Diwiti" and Alice on their wedding day, flanked by Mamorena and a family friend
(*Source: Mamorena Taje)*

Similarly, Thulo recalls that after his fine had been paid and he was released from prison, he questioned "Diwiti's" actions. In his words

> I had one question for George, that's "Diwiti". I said 'Chief, you can't. I understand that it is painful to find out that someone is sleeping with your wife. But why didn't you take George [Daniel] to the disciplinary hearing of the organisation so that the organisation could deal with this thing? Then he responded "No, I don't want to listen to what you are saying. I'm killing now. I'm going to kill everyone and everything I come across, be a dog or cat". I told him that he won't do it while I'm still here. And he said he would do it[1762]

However, it was Tebello "Blakie" Tumisi who offered a more convincing argument for the 'comrade youth's' suspicions. He recalled that he was approached by one of "Diwiti's" friends, who informed him that "Diwiti" was planning to form a gang that would harass and attack the 'comrades'. This, for him, was enough reason to conclude that "Diwiti" was working for the 'system'. He takes up the story

[1762] Interview with Thulo

> I think it was around June in 1990. 'Five', who was a thug, came to me and told me that "Diwiti" wanted to organize them so that they could fight the 'comrades'. After that "Diwiti" joined the Youth League. After joining, the first thing they did was to kill two policemen. They stopped the bus and killed two policemen. They stabbed them and took their guns. … One day I was home, sick. These people had an argument with George [Daniel] on Saturday. Or was it Sunday? I can't remember now. That week-end my car was used by my wife. When they fetched me on Monday, it was "Diwiti" and "Five". They said they wanted George. I was rude to them. I said *Voetsek* (go away), you silly boys. Go away. "Diwiti" said 'Simon told us to look for George here. You were driving around with him in your car, with your wife[1763]

Tumisi's rude attitude failed to deter "Diwiti" and his friends. They forced him into his car and drove with him around the township, searching for George. While driving around with "Diwiti" and his friends, Tumisi's suspicion was confirmed when they met the police and the latter were unperturbed by "Diwiti's" actions. Instead, they encouraged him and his friends to carry on with their task. Tumisi continues

> We left that place *Troubou.* When we approached Ramotsoela [Secondary School] there was a white kombi parked next to the T-junction. They told me I was going to stop there. When we got there, I found that it was Ranthololo, he was a Detective, and another guy. They asked me to stop the car, and I did. … "Diwiti" opened the window to talk to Ranthololo. He told him that they couldn't find Mohapi's gun. He was one of the policemen that they had killed in the bus. The other one was Ndweng. And he said 'I won't give up until I find it today. Here is Blackie. I took him'. Ranthololo said "Hey, Blackie, where is the soft drink?" I said "Come, you will get it at the bottle store". I was only trying to get protection. He was laughing. It was painful. We were all going to Bonki's house. It was number 475, that side of the tarred road. 'George was there', "Diwiti" said. We stopped there. … They got off the car and rushed into the house with their knives. They were going to surround the house. Now, they told Bizza to bring me to the house. He had a bottle store around here. He told me to hurry up. I was so glad. The time I realised I was in the middle of the yard I went back. I had planned to punch him [Bizza]. But he didn't follow me. I went inside the car and he went to tell the others that I had ran away. As they were coming to me, I started the ignition of my car and drove away. I didn't even put my foot on anything, but the car was moving. The doors closed by themselves, and I told myself that they would never see me again (laughs). That's when I met Dennis [Bloem] and others[1764]

[1763] Interview with Tumisi

[1764] Ibid (Italics my emphasis). This Bizzah should not be confused with Bizzah Makhathe of the Activists Forum

Thulo concurs with Tumisi, but went on to claim that "Diwiti" and his friends were arrested for murdering the two policemen. However, "Diwiti" was not charged for this horrendous act. He was, instead, charged and sentenced for a minor offence – one not related to the murder. For Thulo, this was when the police won "Diwiti" over to their side and used him against the 'comrades'. He remembers the story as told to him

> After they were arrested for killing the policemen, they went to his house. There was *dagga* in his house. It was now sort of a camp. ... They had pictures of naked people. And at that time, I don't know now – I haven't checked the law - it was a criminal offence to be in possession of pictures of naked people ... pornography. They were charged with the murder of the policemen. They put them in different cells so that they could get information from them. I was not there. I was serving the eighteen months, while Dithebe and others were struggling to raise the money [for my fine]. When the comrades were charged with murder, "Diwiti" was bribed. They were telling him that *in* the entire country, *the government* was dealing with the political situation because the ANC was going to take over. In KwaZulu Natal, we're using MaZulu (AmaZulu), in Gauteng and elsewhere there were not many Zulus, like here in the Free State. Normally we form gangs which are going to fight against activists, so that they could disturb the programme of the struggle. So, we're not going to charge you, even though we know that you are a thug. In fact, we're not going to charge you for the murder but we'd charge you for pornography and dagga'. They told him that he must identify the guys that were militant, who were implicated in that murder case. They were not going to be charged, but they had to join him in his gang. That's how the Three Million started[1765]

[1765] Interview with Thulo



Back row L-R: Matsile Ramasimong (2nd), Lengoma (3rd), Monki (4th) and Ndade (7th)
Mid-row L-R: Samuel Taka (2nd), Sengwangwa (3rd) Matheus (7th), Patrick "Pabo" Sethibe(8th), and Ramokgolo (9th)
Front row L-R: Thabo "Matekwane" (1st), "Diwiti" Ramasimong (6th), and "Machangane" (8th)
(*Source: Bethuel Thekiswe)*

Even though it is difficult to substantiate Thulo's claim, there is, however, enough evidence to prove that some of the members of the police force were involved in perpetuating political violence in many townships in the 1990s by colluding or assisting the opponents of the liberation movements, especially of the ANC. In a revealing account of how the police assisted the IFP, Daluxolo Luthuli, a former member of MK who had joined the IFP in the mid-1980s, narrates how after joining the IFP, he was given the responsibility of assisting with the training of the supporters of the IFP at the Caprivi Strip, in the northern part of the then South West Africa (today's Namibia). Some of the trained supporters of Inkatha, on completion of their training, were integrated into the KwaZulu Police Force. The latter, according to Luthuli, took part (or aided) in attacks directed at the supporters of the UDF/ANC. He recalled an occasion when a trained Caprivian, who was also a member of the KwaZulu Police, was instructed to direct attacks against the ANC. According to him, "In 1991 … Caprivian, Gcina Brian Mkhizi, who was with the KwaZulu Police's Esikhawini Riot Unit, was told, in a meeting, that the time has arrived to use the skills he had acquired at Caprivi. The plan was for him to work with the

Inkatha Youth Brigade and direct attacks on ANC-dominated areas. The meeting, Luthuli, asserts, was attended by various IFP notables.[1766]

Similarly, Allister Sparks writes about Father Tim Smith, a Roman Catholic Church priest at a mission station in Natal Midlands, who witnessed blatant police collusion with the IFP on New Year's Day, 1988. Relating the incident to Sparks, Father Smith said he personally called in the riot police to prevent a mob of Inkatha supporters from attacking a UDF settlement after a rally. "They did not", he said, "instead they assisted the attackers in searching the UDF area, after which a young boy, Mkhithiza Ndlovu, was arrested and handed over to Inkatha for the night. His blood-stained body was found next to the road the following day."[1767]

Police involvement was not exclusive to the Natal and KwaZulu areas. In Boipatong, in the Vaal Triangle, residents alleged police involvement in political violence. They alleged that police stood by and watched while more than 300 armed attackers from the KwaMadala hostel attacked residents of Boipatong, leaving one man dead. More worryingly for the residents was when they witnessed the police, driving in three Hippos and a white minibus, and shining a spotlight on the attackers and drove behind them as they were marching and back to the hostel.[1768]

In Kroonstad, the local branch of the ANC blamed the police for siding with the TMG.[1769]This view was supported in a letter to the editor by a concerned policeman from Kroonstad, who wrote, in part, "I am a member of the SAP, working in Kroonstad. I am really horrified by the Maokeng SAP associating themselves with thugs in the location."[1770] Another member of the SAP in Kroonstad, Mkhululekile Petros Mzosane, was dismissed from the SAP because he was suspected of being anti-TMG. Testifying before the TRC Hearing in Welkom, Mzosane related to the Commission how the members of the TMG were protected by the police. He said

> When they had to attend court there would be specific instructions from the Station Commander that they were … supposed to be transported in police vans and whenever they came back from court. They were actually safeguarded by the police. And I did not collude with what they were doing. I was questioning the police behavior towards the Three Million Gang[1771]

[1766] Bopela, T. and Luthuli, D. *Umkhonto we Sizwe: Fighting for a divided people* (Alberton, Galago Publishers, 2005), pp.199-211

[1767] Sparks *Tomorrow,* p.165; for the bias role played by the police in the police violence, also see *Now Everyone Is Afraid: The changing face of policing in South Africa,* (London, Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1988), Chapter Five

[1768] *The Weekly Mail, July 19 to July 25 1990;* For a detailed account of alleged police involvement in political violence, see Johannes 'Do experience'

[1769] *The Star, 4 January 1991; The Natal Witness, 10 January 1991*

[1770] *The New Nation, 14 February 1991; Sowetan, 29 April 1991*

[1771] Truth and Reconciliation Commission Proceedings held at Welkom, 10 October 1996. http://www.justice.gov.za.trc/welkom3.htm

Because of this tension developed between him and the Station Commander, Captain Ramosita, who asked him "whether he wanted to be a police officer or a community worker". The Station Commander then threatened to have him expelled from the police force.[1772] To executive this threat, a trumped up charge of absconding was laid against Mzosane and he was summarily dismissed.[1773]

Furthermore, ANC activists' suspicions that "Diwiti" was collaborating with the police were supported by the letter "Diwiti" showed to Bloem and Gozongo from Schilling, a Captain stationed at Kroonstad Police Station. Bloem, testifying before the TRC, claimed that "Diwiti" handed Gozongo and himself a letter from Schilling with his telephone number – although Bloem did not provide the date.[1774]

What particularly concerned the residents of Maokeng was the fact that members of the TMG would be arrested and charged, but they would always be acquitted in court. This further fuelled the suspicion that the TMG or its leader in particularly, "Diwiti", had a suspicious relationship with the prosecutor, Mrs Pienaar. Remembering Mrs Pienaar's suspicious role in the events taking place in Kroonstad, Mpondo remarked

> … There was this judge [Actually she was a prosecutor] named Ma-Pienaar (Mrs Pienaar). Their cases were heard in *her* court. They were not heard anywhere else. There was a rumour that there was something going on between Ma-Pienaar and the leader of the Three Million, "Diwiti". We were detained for months, but not even one of the Three Million went on trial. They were arrested and given free bail. But we didn't even get bail[1775]

In trying to clarify why members of the TMG received bail or their cases were thrown out of court, Bethuel Thekiswe pointed out that this was because members of the community feared to testify against the TMG members. In his words

> One other problem that we experienced was that you would find that the Three Million Gang had killed someone, but the community wouldn't give information because they were afraid to testify against them in court because of fear that they might be victimized. And you would find that we didn't have a strong case against them, because of the fear. But everybody knew that the Three Million Gang was responsible for the deaths[1776]

[1772] Ibid.
[1773] Ibid.
[1774] Bloem's testimony at the TRC Amnesty Hearing, Kroonstad, 1996. http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/kroon/kroon.thm;
[1775] Interview with Mpondo, Mokotla and Mbona; also see Mzosane's testimony to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Preceedings held at Welkom, 10 October 1996. http://www.justice.gov.za.trc/welkom3.htm

The relationship between "Diwiti" and Mrs Pienaar was confirmed by Samuel "Bebeto" Taka during the TRC hearings in Kroonstad. But he equally hastened to note that the cases against them were remanded just like any other case that came before the court. Taka informed the TRC that at some point he and some of the members of the TMG were requested by Pienaar to paint her house. Furthermore, Pienaar, according to him, would sell her chickens in Troubou, in front of "Diwiti's" house. "She used to stop at "Diwiti's" place", Taka confessed, "just in front of the yard and people would come there and buy the chickens."[1777]

For Mamorena Taje, the relationship between "Diwiti" and Pienaar was not peculiar. This was because "Diwiti" had developed good relations with other white lawyers and magistrates. According to her

> Hartman, ["Diwiti's" lawyer], would take "Diwiti" over the weekend and stay with him in his home. Do you know what he did? He invited the magistrates to his place, so that when the case took place the next day, he could say here's "Diwiti". The next day when the case started and everybody was saying *where's* "Diwiti"? The magistrate said 'No, talk for yourselves and not for "Diwiti". "Diwiti" is present'[1778]

Numerous attempts were made by "Diwiti" to explain his actions and to try and reach a peaceful settlement. It is possible that "Diwiti" realized the pain his involvement in the Three Million Gang was causing his family, particularly his mother. After the eruption of the "war" between the TMG and the 'community', "Diwiti's" mother was isolated by the 'community'. Taje recalls that church ministers, including the Methodist Church minister in Kroonstad, where she was a full member were afraid to visit her when she was sick, let alone to bury her.[1779] Amongst some of "Diwiti's" attempts to initiate peace included approaching the Minister's Fraternal and then writing a letter and distributing it in the whole township. This action was, however, dismissed by the 'comrades' as a ploy by the police (or the 'system') to set a trap for them. Taje recalls

> "Diwiti" was clever. He knew all these priests' organizations. He approached them and spoke with them. What did he do again? He wrote letters and said 'I'm not fighting against you. I'm fighting with George because of my wife. I'm not even fighting him. I'd like to talk to him'. And do you know what he did? He distributed them in the whole location. Then they (comrades) said the police had distributed the letters from an aeroplane. They didn't read the message. He was making people aware: 'Don't find yourself in a mess. Then tomorrow you say I have killed

[1776] Interview with Thekiswe
[1777] Taka's testimony, TRC Amnesty Hearings. http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/kroon/kroon.htm
[1778] Interview with Taje (Italics my emphasis)
[1779] Ibid.

your children. I'm not fighting with you'. My mother's child distributed that letter[1780]

The "new" TMG: Survival strategies

Realising that his attempts were treated contemptuously, "Diwiti" and his friends, who at this stage had formed themselves into the "new" TMG, began their reign of terror. At the beginning the "new" TMG, led by "Diwiti", John Buti "Kraag" Dinga, "Manguni" and Teboho Miya,[1781] used unsophisticated methods and it would seem their targets then were not clearly defined. At this stage they used knives to attack. Samuel "Bebe" Taka recalls

> So, sometimes we would hear that, for example, 'Thabo has been stabbed by so and so in town'. That night we would get into two taxis and we would raid all the taverns until we found the people responsible. If we couldn't find them in the taverns, we would raid them in their homes or camps. We attacked a lot. At times you'd find that during the attacks you did something because of the situation you found yourself in. You'd find them stabbing somebody you didn't even know the reason why, but you must join in and stab that person. The guys would tell you that if you don't stab this person, the day they arrest us you'd also be arrested and hanged[1782]

Taka also remembers that the gang's activities were closely monitored by the leader, "Diwiti". Anyone who did not perform their role as expected was ridiculed and sometimes even punished. He adds

> Every time we returned from the 'war', say we've killed someone, we would all go to "Diwiti's" house and wait for those who might come and avenge their members. So, we'd stand in a queue and "Diwiti" would walk past us asking *Ere ke bone thipa ya hao* (Let me see your knife) [If your knife didn't have blood stains] he shouted *E kare ha oa bolaya motho nyoa mao toe* (It doesn't look like you killed anyone, your mothers' … (private parts). *O tsamaisitse fela tjena hodima ha motho* (You just swiped your knife on the blood of this person and now you want to fool me that you actually killed someone). Then he'd give you a hard slap on the face. That man knew how to slap[1783]

Similar treatment was also applied to those who were suspected of working for the enemy (i.e. 'comrades'). In order to send a clear message to the rest of the gang, all those suspected were

[1780] Ibid. (Italics my emphasis)
[1781] Interview with Taka
[1782] Ibid.
[1783] Ibid.

publicly punished. Taka, who claims to have been suspected of working as a double-agent, recalls that punishment was so severe that finally the suspect would even concur. In his words

> There were meetings which were called by "Diwiti", especially when there were suspects. I was one of the suspects myself. Yes, because I was still attending school at Relebohile. So, when going to school I'd walk past the areas of the people who were fighting the Three Million. They wanted to know why I continued attending school when other kids had stopped going to school. And when attacks were launched, the other group would use the "corners" (safe routes), which were only known and used by the Three Million. So, there were many of us who were suspects. They accused us of giving out information to the enemies. They would call you. There was a huge painted stone at "Diwiti's" place; the kind of stones that are used to decorate the lawn. It was painted [white]. This is where the meetings were held. And you would find them waiting for you with *sjamboks.* They would beat you up like nobody's business. In the end … you'd even support their allegations. You'd agree that, indeed, you did give out information to the enemies[1784]

In the initial stages the "new" TMG survived by manufacturing their own weapons. According to Taka "Diwiti was working for JCI. This company deals with steel. *Ntate,* they manufactured very scary *pangas* (matchetes), and these were strong. All sorts of dangerous weapons were made there".[1785] When the fight intensified between the TMG and the 'comrade youth', the TMG robbed shops to get food. This was after their movement in the township and town was contained. Again Taka remarks

> There were people who were bringing us food. Others were forced. We sometimes robbed shop owners of their food. Sometimes during the day when we felt that we were hungry, we would go to the shops and take their food by force[1786]

The TMG and IFP

In May 1991 the Three Million Gang joined the Inkatha Freedom Party.[1787] Mamorena Taje, "Diwiti's" sister, claims that "Diwiti" finally joined the IFP because he wanted to force the ANC leadership in Maokeng to take him seriously and to start discussing the issue between him and

[1784] Ibid.
[1785] Ibid.
[1786] Ibid.
[1787] *The New Nation, 23 May 1991*

George. This was after had had observed that the IFP and the ANC national leadership were meeting to discuss peace initiatives.[1788] She explains

> This is how the Inkatha issue gets in. He ("Diwiti") finally joined Inkatha. Ntate Lovers (Petrus Lenkwane – a councillor in Koekoe's Council) came here … and they met with ntate Khumalo (a member of Inkatha in Welkom). He wanted to join Inkatha, because he could see that the ANC and Inkatha could negotiate. So, because they were always saying he's a Three Million and a thug the ANC leaders didn't take him seriously … when he tried talking [to them]. So, he thought if he could join Inkatha he'd be able to talk to these people. He'd be able to tell his story. You could see he wanted to talk. He thought that it would be better if he was with Inkatha, because he could go with Inkatha there: 'I can go to the ANC with them. I don't know what's happening with the ANC but it's siding with those people (George and others)', he'd say[1789]

It may have been true that "Diwiti" conveniently entered into an alliance with the IFP to achieve his personal undertaking. But for the IFP an alliance with "Diwiti" and the TMG may have been an opportunity to expand its support base outside KwaZulu/Natal and parts of the PWV to the OFS. This would undoubtedly dispel the argument that it was a party for AmaZulu only. It was no surprise that the IFP decided to work with the TMG. Seemingly, this collaboration was developed by members of the City Council of Maokeng long before May1991. This was evident when in April the Council in its meeting granted the IFP the permission to use the Seeisoville Stadium for its meeting. And in the same meeting, it refused COSATU Kroonstad branch's application to use the stadium on 1 May 1991.[1790] It is possible that the members of the Council, who at the time felt pressured by the ANC in Kroonstad to resign, invited the IFP particularly the Welkom branch to Maokeng to study the area and the people, and to learn more about the TMG.

After joining the IFP, the TMG's *modus operandi* changed. It became sophisticated and the gang's targets were well defined – political activists, particularly the leaders of the ANC. In fact, the *New Nation* published a story titled "Three Million Gang 'operated like an army'".[1791] The newspaper, drawing from the information provided by a former gang member, reported "there is a line of command with the echelon manned by policemen, councillors and Inkatha officials who in turn liaised with ten commanders occupying the second tier".[1792] "The commanders", the

[1788] On 29 January 1991 Nelson Mandela, leader of the ANC, and IFP's Mangosuthu Buthelezi met for the first time in three decades to discuss an effective peace process in the war-torn areas of Natal. Bhagowat, C. 'After the Peace Accord: Conflict continues in Kwa-Makuta', in *Work in Progress, 73, March/April, 1991*

[1789] Interview with Taje; also see *The New Nation, 23 May 1991*

[1790] Minutes of the Eighty First Ordinary Meeting of the City Council of Maokeng, held in the Council Chambers, Maokeng, on Wednesday 24 April 1991

[1791] *New Nation, 9 August 1991*

[1792] Ibid.

newspaper added "in turn controlled 10 lieutenants who were each in charge of a platoon unit". It concluded "Lieutenants met the units to inform them about attacks to be carried out during missions and about the strategies to be used".[1793]

In an interview with Mamorena Taje, she recalled at this stage the TMG removed fences surrounding the houses in Troubou to create easy escape routes, to create passages. They also used whistles to alert each other when they were being attacked.[1794] Similarly, Taka remembers that younger members of the gang were used to spy. He remarks: "Myself and few others were still young and we were mostly used for spying on people. If there was someone they wanted, it was our job to spy on that person and bring information".[1795] The TMG also began using guns. Taka observes: "We had guns, too. You wouldn't know how you got hold of a gun, but when you look closely you would realize that these old men who brought food from Welkom were the ones who brought these things here. Probably some had been stolen".[1796] This escalated the level of violence and of the number of victims. It was at this stage that the TMG employed other methods to strengthen itself. First, it received assistance from "friends" living in other places. Taka recalls that an outside group arrived in Maokeng to assist them in their fight

> I can't remember if it was from Parys or what. But there was a group which came in a taxi, wearing scorches … You know, the Ducks [of London] scorch. Iyo, you wouldn't talk to them while looking them in their eyes. Hey, their eyes were red like blood. Then later I found out that they were "Diwiti's" connection from prison when he was incarcerated[1797]

And secondly, the TMG resorted to using *muthi* (African traditional medicine).[1798] The use of *muthi* was widespread during political violence. Ari Sitas, in his study of 'comrades', illustrates this phenomenon. According to him, both the 'comrades' and *otheleweni* (those who aligned with the IFP and KwaZulu Administration) used *muthi* for protection. He notes that some of his interviewees, who were 'comrades', informed him that "They (*theleweni)* take *muthi.* They have wizards to weaken us. We take *muthi.* We sing kill the wizards".[1799] Just like the 'comrades' and *otheleweni* in Natal, the TMG also used *muthi.* Taka explains

> Yoh, it was bad. We were wearing T-shirts of Inkatha, together with those old men, who were members of Inkatha. Some of these old men you'd even think they were

[1793] Ibid.
[1794] Telephonic interview with Taje
[1795] Interview with Taka
[1796] Ibid; The 'old men' from Welkom were the IFP officials
[1797] Ibid.
[1798] For an account on the use of *muthi* during political violence, also see Kynock 'Crime, Conflict and Politics'
[1799] Sitas 'The Making', p.637

> crazy. … We were pierced with needles with *muthi* and *ba rephatsa* (our bodies were cut with razors and *muthi* inserted into the wounds). Speaking in Isizulu and Sesotho, these old men were saying *Ikulu mayiza kanje ingena lapha, iphuma lapha* (when a bullet is fired in your direction, it'll go in your body and come out again). I was surprised to see that the bullet had killed "Diwiti"[1800]

The use of *muthi* by the gang was confirmed by Daniel Tsholo, who had defected from the TMG. In an interview with *The Natal Witness*, Tsholo claimed he was involved in three murders committed by the Three Million Gang: "We mutilated private parts after killing the people which we then take to a witchdoctor in exchange for a portion to strengthen us against the attacks by comrades".[1801] As Taka and Tsholo explain, *muthi* was used for protection. But it created an unrealistic expectation: that it would prevent the user from dying especially from bullets fired by the enemy.



Samuel "Bebeto" Taka, former member of the "new" TMG
(*Source: Tshepo Moloi)*

The TMG's new strategy involved opposing boycotts and targeting the leadership of the ANC.[1802]
Bloem, testifying before the TRC hearings, explained how the TMG opposed the boycott organized by the ANC in Maokeng. He remarks

[1800] Interview with Taka
[1801] *The Natal Witness, 10 January 1991*
[1802] *Sowetan, 5 December 1991; New Nation, 12 December 1991;* also see UWL HLP AD1912 (40.15) SAIRR newspaper cuttings

> You see, what happened at the Kroonstad taxi rank is that many people were intimidated and advised to go and shop in town, and that they should not heed people telling them not to go and buy … in town … The manager of Pick 'n Pay it was known that "Diwiti" would go to him during these consumer boycotts … [and] assure the managing director that people would come and shop there[1803]

Bloem's view was supported by Machabe Thulo when he explained at the same TRC hearings that

> there was a time when a consumer boycott was conducted, and we have been preaching to the people the importance of consumer boycott. Those who had businesses in the township, we wanted them to benefit … We made door-to-door campaign. And those people (TMG) … got into the streets and our members were threatened. They couldn't continue with the … campaign. They were told to stop[1804]

It is not clear what the TMG intended to achieve by opposing the consumer boycott organized by the ANC. But what is certain is that it was able to scare the residents of Maokeng, some of whom supported the ANC. Thulo adds

> … Because the community of Maokeng was threatened … if you went into a house to explain what was happening. They would say to you it doesn't help for you to come *here* and tell us *about the boycott.* We know that we have to be part of this, but tomorrow when we come back the Three Million Gang is going to kill us, saying that we have been involved … together with the members of the ANC[1805]

This cost the ANC support in Maokeng. However, the situation changed in 1992 following the intervention by the ANC national leadership and MK (see below).

Feeling uneasy about the collaboration between the TMG and IFP, which in many other areas was complicated by the allegations of the SAP's partiality, in May 1991 the ANC Kroonstad branch wrote a heated letter directed to the Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, complaining about the SAP's ineffectiveness, but also questioning whether he was in control of the police and, if not, the letter suggested, he should quit.[1806] This prompted the Minister to take decisive action against the TMG. In June 35 members of the gang were arrested, and the police

[1803] Bloem's testimony, TRC Amnesty Hearings. http://.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/kroon/kroon.htm
[1804] Thulo's testimony, TRC Amnesty Hearings. http://.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/kroon/kroon.htm
[1805] Ibid. (Italics my emphasis)
[1806] *The New Nation, 29 May 1991*

were reported to be investigating at least eight cases of murder.[1807] The arrests came after the special unit under Lieutanant J.J. de Ru was sent from outside of Kroonstad.[1808] Recalling how they were arrested, Taka remarks:

> In order for the attacks to stop, there were certain *boers* who came here in Kroonstad. They were called Murder and Robbery Squad, led by Captain Derey (De Ru). They were from Brixton. Those *boers* arrived here on Thursday morning, at six. They were driving an Escort and went straight to "Diwiti's" house – he was alone. They took him with them. They came back at eleven, in those 7/10 huge cars, and we heard the blowing of whistles. Then we came closer and gathered there – fifty something of us - to hear what was the reason for the whistles. So, by then every gang member had their own membership card, red in colour, of Inkatha. We were told that we were going to meet Themba Khoza, who was the commander of the Inkatha then. Yoh! We all flocked into those big cars, beautiful ones. *Ntate,* we were shocked when we got to the gate that we were actually being taken to court. We had no chance to do anything. We were put there in a box [witness stand] and told that the case has been remanded for next month. But we would stay in there. We didn't understand why we were arrested. Each and every day the police officers would come to beat us up. They took the underage to the one in town [police station], and the older ones were here in Kroonstad [prison]. They had all the information about us, our names, and we did not know them. They'd say 'Hey, is your name "Bebeto" Samuel Taka? I'd stand there thinking where does this police know me from? And he'd bang on the table, shouting 'Hey, man, I'm talking to you'. And they had huge hands. Then they'd read out all the crimes we've committed: 'On such and such a day in such and such an area you stabbed so many people'. I'd try to deny it: '*Haai, ntate, nna ha ketsebe* (No, sir, I don't know). And he'd retort 'Hey, man, I can't have your name and you then tell me that you don't know anything'[1809]

Taka's testimony suggests that the police, particularly those outside Kroonstad, had been investigating the activities of the TMG, trying to build a case against its members. Maokeng residents' jubilation was, however, short-lived when in October the arrested gang members were released "on their own recognizance.[1810] Violence flared up once more when the TMG started terrorizing the residents again. In November the owner of Twapa General Dealers, Paulus Ramoji, alleged to have witnessed the murder of Mothobi Frans Nkate, who was stabbed by a member of the gang. Furthermore, three members of the gang were alleged to have entered the

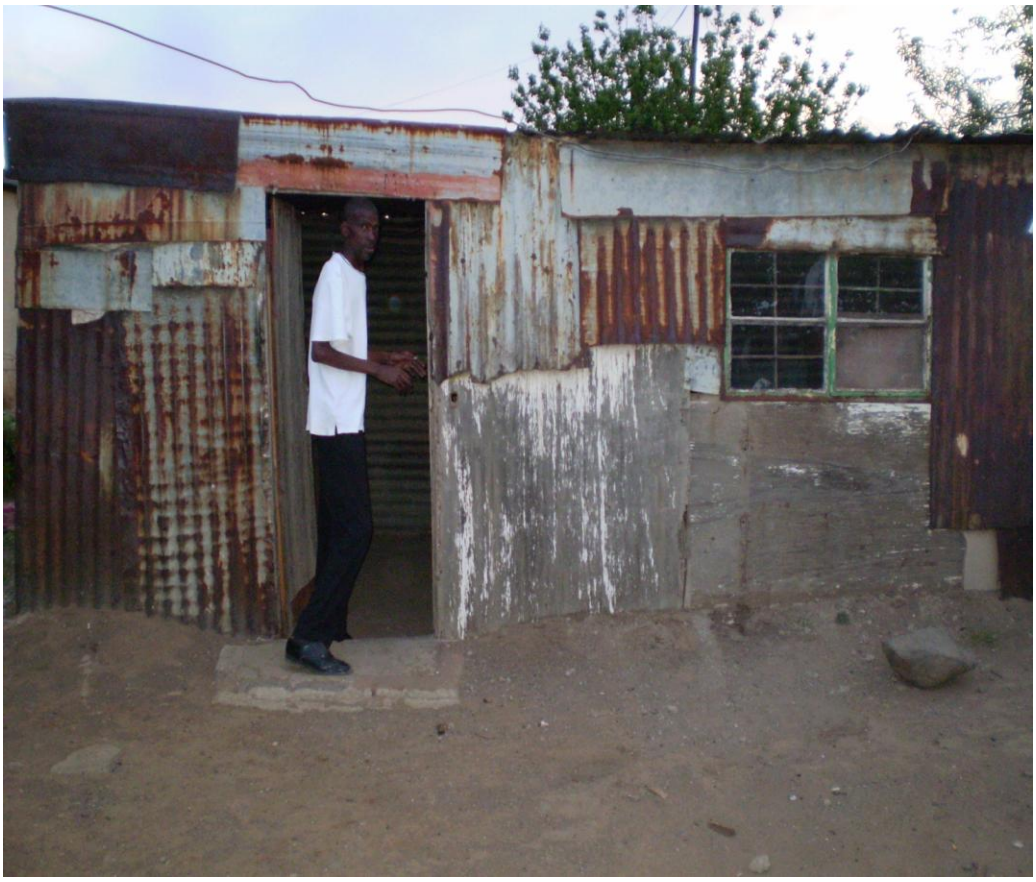
[1807] *The Citizen, 21 June 1991*
[1808] Ibid.
[1809] Interview with Taka; also see *Sowetan, 21 June 1991; City Press, 23 June 1991*
[1810] *City Press, 20 October 1991*

shop and demanded money at gunpoint.[1811] Although, the members of the TMG appeared in court in December, the residents of Maokeng, particularly some of the activists had had enough and decided that in order to stop the gang's reign of terror "Diwiti" had to be murdered.

Tien Manne Kraag – 'Ten Man Power': Community 'Defence Unit'

To counter attacks by the TMG, which had by then turned Troubou into its stronghold, the local activists, particularly those formerly aligned to the MDCC established a community defence structure, which was based at 'Cuito Carnavale' camp, in Phomolong.[1812] According to Bloem, "the defence units were established by the 'community' and … it was because of all the various attempts which had been made to protect the 'community' from various attacks *had failed*. … The youth and the older residents decided to defend themselves from the attacks."[1813] Leading figures in this defence structure recalled that they named themselves *Tien Mane Kraag* – or TMK ('Ten Men Power'), because they believed that ten men can defeat hundred men.[1814] Machabe Thulo, who became the 'General' or the 'Commander' of the unit, recalls that they boastfully called themselves 'The Talented Members of Umkhonto we Sizwe'. TMK was made up of ten 'commanders', who were responsible for establishing and commanding other camps. These were Thulo himself, Joseph "Slovo" Matli, Seele Sekonyela, Johannes Lengoabala, commonly known as 'Oom Joe', Pini Sethibe, also known as 'Scotch', 'Pupu' (or 'Mkhaya') Mahase, whose real name is Sekitla Moses Mahase. Malebo Ezekiel Manotshi, Papi Edwin Khambule, Abednigo Khumbi, and Makgabane Malebo.[1815]

[1811] *The New Nation, 1 November 1991;* for a detailed account of the TMG's acts of robbery see Bloem's testimony, TRC Amnesty Hearings. http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/kroon/kroon.htm
[1812] Cuito Carnavale' camp was a shack built in the yard belonging to the relatives of Machabe Thulo
[1813] Bloem's testimony, TRC Amnesty Hearings. http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/kroon/kroon.htm (Italics my emphasis)
[1814] Interview with Thulo; interview with Sekonyela
[1815] Interview with Thulo



Machabe Thulo standing in front of the 'Cuito Carnavale' camp (*Sources: Tshepo Moloi)*

Sekonyela observes it was not difficult to recruit members. He remembers that some of the people joined because they wanted to avenge their next of kin's suffering at the hands of the TMG. In his words

> You see, during that time people would just volunteer their services as our members because in some cases you would find that some did it specifically for revenge, because you would find that they lost a member of the family or a close friend, or maybe a girl-friend who was "married" forcefully by the TMG. So they would join forces[1816]

[1816] Interview with Sekonyela



Machabe Thulo and Seele Sekonyela, former members of 'TMK', standing in front of one of their hideouts. (*Source: Tshepo Moloi*)

Unlike the TMG, the TMK was well structured, with commanders responsible for the various camps.[1817] Machabe Thulo, who was the chief commander, remembers, *inter alia*, that the commanders' tasks were "checking whether these guys (members of the camps) have food, have ammunition, have places to sleep.[1818] They would come to me and tell me. So, I would get the resources and address the problems in the camps".[1819] Members of the 'community' played an important role by contributing money and sometimes cooking for the members of the defence units. Matshidiso Rantie, at the time of the civil war in Maokeng she was a member of the MDCC, claims that she would move around the township requesting food and meat from the owners of butcheries in the township to prepare food for the defence units.[1820]

Just like the TMG, the TMK also relied on *muthi* to protect and strengthen them. Thulo, again, explains

[1817] Camps were established in Thabadiatjha (at the three rooms), in Gelukwaarts, Phomolong, Tjhorising, and Marabastad. See interview with Thulo

[1818] As the fighting between the TMG and TMK intensified some times members of the TMK were forced to flee their camps and sleep either in other people's houses or in the veld

[1819] Interview with Thulo. Thulo claims that some of the resources they received from the UDF.

[1820] Interview with Rantie

> My grandmother was a traditional doctor. She was one of the strongest. She was also assisting us with *muthi.* All the members of these camps and SDU's were using that *muthi.* They took you to the veld and dug a hole, and everyone dug his hole. You went inside the hole. They mixed the *muthi* and water and poured it inside the hole. They gave you sticks, which we used to talk to the ancestors. And you were given instructions that you must "mourn" (abstain from having sex). If you don't "mourn", when you're going to have sex, you must stop using it [*muthi*]. And before you use it again, you had to bath so that it doesn't turn against you, that *muthi*[1821]

Defence structures, particularly the Self-Defence Units (SDUs) are typically associated with Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). In the initial stages, the Maokeng's self-defence structure did not have formal links with MK.[1822] However, its members received rudimentary military training from a certain Belushe. According to Thulo, Belushe was a former member of MK from exile, in Lusaka.[1823] Giving evidence before the TRC hearings, Thulo recalled that the *Tien Mane Kraag* was formed between October and November 1990, and it had no connections with MK.[1824] It was not surprising that MK was not involved in SDU's at this stage. In August 1990 the ANC had made an undertaking to the government to suspend the armed struggle to allow the process of negotiations to continue. SDUs established before 1991 were usually financially constrained and lacked viable networks.[1825] As a result they were unable to obtain guns and bullets. They, instead, relied on self-made guns. In the interview with members of the SDUs in Sebokeng Zone 7, these members noted that they used self-made guns and bullets were supplied by friendly policemen.[1826] In Maokeng, in contrast, the TMK disarmed the police. Thulo recalls

> We used to disarm the police. I want to be open with you. You see, someone would, for example, come here from other provinces, like Gauteng or North West. They'd be carrying a gun to protect themselves in case violence broke out. They'd be happy to see me, '*Hey* Chabes (short for Machabe)'. We'd go somewhere to drink and then we'd disarm him, telling ourselves that case or no case, it's not an issue. We'd stand if we have to. But the important thing was that we needed that gun to use to defend the community.

[1821] Interview with Thulo

[1822] For a discussion on the differences between SDUs with links with the ANC/MK and those without, see Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alex,* pp.370-4

[1823] Telephone conversation with Thulo, 16 August 2010; see interview with Sekonyela

[1824] Thulo's testimony, TRC Amnesty Hearings. http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/kroon/kroon.htm

[1825] Pakiso Rakgoadi, a researcher at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) observes MK-aligned SDUs were formed in 1991 by the ANC at the height of township violence between the ANC and IFP supporters. The main reason for their creation was because the police were "…perceived as part and parcel of the problem, and were reluctant to apprehend known vigilantes. Rakgoadi, P.S. 'The Role of the Self-Defence Units (SDUs) in an Changing Political Context'. Research report for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, January 1995. http://www.csvr.org./index.php? Downloaded, 29 September 2009

[1826] UWL HLP AG2115 (K10) Peace Action – SDUs, 1992: 'Interview with SDUs in Zone 7, Sebokeng'

> We would say that the gun is "on a tree … like a peach'. And we wouldn't hurt him. We would ask him for it politely and tell him that we need it. And we would say "You can go and report to the police. You mustn't be afraid. We are not robbing you, but we need it"[1827]

Moreover, some of the adult activists close to the TMK bought guns illegally. These it would seem were shared with the members of the TMK, or those associated with them. Tebello "Blakie" Tumisi recalls that he bought a gun, but because of lack of training they could not use it. He explains

> Yes … I bought it *for* R300. It was called *Pere* (Horse). It was the most powerful… (laughs). We nearly died. When Mustapha [Mantso] was supposed to shoot a man, he shot the other way. They didn't know how to use a gun. We were nearly killed that day. He tried to shoot them, but he missed. And he eventually ran away with the gun in his hand[1828]

As the conflict intensified between the TMG and TMK, the latter established other units, which were located in different sections in the location. One of these was the 'Witdoeke'[1829], based at Tjhorising, in Maokeng. Recalling how this unit was established, Mokotla remarks

> Where do I start, when we moved from Phomolong … when they told us to go back to our sections? When we got to Tjhorising I took this comrade (Phankhe), because he lived closer to where I lived. I took another comrade who is now a councillor in Mabopane [Pretoria]. He lived closer to where I lived. I took another comrade. His name is Mahlomola. He also lived closer to where I lived. I took the pastor. His name was Pastor Matsile - he passed away. J*a*, I took *Ntate* Matsile. We also took comrade Jeff Mohlabula. At that time he was a shop steward at the railway. He worked at Spoornet. I knew that I had taken relevant people. We didn't go to the people of Tjhorising, first. We sat down and discussed the importance of establishing a camp in Tjhorising. Some of us were intelligent. We discussed it. When the pastor understood, everything was fine with us. We agreed. And the following day we embarked on a door-to-door campaign. We went to their homes. We recruited the father and the son, but we didn't recruit seven-year

[1827] Interview with Thulo; also see interview with Mpondo, Mokotla and Phankhe; some of the members of the SDUs in Maokeng found guns outside of Kroonstad. At the TRC Hearings held in Kimberley, 1997, Sekitla Moses Mohasa, a former member of the SDU, confessed to receiving his gun from a comrade in Daveyton, in the East Rand, Gauteng Province. http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/kim/mohase.htm

[1828] Interview with Tumisi

[1829] It is unlikely that members of this camp decided on this name because of their admiration of the Witdoeke which operated in *Crossroads* in the 1980s. However, just like the Crossroads' witdoeke, they, too wore white cloths to easily identify each other. For more on the witdoeke in Crossroads, see Cole *Crossroads*

> olds because there is nothing we could discuss with them. There was a church that we used for our gatherings in Tjhorising. It was Holy Pentacosta (Pentacostal). We went to Holy Pentecosta to convince them, because it was us who came up with that idea. We convinced them until they accepted it. If I still remember well, comrade Phankhe, the time we invited all the people it was on Saturday afternoon. Because, I remember, that meeting was not held at Holy. It was held at Jeff Mohlabula's house. We decided that the camp will start operating on Monday. We started camping[1830]

Phankhe Mbona, who was in the same unit with Mokotla, recalls that, in addition to defending the 'community' against the TMG, some of the unit's activities were to enforce stay-aways and to render the township 'ungovernable'. He remembers

> It didn't only focus on fighting the Three Million. There were other activities. Like we said that we were hitting two birds with one stone. On the one hand, we were busy making the country ungovernable and at the same time we were busy organising stay-aways. We had to organise stay-aways and stop people and cars from [leaving] Tjhorising, just like they were stopped in Senzela (Phomolong) and Seeisoville. And when the Three Million was attacking us, we had to be able to cope[1831]

It possible that here Mbona is referring to the time when the MDCC had embarked on rent and consumer boycotts.

Tsekelekwas and Women's role in political violence

The other unit/camp which was established during this period was made up of young people below the age of twenty. This unit was known as Tsekelekwas (or Tsekele). It comprised both male and female activists. Mpondo explains how the unit got its name

> What happened is that … Tsekelekwa was not a name of a group. There was a comrade … Force. He was from Viljoenskroon. He is the one who came up with the name Tsekelekwa. We used to say *tsekele, tsekele, tsekelekwa* (I'm still…I'm still … I'm still here) when we greeted the comrades. Then we adopted that. We made it our style. Then people labelled us the Tsekelekwas[1832]

[1830] Interview with Mpondo, Mokotla and Mbona
[1831] Ibid.
[1832] Ibid.



Phankhe Mbona, Paseka Mpondo and Oupa Mokotla, former members of 'Tsekelekwas' (*Source: Tshepo Moloi*)

It was in this unit that women played a combative role. As already pointed above that most work on political violence generally depicts women as powerless victims; as people who neither took action nor made any attempt to curb political violence. These are women who were abused at will by the men involved in political violence. Babylon Ka Xeketwane, for example, in his study on the relation between political violence and hostels in Soweto, demonstrates how the IFP supporters who resided in the hostels abducted (or forced) township women to live in the hostels. They demanded sexual favours from them.[1833] Similarly, Matthew Kentridge in his book *An Unofficial War,* focusing on political violence in Pietermaritzburg, Natal, using the story of Helmina Shange, also shows how the 'war' turned some women into powerless victims. He writes "Shange is an old woman whose body is covered with burn scars". According to Shange, she was set alight, together with some of her belongings like her house, car, and TV set, by *amaqabane* (i.e. comrades/UDF supporters). And when asked whether she planned to seek legal assistance, and whether she would move to a different area when she came out of hospital, she simply said "There's not much point." "Shange's story", Kentridge concludes, "demonstrates a woman who feel powerless and who had accepted her fate in whatever form."[1834]

However, Deborah Bonnin, in her Ph.D thesis, shows that when political violence moved into the 'women's spatiality', that is their homes, the latter began to play active roles. In spite of this,

[1833] See Babylon KaXeketwane's work on violence in the Reef hostels, for example. Ka Xeketwane 'The relation', on women's role in the hostel during political violence, see pp.166-67

[1834] Kentridge *An Unofficial War*, pp41-7

Bonnin depicts women as only capable of playing auxiliary roles. She writes "by August 1987 political violence (between the UDF and Inkatha-supporters) in Mpumalanga Township, KwaZulu, moved into new spatiality. "The targets of the violence", according to her, "were no longer only the UDF youth … family members of these youth were also attacked and their houses burnt". For her, this was the reason women became actively involved in the violence. She points out that "women supported men in [their] activities by providing food, resources for weapons and … surveillance."[1835] Indeed, this was no minor role, and some of the women in Maokeng also played these roles in their contribution in the political violence.

Mamokhele Sebetoane remembers that she used to hide weapons and was also responsible for liaising with local business people to collect donations. She explains

> I don't know if I told you previously that the "materials" were brought to me (whispering). We had a garage and the "materials" were stored there. It was because they trusted me. Even if the police could show up, I wouldn't have revealed where the "materials" were

I was also a 'go-between', she continues

> I was a 'go-between' when it came to me receiving the "materials", going to business people which we knew were supporting our cause, even if they didn't come out publicly that they supported our initiatives. I was one of those who knew who those were. I used to go to them and collect donations from them. It was like that[1836]

Similarly, Thulo adds

> Women played a very important role, which I respected. When we were arrested, they were given lists to collect money from the community, so that we could be bailed out. .. They would move from one business to another in the township, asking for bread, sweet-aid … and they would bring them to us in jail[1837]

And Oupa Mokotla, the Commander of the Tjhorising's SDU camp, remembers that some of these women provided them with safe accommodation

> There was a time when I lived in the 'bush'. I was a wanted man here in Maokeng. … Police came to where I lived. Do you understand? *Ausi* (Sister) Mamotjhato …

[1835] Bonnin, D. 'Space, Place and Identity: Political Violence in Mpumalanga Township, KwaZulu, 1987-93' (University of the Witwatersrand, Ph.D Thesis, 2007), pp.232-249
[1836] Interview with Sebetoane
[1837] Interview with Thulo

> was one of those women whom we knew her doors were never locked. You would get in on one door at three o'clock in the morning and get out through another. They had accepted that this was a 'war' and we were fighting[1838]

In similar vein, the only woman active in the TMG solely played an auxiliary role. Mamorena Taje claims that her role was to represent the under-aged members of the TMG in court, arrange funerals, arrange food, pay bail for those detained, and to visit them in prison.[1839]

During the course of political violence in Maokeng, however, a new group of women emerged. These were younger and, in addition to being involved in the 'traditional' roles of women discussed above, they also participated in combat. The age group of this group ranged between 14 and 16 years.[1840] The latter had been groomed in the politics of the ANC. One of these is Dikeledi Mary-Jane Tlali. Tlali's combatant role distinguishes her from other women in Maokeng. It is worth studying her career in detail.[1841]

Tlali was born on 10 October 1974 in Phomolong, Maokeng. She started her school at Moepeng Combined until Standard Six (today's Grade 8). In 1990 she went to Reginald Cingo Secondary School to start her Standard Seven (today's Grade 9). She claims that her first introduction to politics was when she was in Standard Two (today's Grade 4) at Moepeng in 1985 – the beginning of the student demonstrations in Maokeng.

In her first year at Cingo she joined the Congress of South African Students (COSAS). According to her "it was the time when I became interested in politics, of which I had always been interested in but I wanted a role model to politicize me". It was not long that she met Dennis Bloem, Machabe Thulo and Pini Sethibe. The latter introduced her to the ANC's political school to gain more knowledge up until 1991-92. Tlali and some of her female friends like Miki, Pinki attended the ANC's political classes in Brentpark. According to her "We would walk from Phomolong to Brentpark every Thursday afternoon and the classes started at 4 or 5 o'clock. The classes were conducted by different "lecturers". I remember comrade Bloem, Thami [Phaliso], Mustafa [Mantsu], Daniel George, Khahliso [Moeketsi]". Political lectures varied. Sometimes they were taught about the ANC's leaders, 1976 student uprisings, Bantu Education. Tlali explains "I learnt about the 1976 uprisings, Bantu Education from comrade Machabe [Thulo]. I *read* 'Through the eye of the needle' (i.e. *The eye of the needle: an essay in participatory democracy),*[1842] about the likes of Nelson Mandela. We were taught many things, especially

[1838] Interview with Mpondo, Mokotla and Mbona
[1839] Telephonic interview with Taje
[1840] Marks also writes about young women in Diepkloof, Soweto, who in 1990 were involved in combative violence. See Mark *Young Warriors,* pp.104-5
[1841] This information is drawn from the interview with Dikeledi Mary-Jane Tlali (LHPR), Phomolong, 24 September 2009
[1842] This book was written by Richard Turner (Johannesburg, SPRO-CAS, 1972)

about discipline: that a comrade should be disciplined and to respect our commanders, and respect each other as comrades".



Likeledi "Molefe" Tladi, former member of 'Tsekelekwas'

(*Source: Tshepo Moloi)*

However, the ANC's political lectures went beyond theoretical teaching, but also involved practical matters. Tlali and her friends were also offered military skills. She recalls: "Most of the time we were taught by Dennis Bloem. Sometimes it was a certain priest called *moruti* (Reverend) Gozongo. … We were doing many things in his house. Things like making petrol bombs." These lessons seem to have motivated Tlali to want to change the situation. "Then I had this strange feeling", she remembers "of wanting to bring some change to the situation that we, as students, faced. And I developed love for COSAS and started recruiting too".

Soon her active participation in politics drew the attention of the police and that of the Three Million Gang (TMG). Tlali claims: "Then I became disturbed and would bunk school, and would sometimes not sleep at home because I was running away from the police. And, on the other side, the Three Million Gang was hunting for me, because I was associated with the comrades." She had to drop out of school in Standard Nine (today's Grade 11). She then dedicated her life to fighting the TMG and the apartheid regime. She became involved in the activities of the Tsekelekwas (or Tsekele). "We called ourselves 'Tsekele', which was the name also used by men. It was Pinky (also known as "Six Nine"), then Hadifele. And there were two Nonos. And

one of the Nonos was a twin. Others have died: people like Poppy, Segametsi and Dipuo. I was called "Molefe", because I'm left-handed. I was named so, again, because we didn't call each other by our real names in order to prevent the police knowing who we were."

Like other women, they, too, participated in acts of surveillance. Jacklyn Cock points out that some of the white women in the SAP's Special Branch were also used to infiltrate the ANC, with the aim of spying and gathering valuable information about its activities. Olivia Forsyth, a former SAP agent, played such a role.[1843] It was easy for women to engage in such roles, because unlike men they were not suspected.

Gradually Tlali and her female comrades began to participate in military actions. They were used to target those who collaborated with the state and the TMG. In her words: "I remember one day we threw a petrol bomb at *ntate* Caswell Koekoe's house. What surprised me was that it didn't explode". She concluded that Koekoe was using *muthi* to protect himself. In addition, they targeted government vehicles. Recalling the time when she was involved in the burning of the vehicle belonging to the Department of Education, she said: "… We used to be very angry then. You know, during that time government cars weren't allowed into the townships. We once burned a car belonging to the Department of Education and Training, myself and comrade City (Sefatsa), who had disguised as a *cherry* (a woman) and myself as *auty* (a man). The police were hunting us."[1844] Such acts seem to have been common among some of the young female comrades in other areas. For example, Marks writes that two young women in Diepkloof informed her that they had been involved in setting fire to the home of a man believed to be an Inkatha supporter.[1845]

Although Tlali and her female comrades had been lectured about the ANC's politics and taught to make petrol bombs, they were, however, never allowed to have or keep guns. They only carried them when going out to attack. "I used to carry along a 'sun-sack', with petrol bombs and guns inside it. But I didn't mind at that time, because I enjoyed what I was doing and felt I wasn't only doing that for myself but for the people of South Africa, or Maokeng as a whole". "Girls didn't *own* guns", she continues "we only carried them in sacks in the company of male comrades. They always knew what was inside Dikeledi's sack. Then they would take them away from us after action. We were never allowed to have them". This displayed the level of distrust male 'comrades' had for women when it came to 'war' and that it was their 'natural' responsibility to engage in political violence.[1846]

[1843] Cock, J. *Colonels and Cadres: War and Gender in South Africa* (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1990), p.141

[1844] Interview with Tlali

[1845] Marks *Young Warriors,* p.104

[1846] See also Marks *Young Warriors,* pp.102-5

Before long, Tlali was detained. A tinge of emotion and, probably, fatigue from the on-going fight with the TMG and the police seems to have clouded her judgement. On learning that one of the girls in the township had informed the police about one of her male comrades, she confronted the girl and disclosed vital information about herself. She remembers: "During the time when comrade City and others slept somewhere in Constantia, there was this girl from the same street who knew where they slept. That girl alerted the police and we heard about that … We went to school to confront her and asked her if she knew what she was doing was wrong and whether she was aware of what could end up happening to City? I told this girl to tell the police that I wasn't afraid of them and I mentioned to the girl my house number, which was 2091. She gave the police my address. They came at night and found me sleeping, and arrested me". Together with her female comrade Hadifele, they were tortured. The police put them inside a sack and suffocated them. And they were later released.

Feeling overwhelmed and tired of the fighting, Tlali finally decided to leave Maokeng for a while. She recalls "I even ran away at some point and went to Bothaville for about six to seven months because I couldn't take it anymore. I wanted some rest … I couldn't even think straight, *niks, niks* (nothing, nothing). Let alone sleep, because I witnessed a lot of terrible things – killings. People were stabbed; people were shot in front of me. So, I thought it was better for me to go away and take a break".

Although the male comrades were cautious not to allow the young women to carry guns, they nevertheless demonstrated commitment and determination in fighting the TMG. It was through their contribution that the TMG was finally defeated.

The demise of the Three Million Gang

The *Tien Mane Kraag* and its units continued to operate without the assistance of MK until the ANC leadership intervened – and arms became readily available. For Tumisi, change came after Steve Tshwete, a former deputy commander and commissar of MK in exile[1847] and in 1990 a member of the ANC's National Executive Committee (NEC), had rejected the idea of negotiating peace with the TMG "because he felt that the Three Million Gang were thugs".[1848] It would seem that attempts were being made by certain individuals to broker peace between the TMG and the 'comrades', but these were dismissed by both "Diwiti" and Leepile Phume, the chairperson of the Maokeng Interim Civic Association.[1849]

[1847] See O'Malley, P. *Shades of Difference,* p.235
[1848] Interview with Tumisi; also see interview with Thulo
[1849] See *New Nation, 25 October 1991*

When Chris Hani, ex-MK Chief of Staff and in the early 1990s General Secretary of the South African Communist Party, came to Kroonstad, the proposal to fully arm the SDUs was set in motion. At this stage, some of the people who had left the country to go into exile were returning. Amongst these were members of MK. One such person was Ditsietsi Mmei. Mmei, was born in Maokeng, and had left the country to go into exile at the age of 22 in 1978. He returned to South Africa at the beginning of 1992. In exile he joined MK.[1850]Through Mmei's discussion with Hani, a formal structure of the SDUs, linked to MK, was established, and arms were made available. Mmei remembers

> There was a time Chris [Hani] came to Kroonstad. There was a rally at Seeisoville Stadium. I said 'You know … I'm staying here and I have to fight these Three Million people but I don't have anything. So, luckily Chris is coming, let me utilize the coming of Chris. But we had formed the Military Command. And at that time we had already written to the HQ (Head Quarters) and S'phiwe Nyanda had already confirmed that you've got a recognized structure, go on with your work. Now, the structure is there and everything, but there's no weaponry … So, when we were at the stadium I spoke to Chris: 'Chris, the Three Million people are armed,[1851] so we need some ammunition. Chris then said 'We'll talk. Fine, that will be addressed'. Fine, then it was addressed. We got our weapons and everything is fine. Then, I formed a strong structure. I went to Welkom and met with the comrades I knew in Welkom. Eh, Viljoenskroon there was a comrade called Sombo. I think he has passed on now. Approached people like Sonny. We met at one place. These were former MK members. Then we formed a structure[1852]

The Maokeng Military Command (MMC) set itself four key objectives in its attempt to quell the TMG. First, it wrote a letter, requesting a meeting with the police to inform them of the presence of MK in Maokeng.

In the same letter, the MMC warned the police that it intended to stop the TMG and demanded the police's co-operation. Mmei explains

> Our target number one … we wrote a letter to the police officials like Schilling.

[1850] Interview with Ditsietsi Mmei (LHPR), Naledi, Soweto, 18 September 2009

[1851] It would seem that at this stage the TMG were receiving guns from the members of the IFP from Welkom; Sparks writes that the IFP were supplied with guns and other ammunition by the C10 Unit based in Vlaakplaas. According to him "both the Koevoet weapons and the home-made guns were packed in black bags and distributed to the IFP through two of its provincial leaders in the Transvaal, Themba Khoza and Victor Ndlovu. It is possible that some of these were sent to Welkom and ultimately ended in Kroonstad. See Sparks *Tomorrow,* pp.175-6

[1852] Interview with Mmei

> We sat down with them. We introduced ourselves: that we are here to protect the ANC. And if you want to use force, then that's too bad. You use force, then we use force. Schilling stood up *and said* 'Hey, you cannot come and say this in my country. This is my country'. I said *he e monna* (No, man), we don't recognize you in this country. Let me tell you, we are the future government. You are the outgoing government. We fought in that building of theirs … next to Pick 'n Pay. They were no longer in Adami House[1853]

Secondly, the MMC recruited and trained all those who were interested in joining the SDUs. Mmei remembers that the Maokeng Military Command drafted a form (it is possible that this was the Code of Conduct), which they expected the recruits to fill in before joining. "So, we developed a form", Mmei explains, "that whoever is interested to join the self defence unit, come and fill in this form, and we'll train you. So, they came to fill in those forms."[1854] According to Pakiso Rakgoadi "the need to make the SDUs accountable and transparent led to the drawing up of a code of conduct. This was to become a yardstick by which the activities of the SDUs were to be monitored."[1855] It has proven difficult to substantiate if members of the SDUs in Maokeng filled in the forms, because Rakgoadi notes that "the code of conduct did not get the approval of the SDU members because it stipulated that anyone under eighteen years of age should not carry firearms".[1856] This could have caused some discomfort amongst some of the young people already involved in the fight against heavily armed members of the TMG.

Thirdly, the Maokeng Military Command established a camp where it could monitor the movement of the TMG. This helps explain the shift of the TMG's attacks from Maokeng to town. After being offered accommodation in Gelukwaarts by Dimo, a former teacher, the Maokeng Military Command established the office of MK. Not long after it established a base in the same area, where it trained its recruitees. The base came to be known as Cuba. Mmei remarks

> So, we had our outpost there in Cuba, where we stayed. Cuba was next to Troubou. There were *mekhukhu* (shacks) somewhere there. The TMG raped mothers there and all sorts. … The owners had left. They ran away. So, we used *the area* as our outpost. We enclosed that place and camped there. So, they couldn't come to that place. You see, just across the street it was Cuba and on the other side it was Troubou[1857]

Mmei recalls that training took place during the day. He continues

> So, when I was forming these units, I got into Cuba … trained them during

[1853] Ibid. (Italics my emphasis)
[1854] Ibid.
[1855] Rakgoadi 'The Role of the SDUs', p.4
[1856] Ibid.
[1857] Interview with Mmei (Italics my emphasis)

> the day ... while Schilling and his police were standing and watching. We didn't train at night. Running in the trenches, showing them how to crawl, how to handle a weapon … So, that's how we recruited these self defence units. And our command was responsible for the northern Free State[1858]

Thulo concurs, and believes the intervention by MK helped them to win the 'war' against the TMG. He explains: "We received it (training) later. They just complemented what we had already started. It was Ditsietsi Mmei and others. They were the first people to arrive. We were trained by them. We trained in the veld. We did steep crawling, crocodile crawling, and others. We were taught about guns. Ditsietsi taught us. They taught us a lot of things. That was the reason we won the fight quicker."[1859]

Having achieved some of its objectives, the Maokeng Military Command embarked on its fourth and final objective: to warn the black policemen against attacking the SDUs "because they were not fighting them".[1860] Furthermore, the Maokeng Military Command aimed to recruit black warders and members of the TMG, including "Diwiti".[1861] Mmei recalls: I said what about mobilizing "Diwiti"? *Others* said let's write a letter to Troubou. We wrote a letter wanting to meet with "Diwiti". Ishmael "Satch" Sefatole took the letter".[1862] "Diwiti" responded by taking the letter to the police. Mmei remembers that when they arrived at the SB's head quarters – the venue chosen by "Diwiti" – the latter was not present. Instead, Mmei adds "the *boers* spoke on his behalf, asking why we wanted to see "Diwiti"? Finally, they said we should make a treaty and not fight"[1863] Feeling disillusioned, the Maokeng Military Command and its SDUs attacked and killed members of the TMG. Those who were able to escape, left Kroonstad. In the process others were won over and sent out of Kroonstad.[1864] Mmei recalls: "Some of them we won *over*. We'd tell them that 'Look, if you agree to work with us, we'll help you escape. Then we took them and send them to Shell House. At Shell House they'd dispatch them and find places for them somewhere."[1865]

This worked in the ANC's favour, because some of these gangsters confessed their involvement in the gang, and also freely spoke about the involvement of the police and other state officials. For example, an ex-TMG member, Elias Marumu, revealed the collusion between the police, the prosecutor and the TMG, strengthening the long held ANC activists' suspicions. He claimed, *inter alia*, to have participated in the murder of at least three people and to have robbed several

[1858] Ibid.
[1859] Interview with Thulo
[1860] Interview with Mmei
[1861] Ibid.
[1862] Ibid.
[1863] Ibid.
[1864] Ibid.
[1865] Ibid. (Italics my emphasis). Shell House is the former headquarters of the ANC, in Johannesburg.

others. But for all these crimes he was never convicted by a court of law. He claimed that police would arrest them but would advise them during interrogation not to answer questions in court in a manner that would lead them to their conviction.[1866]

The Maokeng Military Command made its final attempt to win "Diwiti" over before he was murdered, but this was, again, unsuccessful. As on the previous occasion, the Maokeng Military Command wrote a letter to be delivered to "Diwiti". Only this time "Diwiti" was given an ultimatum to change his ways or face the consequences. Tumisi, who was part of the delegation that delivered the letter at "Diwiti's" place, remembers

> ... Sunday, Ditsietsi Mmei came to me. He said he came to fetch us. He said we must deliver a letter to "Diwiti's" house. We didn't know what was written in that letter. Now when we arrived at "Diwiti's" house, I got off the car with him. We were looking for "Diwiti" and we couldn't find him. We found his little brother and gave him the letter to give it to "Diwiti". That letter made the police to be suspicious. It said 'If he does not mend his ways before Thursday, he is going to die'[1867]

What confirmed police suspicion was that "Diwiti" received a threatening letter on Sunday and on Tuesday he was murdered. And for them no one but MK was to be blamed for this act. In fact was not the case (see below).

In 1992 MK decided to use the death of one of its cadres to demonstrate its (and the ANC's) strength and popularity. This, in turn, won the ANC support. Mmei observes - dramatically

> Now the turning point is that one of our youngest MK guy passed away. What was that *ntwana's* (boy's) name? … We *felt* to show that MK exists and show *off* our power. Now during the week I was selecting soldiers that were brave from all over the Free State for that occasion. That weekend we met at the Seeisoville Stadium; the funeral was there. It was packed. We divided our guys into three. There were those who were supposed to wear plain clothes … those who were supposed to wear MK uniform. Then … those who were supposed to walk amongst the people. The whole Kroonstad had come out, because they wanted to see MK. We said today the army should know that MK exists and the community should know that it's us who are governing now. There was a certain lady from Welkom called Ouma. *I said* Ouma, you lead the grenade squad. Then I'll wait here in front of these … Welkom *police.* I'll command from here. So, their hippos were waiting there. *The police* went to reinforce further up. The thing they didn't understand was that where they were waiting … were MK members who were wearing civilian clothes. So, we left the cemetery. Immediately, when we reached the corner we found Schilling waiting. Now, they were closing in as we

[1866] *The New Nation, 21 January 1993*
[1867] Interview with Tumisi

> were coming. … Our guys in the civilian clothes took them off and remained with T-shirts written MK army and they pulled out their guns and cocked them, and said 'you are surrounded'. They surrendered unconditionally. Schilling said 'wait, wait'. For the first time the people of Kroonstad saw a policeman running away …going to get inside the hippo. *After that* there was no one who was scared of wearing an ANC T-shirt and *to* canvass. There was no intimidation[1868]

In spite of the MK's show of force some of the local activists were still bent on murdering "Diwiti", with the hope that will bring an end to the ongoing violence in the township. Tumisi, who was privileged to information to carry out the murder of "Diwiti", admits that they had planned to murder "Diwiti" but their plan failed. He recalls

> We had planned something else on our side. And Ditsietsi also came with his plan. Now, when we went to town on Monday 24 (1992), we were together with the other guys ... There were six of us in the car. When we moved towards the court, we were supposed to pass Pick 'n Pay … We were going to leave those boys at Pick 'n Pay. Now, we discovered that the police were behind us - the detectives were behind us. It was two cars. The one was right next to us, while the other one was further back. I saw them in the mirror … Then *Bra* Robert Ntoampe was [panicking]. I said *Bra* Robert, wait the police are behind us. We parked the car at Pick 'n Pay … the police drove past. We were no longer going in the direction of the court; we were now at Pick 'n Pay. We were surprised to see that there were lots of police around. So, we left them, and quickly drove with Dennis. We found that the town was full of people. We were surrounded. We parked next to ABSA bank. While we were still there, we saw the other guy who worked at Maberies. I think his surname is Molotsi. I ran to him. He works for a newspaper company. I said to him "Go and check the guys and take them to the township". That guy drives the company *car*. He took them to the township. We came back, because our mission had failed [1869]

It is possible that someone privy to the discussion about the plot to murder "Diwiti" leaked the information to the police, hence Tumisi and his 'comrades' were under police surveillance.

But before this day Tumisi, Bloem and [Robert] Ntoampe had travelled to Johannesburg, where they met Bloem's relative, Petrus Roland. Roland insisted he wanted to come to Kroonstad with them to stop "Diwiti", who, with his gang, had allegedly killed his relative in Brentpark. Tumisi remembers

> As the clash continued, there was another boy. He came from the Bloem's family. He

[1868] Interview with Mmei (Italics my emphasis)
[1869] Interview with Tumisi

> was Dennis Bloem's relative. He was in Gauteng. While we were still in Gauteng … he wanted to come with us here. He wanted to come here to stop "Diwiti". He lived in a Coloured township. His name is Petrus. It was me, Dennis and *Bra* Robert [Ntoampe]. We said "Just wait" [1870]

In spite of the advice that he should "just wait", Roland left for Kroonstad. The latter's hatred for "Diwiti" and the TMG was both political and personal. He was born in Eldorado Park, South of Johannesburg, in 1969, but then moved to Ennerdale. His family roots were in Kroonstad. Testifying before the TRC Hearings he explained: "My father, Mr Philip Petrus, was born in Kroonstad."[1871] As a result he spent most of his time in Kroonstad. He even joined SAYCO and later ANCYL in Kroonstad. On the 14 February 1992 his relative, Simon Bloem, was murdered at the taxi rank in town allegedly by the TMG. He claimed that this incident and the decision taken at the ANCYL meeting that "Diwiti" had to be killed strengthened his resolve to murder "Diwiti". On Tuesday 25 February 1992 he acted on his resolve. Recalling how he carried out this act, he explained

> I walked up to … George Ramasimong. He was with his gang. I think there were about 12 or 15 of them, I can't remember exactly. Because they knew me I wore a balaclava so they wouldn't identify me, because if they had … they would have attacked me and not the other way round. He walked to the taxi rank and walked through a passage. He entered through the gate to the taxi rank. I was walking amongst the members of the TMG. I walked up to him, I took out the firearm. … And a couple of gang members behind me shouted at him. He turned around. He looked in my direction. He saw me approaching with a firearm and he tried to run away. I shot at him. And he ran around the kombis … and the fence is quite too high on the other side, so he couldn't run away. So, he actually cornered himself there. He turned around and ran towards me. I ran towards him. I … kicked him on his chest. He tried to get up whilst I was standing. I knocked his feet out from under him, so he fell down again. I then put my foot on his head and while he was lying on the ground I shot him in the head. I turned around … I was alone. … I .. ran away in the direction of the cars[1872]

As soon as the news of "Diwiti's" death began making rounds, people in town ran around in jubilation, taxis sounding their hooters. Tumisi, who was on his way to meet with his lawyer in town recalls

> … I had an appointment with the lawyer, Du Plessis and the SANCO (South African

[1870] Ibid.
[1871] Roland's testimony, TRC Hearings. http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/amntrans/kroon/kroon.htm
[1872] Ibid.; For a detailed account on how "Diwiti" was murdered, see Mamorena Taje's interview; also see *City Press, 8 March 1992;* Krog in her book about the murder of "Diwiti" incorrectly describes Roland Petros as a member of MK. He was not. See Krog, *Account,* p.24

> National Civic Organisation) Committee. ... When we were on the way to see the lawyer, then came a lot of cars making noise with their horns (hooters). I had just collected some people. So, I also sounded the horn of my car … (Laughs), because I knew the mission. It was hectic. The streets were full of *people, tjo, tjo, tjo*! It were the taxi drivers who started the commotion. Yes, after that they (police) came to me and Dennis. We were beaten the whole night. They came here around 21:30 and took me away. They beat me until 03:30 in the morning. After that they brought me here (home). They released me[1873]

Eunice Tsoaeli, former Secretary of the SACC in Kroonstad, who had just arrived in Maokeng from work in town, concurs:

> It was during the week. Oh! I had just got back from work then I heard 'hey! let's go back to town. Everyone in the township was ululating. It was just ululation 'The boss is dead'. Oh! my God what is it? What's going on? As we went outside, there were even free rides to town, to go and see the corpse as it laid there. It was the first time I experienced such a thing in my entire life. It was like a president had died. And I had never seen people so happy[1874]

The residents' rejoicing was short-lived, because fears of counter-attack by the remaining, and equally angry, members of the TMG, persisted. However, there is no evidence to suggest that the remaining members continued to terrorise the community. Instead, newspaper headlines appeared declaring that the gang was disintegrating. This was after the detention of "Diwiti's" younger brother, Matsile, in connection with some of the deaths.[1875] Calm descended on Maokeng once again. Some of the members of the SDUs were also arrested and sentenced to long spells in prison. For example, Thulo was sentenced to 10 years in 1991 for the murder of Masusu Ntema;[1876] Mpondo received eight years for the murder of Tsietsi Leboko. Roland, for his role in the murder of "Diwiti", was sentenced to 14 years.[1877] The three were subsequently given amnesty by the TRC.[1878] TRC found that the conflict that ravaged Maokeng towards the end of 1990 to the beginning of 1992 resulted in 104 deaths of community members while about 25 gang members were killed.[1879]

The final chapter will deal with the transition period, leading to the first non-racial and democratic local government elections.

[1873] Interview with Tumisi
[1874] Interview with Tsoaeli; also see interview with Matli
[1875] *The New Nation, 4 April 1992.* Matsile was subsequently murdered in prison, see interview with Thulo
[1876] Interview with Thulo
[1877] http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/decisions/1996/961206_petrus%20etc.htm
[1878] Ibid.
[1879] Ibid.

Conclusion

The political violence which erupted in the early 1980s between the IFP and UDF in KwaZulu/Natal and rapidly spread to the Rand and other areas did not affect Maokeng until mid-1991. This was because Maokeng did not have hostels and squatter camps (or informal settlements), which became breeding grounds for political violence that engulfed the Rand in the 1990s. Similarly, in Maoekeng the conflict between the IsiZulu-speaking and IsiXhosa-speaking ethnic groups was absent, which inevitably turned into a clash between the ANC and IFP.

The cause of political violence in Maokeng differed from other areas. In Maokeng, a gang-related warfare was the main impetus. Local councillors and some elements within the South African Police took advantage of this and identified certain members of a particular gang to lead a vigilante group that attacked and terrorized ANC activists. Later this vigilante group collaborated with the IFP. In this chapter I have contended that this was not coincidental, but it was a deliberate strategy by the National Party government to destabilize the ANC and cause confusion amongst its supporters. This, the government, hoped would boost its position during the negotiations with the ANC.

At the local level, the vigilante group in the form of the Three Million Gang (TMG) attacked, maimed and killed supporters of the ANC. As a result, it became difficult to mobilize and organize members of the ANC to force the local council to disband and the councillors to resign, as it was the case in other areas. Moreover, the TMG's reign of terror instilled fear in the residents of Maokeng to the extent that some avoided becoming involved in politics or being associated with the ANC. This cost the ANC support. The situation was reversed after the intervention of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

The 'youth' of Maokeng, particularly those who were aligned to the Charterist movement, were at the forefront of the political violence that erupted in Maokeng. The 'youth', as was the case in many townships across the country engulfed by political violence, perceived themselves as the defenders of their communities against anyone or any organization, or grouping that terrorized their 'community. Such were seen as festering disunity within the 'community' and obstructing the 'people's goal to achieving liberation. It was against this backdrop that the 'youth' of Maokeng risk their lives running street battles with the TMG, supported by the police, councillors and the IFP.

Finally, in Maokeng, in contrast to other areas experiencing political violence, female activists played an active role. They were not subjected to auxiliary roles. Some of the younger and politically conscientised female activists became involved in combative roles alongside their male counter-parts.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Civics and the ANC: Contestations and the local government elections, 1993 – 1995

Introduction

> They said: "We just wanted you to support the list that included [Caswell] Koekoe … We couldn't accept that …"[1880]

The principal concern of this chapter is to attempt to explain the poor performance of the ANC in Kroonstad in the first democratic local government elections. It will contend that the ANC's unimpressive performance was caused by the tensions between its Free State provincial leadership and the ANC Kroonstad branch. Some of the senior members of the ANC Kroonstad branch accused the ANC's provincial leadership of total disregard after it failed to adequately consult it when compiling the election list for the local government elections in November 1995. These members contested the imposition of the name of Caswell Koekoe on the local ANC branch and its alliance partner, the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) Kroonstad branch. Locally, Koekoe was perceived by many as "the enemy of the people" and, therefore, the inclusion of his name in the election list was vehemently disapproved by a certain section of the "community". Consequently, some of the members of SANCO, who were also active members of the ANC in Kroonstad, established the Maokeng Civic Association (MCA) to contest the elections independently of the ANC.

The decision by some of the members of SANCO to contest the local government elections as independents was not peculiar to Maokeng. In North West Province, for example, SANCO branches fielded their own independent candidates in the 1995 local government elections.[1881] Similarly, in Cape Town, "some SANCO and ex-SANCO activists stood against the official ANC candidates in the elections".[1882] The difference between the SANCO Kroonstad branch and other SANCO branches elsewhere in the country was that the SANCO Kroonstad branch did not explicitly challenge the directives from the SANCO national leadership unequivocally to support the ANC in the coming local government elections.[1883] Instead, some of the members of SANCO

[1880] In the Interview with Tebello "Blackie" Tumisi he contended that the ANC OFS Northern Province (and national) demanded that Caswell Koekoe's name be included in the list of candidates for the 1995 local government elections but some of the members of the SANCO Kroonstad branch opposed this decision.
[1881] Nthambeleni, N. B. 'The South African National Civic Organisation: A Two-Tiered Social Movement' (University of Johannesburg, D.Litt and Philosophy thesis, 2008), p.133
[1882] Seekings, J. 'No Home for Revolutionaries?: The Structure and Activities of the South African National Civic Organisations in Metropolitan Cape Town, 1996-96', in *Urban Forum, 9:1, 1998,* p.8
[1883] SANCO's official position was always that civics should not themselves put up candidates in local government elections. SANCO would participate in the selection of ANC candidates, and support them fully". See Seekings 'SANCO: Strategic Dilemmas in a Democratic South Africa', in *Transformation, 34,1997,* p.15

in Kroonstad directly opposed the decision by the ANC provincial leadership to support Koekoe's nomination.

It is important to note here that the relationship between the ANC and SANCO, particularly at the local level, was not always antagonistic. It was generally cordial. This was until the ANC upstaged SANCO and took the lead in the final negotiations to transform the local government.[1884] To underline this point, Seekings writes "The ANC's overshadowing of SANCO in the final negotiations over the Local Government Transition Act (LGTA, 1993) was soon followed by the eclipse of civics by ANC branches at the local level".[1885]

Like other studies of civic organizations in South Africa, this chapter will also demonstrate that the period of political transition had a negative impact on 'radical'[1886] civics. From 1990 to 1992 civics continued to play a central role in township politics.[1887] They engaged in negotiations with the local authorities over rent and development issues[1888] and the SANCO national leadership encouraged local civics actively to champion issues of development in the townships.[1889] However, "from 1993 civics declined in importance", notes Seekings.[1890] It was at this stage that civics were forced to redefine their role. It was clear that their 'traditional' role of protesting and boycotting payment of services, for instance, would no longer be tolerated. It is possible to surmise that they were being prepared for the 'new' South Africa. After the 1994 national elections the ANC, as a leading governing party in the Government of National Unity (GNU), insisted on the resumption of payment of services through 'Operation Self-Reliance', later renamed 'Masakhane' ('Let us build together')[1891].

Although, rent boycotts continued in some areas and SANCO defended this decision[1892], this was perceived by the ANC as irresponsible behavior and tantamount to opposing the ANC-led government. As a result in 1994 in other areas like Maokeng, SANCO abandoned its most potent weapon: rent boycotts, and agreed to encourage the residents to pay a flat rate. Civics were

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[1884] Seekings 'After Apartheid: Civic Organisations in the 'New' South Africa', in Glenn Adler and Jonny Steinberg (eds.) *From Comrades to Citizens: The South African Civics Movement and The Transition to Democracy* (Great Britain, MacMillan Press, Ltd. 2000), p.209

[1885] Ibid., p.209

[1886] 'Radical' civics were those historically broadly aligned to with the liberation movements and generally opposed to participate in township councils. See Seekings 'Civic Organisations in South African Townships', in (eds.) Glenn Moss and Ingid Obery *South African Review: From 'Red Friday' to CODESA* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1992), p.217

[1887] At this stage they seemingly did not have the capacity to assume responsibility for campaigns and negotiations around development issues that were burgeoning at the local level. In any case, the ANC was preoccupied with establishing branches in various townships. See Seekings 'After Apartheid', pp.207-8

[1888] Seekings 'After Apartheid', p.215

[1889] Zeurn, E. 'Continuity in Contradiction? The Prospect for a National Civic Movement in a Democratic State: SANCO and the ANC in Post-Apartheid South Africa, 2004, p.5. http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za. Downloaded 13 January 2012

[1890] Seekings 'After Apartheid', p.217

[1891] Ibid., p.218

[1892] Ibid.

further emasculated when they lost influential members to government and the private sector.[1893] Worse, funding from international donors dried up after 1994, and this made it impossible for civics to function optimally. These factors paralysed civics' activities but, more importantly, they caused fierce tensions between civics and the ANC.

To understand the impact of political transition on civics, it is important to, first, look at the origins of civic organizations in South Africa.

Civic organizations in the 1980s

As mentioned in chapter four, the first civic organizations were established in 1979: the Soweto Civic Association (SCA) and Port Elizabeth Civic Organisation (PEBCO)[1894], mainly in opposition to rent increases. Between 1979 and 1983 civics' role was to act as 'watchdogs' over councils and contest the councils' claim to represent the 'community'.[1895] At this stage they concerned themselves solely with local issues rather than with national politics. However, between 1983 and 1985 their role changed and became more militant. According to Seekings, this was because the UDF linked them to national politics.[1896] Civics began to mobilize communities against the BLA's elections in November 1983. A year later they mobilized communities against rent increases, lack of service delivery, and called for the dissolution of the town (and village) councils and the resignation of councillors (see chapter four). This illustrated a significant shift from quiescence to confrontational politics. By 1986 civics, together with other 'progressive' structures like the students and youth organizations, were able to force many of the councillors to resign. Civics became the *de factor* 'managers' of the townships. Residents brought their problems to the civics to be solved, leaving state's institutions such as the police and courts moribund. However, the civics' power was soon eclipsed.

Between 1986 and 1989 the government, through its states of emergency, clamped down very heavily on activists, including members of civic organizations, countrywide. Many of the civic leaders were detained and others went into hiding. Amongst those who were detained, some were charged for treason. One of the most notable treason trials involved civic leaders from Alexandra Township: Moses and Mzwanele Mayekiso, Sipho Kubheka, Obed Bapela, Richard Mdakane and Paul Tshabalala.[1897] These were acquitted at the end of 1988. Although the state did not

[1893] Seekings 'SANCO: Strategic Dilemmas', p.6

[1894] Other 'radical' civics formed after the SCA and PEBCO were the Kagiso (later Krugersdorp) Civic Organisation and Mohlakeng Civic Organisation (1981), Thembisa Civic Association, formerly Residents' Action Committee (1981), in Natal the Joint Rent Action Committee, and in the Western Cape, the Western Cape Civic Association and Federation of Cape Civic Associations. See Seekings 'Civic Organisations', p.218 Seekings 'Quiescence', pp.146-52; for an in-depth account about the formation of the Thembisa Civic Association, see interview with Greg Malebo by Tshepo Moloi, for the SADET Oral History Project, Hospital View, Thembisa, 14 October 2004; Interview with Greg Malebo by Tshepo Moloi, for the SOTP, Hospital View, Thembisa, 20 October 2011

[1895] Seekings 'Civic Organisations', p.218

[1896] Ibid., p.219

[1897] Ibid., p.223; Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* p.320

succeed in its attempt to make an example of these civic activists, it was however able not only to disorganize civics, but also to intimidate people from participating in civics' activities. As a last resort to crush civics, the government banned some of the most active civics in the country. According to Seekings, five civics – in Soweto, Port Elizabeth, Cradock, the Vaal Triangle and Western Cape – were among the organizations which the state effectively banned in February 1988.[1898]

The beginning of the 1990s ushered in a new phase for civics. At the regional and national levels, plans were well developed for the formation of regional and national structures, which finally became SANCO. These, particularly the national structure, focused more on policy matters and its alliance with the ANC. It was at the local level that civics re-emerged and continued in their traditional roles of the 1980s. This was largely caused by the MDM's defiance campaign. For example, in Maokeng, as mentioned in chapter six, when the Kroonstad Town Council cut off the electricity and water supply to the township because the City Council of Maokeng could not pay for these services following the rent boycott by the residents,[1899] the Maokeng Civic Association (formerly street committees), together with the MDCC, responded by organizing a consumer boycott and later engaged in negotiations with the local authorities to resolve the problem. As a result an intimate bond was created between the civics and the communities they served (and vice versa). It was for this reason that local civic activists challenged decisions imposed on their communities by regional and national civic structures, including the ANC.

Civics and other community structures, early 1990s

When the ANC was unbanned in February 1990 community structures representing residents were already in existence in various townships. In some areas these were the recently established or revived civic organizations[1900], and in others like in Maokeng these were street committees. Just like civics in the 1980s, these structures continued to exert pressure on local authorities, particularly the administrators which had been appointed to manage the townships after the collapse of most of the BLA councils. They were against the rent increases and lack of development, especially lack of housing. To compel the local authorities to attend to their demands, civics and street committees embarked on stay-aways and consumer boycotts.[1901]

[1898] Seekings 'Civic Organisations', p.223

[1899] In 1992 the City Council of Maokeng owed the Kroonstad Municipality R269 350, 14 for electricity. Minutes of the 97th Ordinary Meeting, 24 September 1992

[1900] For instance, the Alexandra Civic Organisation (ACO) was launched on 5 December 1989 and led by the acquitted treason trialists. See Mayekiso, M. *Township Politics: Civic Struggles for a New South Africa* (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1996)

[1901] See, for example, Seekings 'Civic Organisations', p.223

As noted in chapter one, no civic organization existed in Maokeng until 1990. Prior to the establishment of the Seeisoville Civic Association, street committees operated. Matshidiso Paulina Rantie, a founding member of the street committees in Maokeng, observes that street committees were established to counter the police's restrictions on mass gatherings in the townships. She explains

> I used to support the struggle from a distance. But then one day there was a community meeting. One of the organizers of that meeting was Thami Phaliso of the MDCC. We met at the community hall. In that meeting I complained about the rent issue; that instead of the rent money we were paying being deducted it was added. This was the year when we embarked on a rent boycott. In that meeting it was suggested that people should be nominated into street committees. Then you were not supposed to refuse to be nominated. I was one of those who were nominated. That's how I became involved in the street committees[1902]

Street Committees were first established in Cradock, Eastern Cape, by Matthew Goniwe. Tetelman argues that Goniwe's initial intention was to restore the authority over younger activists and to incorporate disaffected elders.[1903] He writes

> In 1984 Goniwe organized CRADORA into a set of structures known as street committees. Organisers divided Lingelihle into seven zones, each containing about forty leading activists. Organisers held public meetings in these zones, where each house voted for a street committee representative[1904]

Goniwe and his comrades later used the street committees, first, to conceal the identity of leaders from the police, second, to handle the residents' problems, and finally, to gather and disseminate information within the community without calling mass meetings.[1905] This undoubtedly boosted the committees influence. It was for this reason that many residents bypassed state institutions and used street committees to handle their grievances.[1906]

Similarly, street committees in Maokeng attended to the residents' problems. Ranties recalls

> My responsibility was to be aware of the needs and problems of the residents of Seeisoville. The residents would inform me about these and I would then take them

[1902] Interview with Matshidiso Paulina Rantie (LHPR), Seeisoville, Kroonstad, 19 April 2012
[1903] Tetelman 'We Can',p.196
[1904] Ibid. CRADORA (Cradock Residents Association)
[1905] Ibid., pp.196-7; street committees were also formed in Alexandra Township, see Carter 'Comrades and Community; Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra;* in Thembisa Township, see interview with Thandi Swakamisa by Tshepo Moloi, for the SADET Oral History Project, Thembisa 23 July 2004
[1906] Tetelaman 'We Can', p.197

> to the committee. Remember that during this period the whites dictated how many people could attend a meeting. So, open meetings were impossible to hold. Through street committees we were able to meet with people and get to know about their grievances[1907]

One of the problems the street committees handled was the burial of members of the community whose families were financially deprived. Rantie continues

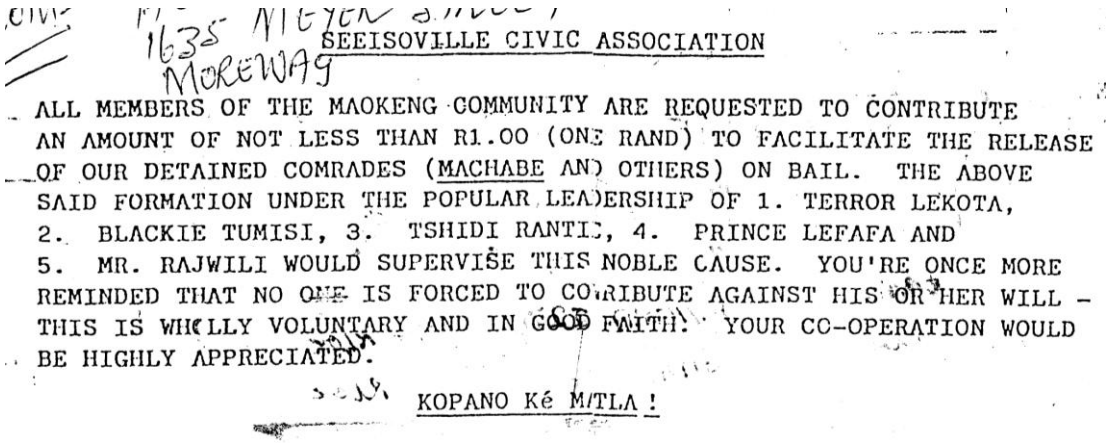
> In a case where there was someone in the community who had died and his/her family could not afford to bury that person because they did not have money, as street committees we used to request donations from members of the community to fund their burial. We also dealt with rent and consumer boycotts[1908]

It was not long before the Maokeng street committees were reconstituted as a civic association. It is not clear what prompted this shift. But it is possible that it was because activists in Maokeng believed that a civic association would unify the township and allow the residents to report their grievances to a central structure compared to the street committees which operated loosely in different sections. It is also plausible that activists felt that it was no longer necessary for them to operate clandestinely after the government had lifted the state of emergency in June 1990.

The first civic in Maokeng was called the Seeisoville Civic Association (SCA). It was led by Mosiuoa "Terror" Lekota[1909], Jacob Tebello "Blackie" Tumisi, Matshidiso (Tshidi) Paulina Rantie, Itumeleng Prince Lefafa and Mr. Rajwili.[1910] The name was hastily changed to Maokeng Civic Association (MCA)[1911] "to represent all the sections in the township", contends Tumisi.[1912] However, before this, the SCA organized donations in the community to pay fines for some of the young activists arrested for their involvement in acts of violence in the township.[1913]

[1907] Interview with Rantie
[1908] Ibid.
[1909] In 1991 Lekota spent six months working as an organizer for the ANC in the northern Orange Free State deployed to organize in the northern Free State. See Lodge, T. *South African Politics Since 1994* (Cape Town and Johannesburg, David Philip Publishers, 1999), p.19
[1910] Interview with Rantie; Interview with Blakie Tumisi by Tshepo Moloi. Telephonically, 17 April 2012
[1911] Tumisi emphasizes that the civic was called the Kroonstad Civic Association (KCA) and Litabe remembers it as Maokeng Civic Organisation (MCO). In the City Council of Maokeng's meeting minutes it is noted as Maokeng Civic Association (MCA). Interview with Tumisi; Handwritten notes by Joseph Nchaga Litabe; Minutes of the 97th Ordinary Meeting of the Maokeng City Council, 24 September 1992
[1912] Interview with Tumisi. Telephonically, 17 April 2012
[1913] Machabe Thulo recalls that in 1990 he was arrested for unlawfully taking the caterpillars belonging to the municipality and his bail was paid by the "community". Interview with Thulo

Seeisoville Civic Association



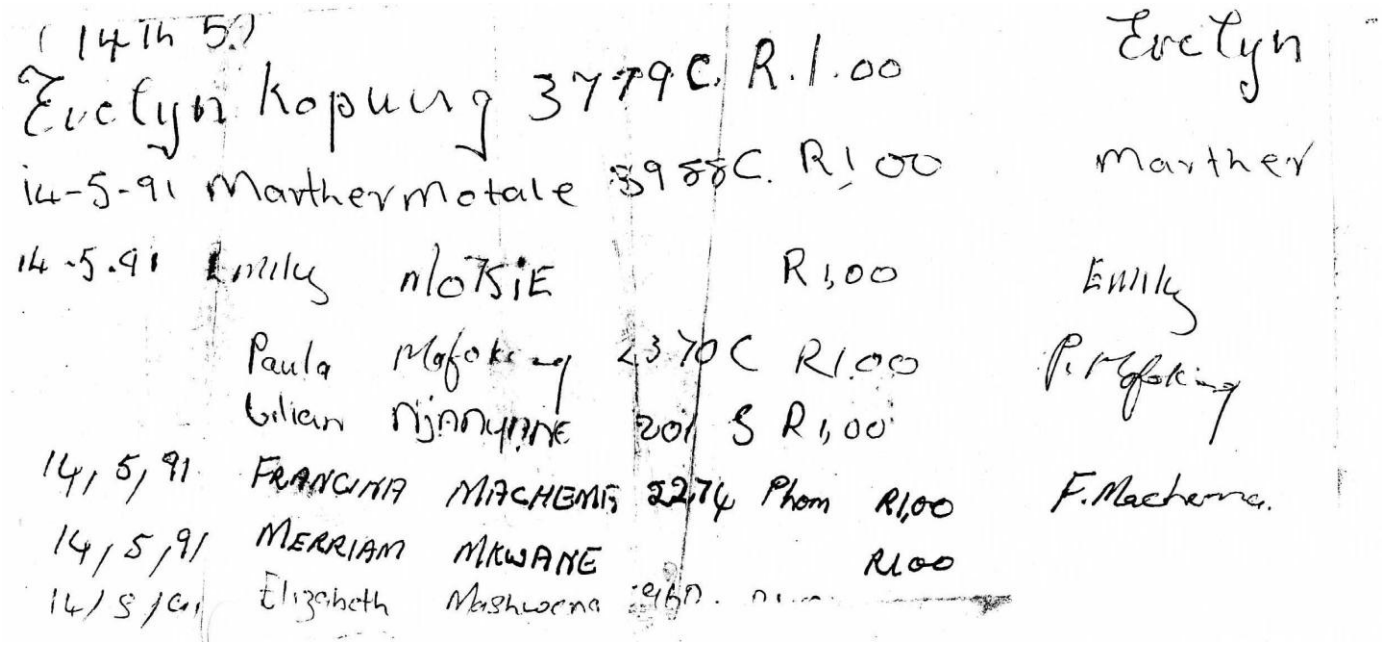
SEEISOVILLE CIVIC ASSOCIATION

ALL MEMBERS OF THE MAOKENG COMMUNITY ARE REQUESTED TO CONTRIBUTE AN AMOUNT OF NOT LESS THAN R1.00 (ONE RAND) TO FACILITATE THE RELEASE OF OUR DETAINED COMRADES (MACHABE AND OTHERS) ON BAIL. THE ABOVE SAID FORMATION UNDER THE POPULAR LEADERSHIP OF 1. TERROR LEKOTA, 2. BLACKIE TUMISI, 3. TSHIDI RANTIE, 4. PRINCE LEFAFA AND 5. MR. RAJWILI WOULD SUPERVISE THIS NOBLE CAUSE. YOU'RE ONCE MORE REMINDED THAT NO ONE IS FORCED TO CONTRIBUTE AGAINST HIS OR HER WILL - THIS IS WHOLLY VOLUNTARY AND IN GOOD FAITH. YOUR CO-OPERATION WOULD BE HIGHLY APPRECIATED.

KOPANO Ké MATLA !

SCA's pamphlet.
(*Source: Matshidiso Rantie*)

The residents of Maokeng heeded the requests and donated the little they could afford. See the list below



(14th 5)					Evelyn
Evelyn	Kopung	3779C.	R.1.00		
14-5-91	Marthermotale	3988C.	R1.00		Marther
14.5.91	Emily	nlokie	R1,00		Emily
	Paula	Mafoking	2370C	R1.00	P. Mafoking
	Lilian	Nyamane	201 S	R1,00	
14/5/91	FRANCINA	MACHEMIS	2274	Phom R1,00	F. Machemis.
14/5/91	MERRIAM	MKWANE		R1.00	
14/5/91	Elizabeth	Mashoena	2160.		

(*Source: Matshidiso Rantie*)

When the MCA emerged it played the role of a watchdog. Indeed, Tumisi describes the MCA as the 'eye of the community'. Both Rantie and Tumisi agree that the MCA continued to handle residents' grievances. Rantie remembers a family case brought to her attention that she had to resolve

> We continued looking into the residents' grievances. These still included the rent issue. But we also dealt with disputes. Say, people had fought we would inform them not to report the matter to the police station. They must bring it to us, the civic, at our office ... *we would* try to find a solution. People stopped going to the police station. People brought all their problems to the civic. I can remember there was a certain teacher who had fought with his wife and she decided to divorce him. He came to us to help him. This woman wanted to sue him for breach of marriage. I wrote a letter summoning this woman and her mother to come to our office. When they arrived I informed them that they didn't have a case; they would loose. Indeed, when they met in court their case was dismissed, because she was the one who was wrong for the breach of marriage[1914]

The other reason why the residents opted to not report their complaints to the police was because the latter were despised because they were suspected of supporting the Three Million Gang which was terrorizing the "community". The MCA's influence went well beyond the township. White residents of Kroonstad experienced it as well. Rantie claims that whites acknowledged the MCA's role and would comply with its demands. In her words

> I mean, we had so much influence that when we wanted to see someone who was working for a white person, we would inform the white person that we wanted to meet with his employee in our office. The white person would not ignore us. Instead, he would bring his employee to our office[1915]

As a result of its growing influence, the MCA was able to attract many people to its meetings. Tumisi claims that about 200 to 300 people attended meetings the MCA called in the community hall, or in some of the churches in the township.[1916] Buoyed by this, the MCA entered into negotiations with local authorities over the rent issue. According to Rantie, for a very long time in Maokeng a particular system was used for paying rent. Every year residents received a rental statement with the amount the residents had to pay for that financial year. Every month a resident paid his/her rent, the amount on the statement would be deducted. At the end of the financial year in March the following year, the residents would have finished paying the rent for that year and would receive a new statement for the new financial year. The MCA's main contention was

[1914] Interview with Rantie (Italics my emphasis)
[1915] Ibid.
[1916] Interview with Tumisi

that the system had changed. Instead of the rent amount being deducted every month, more money was added[1917]. Rantie remembers their meeting with the administrator as follows

> Thami Phaliso, "Blackie", myself and the other person, who I have forgotten, met with the Administrator … Oh, Daniel George. I was the only woman. We informed the Administrator that the practice was that every time we paid our rent our balance would be deducted until end of March when the balance would be zero. But now we were paying and more money was added to our debt. For example, if you paid R15 this month, next month your statement would be saying you owe R30. Then the Administrator suggested that all the residents who are affected by this should not pay rent for a year or two years. We refused. We argued that they should be refunded, because they've paid in cash already. He then said we should allow him to go back to the region to discuss this issue with the authorities there and he would return the following Wednesday with a response. The following Wednesday just when we were about to leave to go and meet with the Administrator, George came running and told us that the Three Million Gang wanted to kill him[1918]

Although it is not clear whether this issue was ever resolved, but what is apparent is the central role the MCA played in local politics.

The MCA was also involved in developmental issues. Lack of housing seems to have been the main problem. Dennis Bloem remarks

> No, there were no houses there. People were staying in backyards. Ja, there was a problem with housing; and it was a serious problem. There was no development in Kroonstad. And, you know, you are married and you are staying with your parents. And people were really looking forward to having their own places[1919]

The MCA decided to tackle this matter directly. In November 1991 it mobilized the residents of Maokeng, especially the tenants, to erect shacks in an open space between Brentpark and Kananelo Secondary School.[1920] Recalling this event, Tumisi, who was at its forefront, had this to say

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[1917] This was confirmed by Frank Mabitle, the Kroonstad ANC branch secretary when he argued "households, which were on average paying electricity bills of R37 a month, had recently been receiving accounts demanding payments of up to R194". http://newsbrief/1993/news9308, Johannesburg, 12 August 1993. SAPA

[1918] Interview with Rantie; Daniel George remembers that he first heard that the Three Million Gang was looking for him in September 1990. Interview with George (LHPR), 18 August 2009; see also *Sunday Times, 28 July 1996*

[1919] Interview with Bloem

[1920] *Business Day, 20 November 1991*

> *Ja* … in 1992 (actually it was 1991) I was at the forefront of that. And Dennis [Bloem]. We were allocating stands to people next to Kananelo [Secondary School], in that open space (laughs). Police used to come and harass us. They took photos while we were still demarcating the stands ... for the people living in the location, those who were renting *to* demarcate those stands … they told us it was 12 what, what. We used our feet to count. One person came with a tape but we had already measured with our feet. People were ready. They built shacks immediately after we finished demarcating the stands. They built a lot of shacks. So, we were arrested and detained. They later released me. I was helped by my lawyer Du Plessis. I went back to that place again. I was arrested again, with Dennis. After arresting us they went back to remove the people. They demolished their shacks[1921]

Media reported that about 40 shacks had been built in the area that came to be known as Z.R. Mahabane squatter camp when the police brought the shacks down.[1922] The City Council of Maokeng was against people erecting shacks in the vacant space between Brentpark and Kananelo Secondary because, it argued, that "area was used as a dumping site and posed a health hazard".[1923] When the MCA and the residents ignored the Council, police were called to forcibly remove the shacks. A scuffle broke out between the police and the residents. Two people were reported to have been shot and injured when the police fired rubber bullets and teargas.[1924] To pacify the people, the Council promised to move the "homeless" to the 700-vacant plots at "Koekoe Village", at a cost of R1000 per plot, including water and electricity connections.[1925] The "homeless" abandoned the MCA and moved to the Council's promised land. The MCA felt betrayed and labeled these *dinoha* (snakes). Moeketsi Ditseki recalls

> They were people from the location. Then a lot of police came and destroyed the shacks. And *ntate* Koekoe told those people to go to the office so that he could allocate them some stands. On hearing this, the people went to the municipal office and were allocated those stands. That's when the name *dinoheng* (a place of snakes) came. We called them snakes because despite our agreement of not accepting anything from the municipality, they did so[1926]

The central role played by the civics in local politics soon changed after the ANC became involved in local politics. To understand this change, it is important to look at the role of SANCO. But before doing this, the chapter will first outline the debates which ensued after the

[1921] Interview with Tumisi
[1922] *Business Day, 20 November 1991; New Nation, 22 to 28 November 1991*
[1923] *New Nation, 22 to 28 November 1991*
[1924] Ibid.
[1925] Ibid.
[1926] Interview with Moeketsi

unbanning of the ANC focusing on whether the civics should continue functioning or not. This will help explain the future relations between the ANC and the civic association in Kroonstad.

Debating the civics' future

Not long after the unbanning of the liberation movements, activists and academics began to engage in a heated debate about the future role of the civics. Writing about this phase in the life of civics, Mzwanele Mayekiso, a leading figure in the Alexandra Civic Organisation, noted

> The unbanning of political organizations at the beginning of 1990 posed a serious challenge for civics. The question was: what role should they play now that the ANC had been unbanned? A debate ensued between those in favour of the civics to continue functioning and even be strengthened; others believed that there was no need for the civics to operate on their own, or as independent, instead they should be blended into the ANC; and yet some felt that in a united and democratic state, civics will cause disunity[1927]

According to Khehla Shubane and Pumla Madiba, "there [were] three basic characteristics of civics in this debate". First, civics [were] seen as part of the "liberation" movement, which usually meant the ANC, second, civics were perceived as important formations in "civil society" … and their role [was] to address the development needs of the marginalized sections of the population, and finally, civics were expected to play a "watch dog" role".[1928] In a similar vein, Pat Lephunya, a Soweto civic leader, described three options available to the civics. The first option was for civics to fold, or to become ANC branches, or ANC residents' association. Second, local civics could enter local government by effectively taking over the administration of their communities. Third, the civics could define themselves as an autonomous, non-party political movement in civil society.[1929]

Civic activists like Mzwanele Mayekiso favoured the third option. They argued for the independence of civics. They emphasised that civics' responsibility should be to its constituencies, all the residents in various communities across political lines. They believed that for civics to achieve their developmental objectives they should be non-partisan.[1930] For Mzwanele Mayekiso, civics' status as structures closer to the people placed them at an

[1927] Mayekiso, M. *Township Politics: Civic Struggles for a New South Africa* (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1996), p.148; also see Shubane, K. and Madiba, P. 'The Struggle Continues? : Civic associations in the transition'. Centre for Policy Studies Research Report No. 25, October 1992
[1928] Shubane and Madiba 'The Struggle', p.6
[1929] Zeurn, Continuity in Contradition', pp. 5-6
[1930] This view was strongest amongst civics which formed the Civic Association of Southern Transvaal (CAST), a regional civic body in the then Rand. See Mthambeleni 'The South African', p.110

advantageous position to know (and be able to attend to) the needs of their communities. He warned

> … Simply because nationalist organizations like the ANC are apparently progressive today does not mean they will remain so. The fact that there are, within the ANC, numerous class forces is a reason in itself for strengthening independent organs of working class civil society. If the movement within the ANC toward meeting basic needs began to falter, it would be logical to expect that *civics* would continue to press for programs that met those needs [1931]

In contrast, there were many other civic leaders who "… saw the achievement of a democratic political system as the conclusion of civics' primary function", writes Seekings.[1932] These leaders argued that civics, from their inception, had fought for the eradication of apartheid and now that the ANC was unbanned there was no need for the civics (similar argument was applied to the UDF)[1933]. The latter should instead operate within the ANC. According to Seekings, "some civic activists had aspired to have the opportunity to organize openly within the ANC, or to represent the interests of the people in their area as a democratically-elected ANC councillor or member of parliament".[1934] "For these activists", concludes Seekings "the need for civic organization was greatly diminished in the new political context".[1935] Underscoring this view, political commentators Shubane and Madiba observed, "If civic bodies are merely the local 'shock troops' of the liberation struggle, or of a particular movement within it, their task now would presumably be restricted to seeing their cause to its successful conclusion, with no role to play beyond that".[1936] This view was supported by academics from Natal, particularly Blade Nzimande and Mpumelelo Sikhosana They argued that political parties should take up civic issues, individually or in alliance, and that the efforts put into civic organization would weaken parties, especially the ANC.[1937]

At this stage (beginning of the 1990s) the ANC treaded carefully in voicing its opinion on this issue. It acknowledged the importance of civics at the local level and their contribution in the liberation struggle.[1938] But it did not rule out the need for the ANC to be involved in local politics. This view was summed up by the ANC's Jakie Selebe when he said

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[1931] Mayekiso *Township,* pp.148-9
[1932] Seekings 'After Apartheid', p.207
[1933] Seekings *The UDF,* pp.275-78
[1934] Seekings 'After Apartheid', p.207
[1935] Ibid.
[1936] Shubane, K. and Madiba, P. 'Civic association in the transition', in Ian Liebenberg et al. (eds.) *The Long March: the story of the struggle for liberation in South Africa* (Pretoria, HAUM, 1994), p.244
[1937] Seekings 'Civic Organisations', p.232
[1938] The role of civics', in *Mayibuye, Vol.1, No. 3,* December *1990*

> We think that the civic association and some such structures dealing with local matters – water, electricity … must remain. Some members of the ANC will also be members of civic associations because they live in a particular township. So there will certainly be some sort of relationship between different civic associations and members of the ANC on the ground … in the ANC they will deal with broader political issues, but when it comes to local issues like drainage and water, that will be left to the civic association. Of course, with the ANC making its contribution through its members who are part and parcel of the civic[1939]

Perhaps influenced by the fact that it still lacked capacity to assume a leadership role at the local level, the ANC between 1990 and 1993 allowed the civics space to continue representing the "community" over developmental and other local issues.[1940] It did not interfere with the civics' activities. According to Seekings, "The ANC and civics formulated a general division of labour, with the former taking responsibility for constitutional and national political issues, while civics took the lead in struggles around urban development and, by default, urban local government".[1941] Undoubtedly, the view that the ANC should, at least, in the future play a leading role at the local level was gaining momentum and as a result it was clear that the view held by Mayekiso and others was rapidly losing ground. The situation worsened when some of the civic activists were elected into leadership positions in the ANC branches. This had the effect of blurring the clear distinction and role between the ANC and the civic. The leadership of civics were seen building the political structures of the ANC and not the civic.[1942] In Maokeng, for example, the whole leadership of MCA also held leadership positions in the ANC. Rantie remembers

> We were one. Remember that we were also leaders in the ANC. Gozongo was the chairperson, Bloem his deputy, I was the treasurer[1943]

Similarly, Tumisi recalls that in 1992 he was the organizer and Bloem, the chairperson.[1944] This invariably made it extremely difficult for the civic leaders to challenge the ANC, by extension themselves, when feeling aggrieved. Later a regional leader of SANCO was to ask: "how will a SANCO leader, who also holds the position of councillor, conduct himself if he is called on to

[1939] Ibid.; To demonstrate the ANC's future plans for the civics, Elke Zeurn cites an ANC document (1991), which in conclusion stated "… There is no conflict of interests between the ANC and civic organization, but a community of interests. It is the duty of the ANC ro re-enforce the hand of the ANC". see Zeurn 'Continuity in Contradiction', p.6
[1940] See Seekings 'After Apartheid', p.207
[1941] Seekings 'SANCO: Strategic Dilemmas', p.14
[1942] See Mthambeleni 'The South African', p.122
[1943] Interview with Rantie
[1944] Interview with Tumisi

lead a march of residents against the local authority? Who will he lead the march against – himself?"[1945]

It took the ANC some time after it was unbanned to command a significant membership within the townships. Up until then it had supporters and not members. To reverse this situation it therefore relied on activists in the civics to recruit members on its behalf. After all these were closer to the people in their "communities" and were aware of the local political dynamics that could obstruct "outsiders" (i.e. former exiled members of the ANC). In many places across the country civic activists recruited members and established ANC branches. In the initial stages this proved to be a difficult task. There are various reasons that can help to explain this situation, which included political violence which had erupted in many areas across the country. In Maokeng, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, violence erupted between the Three Million Gang (TMG), assisted by some of the state's institutions and Inkatha Freedom Party (Party), and members of the community aligned to the ANC. Consequently, many people were terrified of being associated with political organizations, particularly with the ANC. Because of this they did not demonstrate enthusiasm in joining the ANC. As a result in some of the areas, including those like Alexandra Township, with long-traditions of political resistance, the ANC was only able to register about 1 400 members towards the end of 1990.[1946] However, before long the situation improved. Tom Lodge estimates that in 1992 "… The ANC had acquired 900 branches …"[1947] In the case of Maokeng, as already noted in chapter six, following the MK's intervention in the fight against the TMG, the ANC's support grew in the township and this was also turned into membership. Isaac "Sakkie" Oliphant remarks

> Then we started transferring our membership into the ANC. And at that time we were filling up the stadium with ANC supporters … At one stage Walter Sisulu was called. The whole of Kroonstad, I'm counting easily 70 to 80 000 people were marching[1948]

[1945] Zeurn 'Elusive Boundaries', p.183
[1946] Bonner and Nieftagodien *Alexandra,* pp.348-9
[1947] Lodge, T. 'The African National Congress in the 1990s', in Moss, G. and Obery, I. (eds.) *South African Review 6* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1992), p.44; A similar pattern also applied in the UDF. Lodge notes that *Mayibuye* claimed that by early 1991 most full-time UDF officials were absorbed in ANC duties. Lodge 'The African', p.57
[1948] Interview with Isaac "Sakkie" Oliphant by Tshepo Moloi, for the "Local Histories and Present Realities" Programme, Kroonstad, 28 October 2008



ANC's march in Kroonstad, 1990s (*Source: Matshidiso Rantie*)

The ANC's rapidly expanding membership in Maokeng cannot only be attributed to the intervention by MK and the involvement of civic activists. The ANC itself embarked on an intensive recruitment drive to garner the support of as many people as possible.[1949] However, this had unintended consequences, which caused problems for the ANC at a later stage. Everyone was welcome to join the ANC – even the residents who were locally perceived as "enemies of the people" (by extension the ANC). To achieve its objective the ANC cautioned:

> The ANC is an organization of all the people of South Africa. As such we must ensure that every person over the age of eighteen feels welcome in the ANC. We must not discriminate on the basis of age or sex, colour or creed. The qualities of an individual must count above all else[1950]

In Maokeng some of the people who joined the ANC at this stage, apart from Koekoe, were the former councillors in the City Council of Maokeng – an apartheid-created structure. Mokhele Letsabo, a former member of the executive committee of the Council recalls that he joined the

[1949] Marks, writing about youth politics in Diepkloof, Soweto, noted: "The primary focus of the ANCYL branch, like the ANC more generally, was to embark on an organizing drive to secure as many members as possible". Marks *Young Warriors,* p.69
[1950] 'Moulding', in *Mayibuye,* p.2

ANC, but because of mistreatment by some of the ANC Youth League members he resigned and joined the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). He explains

> *Ja*, I remember that when people went for the national elections in '94 we were running around as we were ANC members. They said we should join the ANC *because Matla a Sechaba* and *Ea lla Koto* won't be able to contest … because they were not registered. I remember that I stayed in Constantia and we were starting our Constantia branch. But *later* I took these ANC cards from all the councillors and the Deputies. I put them in an envelope and posted them to Shell House. I joined PAC. ANC youth locally … used to tell me that I am an opportunist and they do not want me as I come from the apartheid regime, and now I want to be there[1951]

Besides feeling disrespected by young people he once taught at school, Letsabo also felt that it would be difficult for him to work well within the ANC. But most importantly he believed that the PAC was strong enough to challenge the ANC.[1952] Sesomo Samuel Seakhela was another member of the Council who joined the ANC but he, too, like Letsabo was forced to resign and finally joined the PAC.[1953]

In Maokeng, it is possible that the apartheid-era councillors were recruited by some of the local activists to join the ANC, because the latter strongly believed that these councillors, particularly the mayor, would help the ANC gain more membership in the township, because of their previous record as councillors. These councillors, unlike other councillors elsewhere in the country, enjoyed considerable support in the township, especially amongst the elders or homeowners. This was because of their record of providing a satisfactory service to the "community" over the years since they took over the management of the township in 1984. It is likely that these activists felt that in order for the "community" to move on (and most probably with the hope that this will be advantageous for the ANC) they needed to reconcile with those they once perceived as the "enemies of the people". Moeketsi Ditseki observes

> In the ultimate end *ntate* Koekoe became one of us, even though there were some who still didn't approve of him. We understood we had to move fast to normalise the situation and seek a way forward. So, we had to sit down with him to discuss. Then there was a civic association, which didn't like the idea of reconciliation …[1954]

[1951] Interview with Letsabo (Italics my emphasis)
[1952] Ibid.
[1953] Interview with Seakhela; In 1990 Seakhela resigned from the Council and claimed that he was going to join AZAPO. It is not clear whether he eventually joined it or not
[1954] Interview with Ditseki

Clearly some of the members of the ANC were against the idea of welcoming those who previously collaborated with the 'system' into the ANC. But this also points to lack of adequate consultation within the ANC in Kroonstad. Seemingly the information that Koekoe had joined the ANC was privy to selective members of the organization. This caused tensions between members of the ANC in Maokeng. This was evident at the ANC northern Free State region's elective conference at Makabelane Technical High School, in Qwaqwa, in 1993. Some of the delegates from Maokeng were infuriated by the presence of Koekoe who attended it without their knowledge. Rantie, who attended the conference, remembers

> I can still remember the last ANC regional conference we held under apartheid. This was an elective conference. It was held in Qwaqwa. When we got there we were made to sit on one side together with activists from Qwaqwa. We realized during the course of the conference that we were not part of the delegation, but we had been allowed in as observers. I can still remember that every time our members raised their hands to make a point they were ignored. When I went outside I saw Koekoe there. I went back inside and wrote a small note and passed it around notifying our members that Koekoe was in attendance. The Welkom branch heard about this and wanted to know why we had brought Koekoe to the ANC conference. Lekota arrived late, but Koekoe had already disappeared. I don't know how he got the ANC's membership[1955]

It is obvious from this testimony that not every member of the ANC in Kroonstad was consulted about the delegation to represent the ANC Kroonstad branch at the conference. And the apparent hastened elevation of Koekoe within the ANC caused discomfort amongst some of the members of Kroonstad's ANC. It was this group that would at a later stage vehemently question and oppose Koekoe's imposition into the leadership position in the ANC. The situation deteriorated further after the launch of SANCO.

Civics, the ANC and political transition

SANCO was launched at Uitenhage, in the Eastern Cape, in March 1992 to unite into a national civic organization all 'radical' civic organizations.[1956] Although it defined itself "as a tiered, unitary civic organization, comprised of national, provincial, regional and local branches",[1957] SANCO's structures, particularly the local branches, continued to operate independently of SANCO national and regional (after the 1994 elections these were renamed provincial branches) levels. Writing about SANCO branches during this period, Patrick Heller notes "… local civics – that is, branches – ha[d] less to do with the formal unitary structures and the chain of command

[1955] Interview with Rantie
[1956] See Seekings 'No Home', p.2
[1957] Zuern 'Continuity in Contradiction', p.3

laid in SANCO's constitution than with local dynamics and configurations".[1958] Local civics built their own organizations and fundraised on their own to sustain themselves. This was despite SANCO national's undertaking that it would be responsible for such activities, particularly fundraising. In fact, the SANCO constitution demanded that: 'All local branches dissolve their constitution, refrain from any negotiations with municipal authorities, and cease all fundraising'.[1959] Tumisi, former deputy chairperson of the SANCO Kroonstad branch, recalls that his branch did not receive any funding from the national and/or regional offices. As a result his branch and the ANC Kroonstad branch shared an office (formerly a store) donated to the organizations by Dithebe Tau. To raise funds, Tumisi (and Rantie, the treasurer of the SANCO Kroonstad branch) claim that they requested donations from business people in the community and other members of the community. Consequently, at times they functioned without a telephone in the office, because it had been suspended following the civic's failure to make payment.[1960].

Lack of funding not only restricted the SANCO branches activities, but it also caused local civic leaders to disregard SANCO's higher tiers. Seekings notes that branches and provinces had widely failed to dispense revenues to higher levels.[1961] Moreover, SANCO branches, like the Kroonstad branch, continued to engage the white local municipalities on issues relating to the transformation of the local government – this was despite the constraining clause in the SANCO's constitution. This caused a discord between SANCO national and its branches, and this came to a head in 1995 (see below).

SANCO at its founding conference adopted two important resolutions: to adopt a unitary structure and to function independently of political parties. Firstly, SANCO opted for a unitary structure amidst vehement opposition, especially from the Soweto Civic Association and Alexandra Civic Organisation (ACO). The two favoured a federal structure. Local civic leaders from the two structures were mainly concerned about losing their autonomy, especially when it

[1958] Heller, P. 'Reclaiming Democratic Spaces: Civics and Politics in Posttransition Johannesburg', in (eds.) Richard Tomlinson et al. *Emerging Johannesburg: Perspective on the Postapartheid City* (New York and London, Routledge, 2003), p.160

[1959] Mthambeleni 'The South African', p.114; SANCO had projected that one million paid-up members paying a R2 joining fee and a R6 annual subscription would generate R6 million per annum, excluding the initial joining fee. R1.5 million would accrue to the national office. But "SANCO never collected anywhere near this kind of sum, because it never instituted a coherent paid-up membership system". See Seekings 'SANCO: Strategic Dilemmas', p.8

[1960] Interview with Tumisi and Rantie; SANCO started experiencing financial problems after the foreign donors stopped funding 'progressive' organizations when the ANC-led government was elected into power. Foreign donors argued that they had made funds available generally as a contribution to the struggle and for representative democracy. Seekings 'SANCO: Strategic Dilemmas', p.8

[1961] Seekings 'SANCO: Strategic Dilemmas', p.8

came to funding.[1962] In contrast, local civic leaders from financially weak organizations favoured a unitary structure.[1963] The debate was finally won by those who argued for a unitary structure.

In protest, some civics chose not to join SANCO. "… CAST (Civic Associations of the Southern Transvaal) and other independent civic organizations", writes Mthambeleni "did not join SANCO at its launching conference, because they remained opposed to the unitary structure of the new national organization and favoured a federal structure".[1964] For Zuern, cited by Mthambeleni, SANCO's adoption of the unitary structure meant all resolutions taken by SANCO leadership at the national level would be binding to all SANCO branches.[1965] But in practice this was not always the case. Branches or, at least some of the members within the branches, did not always follow the decisions taken by the SANCO higher tiers. This was evident when some branches ignored SANCO when it supported the ANC's insistence on the resumption of payment of services. In some areas branches continued supporting rent boycotts.[1966]

Secondly, SANCO, during Moses Mayekiso's presidency, 1992 to 1993, "… insisted that civics must remain independent of government and political organizations, and refrain from pledging loyalty to any political party since civics represent residence, irrespective of political affiliation".[1967] To underscore this view, Moses Mayekiso said "SANCO should be closer to the trade union movement than political organizations: we must remain watchdogs for the community and remain unaffiliated to any political party".[1968] Ideally this option suited civics, but in practice it would have been difficult for the majority of civic activists to uphold. Many members of SANCO at all levels had close links with the ANC. In 1993 this relationship was formalized (see below). And for some of the civic activists entering into an alliance with a organization was SANCO's undoing. For example, Mzwanele Mayekiso, brother to Moses Mayekiso, argued that this relationship introduced "… a corporate culture into the civic movement, meaning … the imposition of top-down instructions instead of bottom-up approach associated with the participatory democratic culture of the civic movement …"[1969] It was at this stage in SANCOs' life that civics' independence was eroded and their traditional role undermined. After 1994 SANCO, particularly at the local level, shared its activities with government institutions like the police. For example, they became part of the Community Police

[1962] Isaac Mogase of the Soweto Civic Association argued that they did not join SANCO "because they had problems with SANCO regarding the question of funding. … SANCO wanted to control all the funds". Mthambeleni 'The South African', p.113
[1963] Ibid., p.114
[1964] Ibid.; CAST finally joined SANCO in 1993
[1965] Ibid., p.115
[1966] In mid-1996 the outstanding rents and service charges amounted to almost R6 billion. See Seekings 'SANCO: Strategic Dilemmas', p.13
[1967] Mthambeleni 'The South African', p.117
[1968] Ibid.
[1969] Heller 'Reclaiming Democratic', p.160

Forums (CPFs).[1970] Zeurn points out that even though this was an excellent vehicle to, first, improve relations with the police and, second, to fight crime in the townships. But it undermined civics' watchdog role. "Civic attempts to improve policing", writes Zeurn "proved to be extremely difficult due to lack of properly trained and paid officers, … police stations, and in some cases, police corruption".[1971] "This served as a central example", Zeurn concludes "to many civic activists of the limitations of a narrow understanding of civil society engagement as a 'watchdog' in which local civics only worked through existing government institutions, rather than either challenging them from outside or seeking change through active participation in political parties".[1972]

Due to the popular support civics enjoyed at this stage – pre-1994 - SANCO was able to enter into negotiations with the government and local authorities, together with the ANC, on equal basis. Mzwanele Mayekiso writes "In mid-1992 SANCO delegation, led by president Moss (Moses) Mayekiso, held a meeting with Local Government Minister Leon Wessels … The meeting was also attended by other ANC alliance partners … It stitched together the principles for the eventual establishment of non-racial, democratic local government. This was ratified in a deal by the multiparty constitutional negotiations … toward the end of the process in December 1993".[1973] Furthermore, SANCO was also instrumental in the drafting of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) document, notably the chapter on housing.[1974] The RDP document was adopted by the ANC as its election manifesto in the 1994 national elections.[1975] Civics were moreover central players in the negotiations at the local level. This led to Chris Heymans, cited by Seekings, suggesting that in 1993 "… it was 'well-nigh impossible to discuss, plan or implement development in South Africa without engaging with, or at least having to take account of, civic associations'".[1976]

Towards the end of 1993 the situation changed. In November of that year Moses Mayekiso left SANCO (he later joined parliament in 1994) and was replaced by Lechesa Tsenoli as president of SANCO. Tsenoli had been active in the UDF in the 1980s.[1977] SANCO during Tsenoli's presidency unequivocally supported the ANC.[1978] According to Mthambeleni "*SANCO* established a closer relationship with the ANC with a view that *this* would provide the national civic body a vantage position to influence the government directly".[1979] This was not to be, as the

[1970] Zeurn 'Continuity in Contradiction', p.9
[1971] Ibid.
[1972] Ibid.
[1973] Mayekiso *Township Politics,* p.225; see also Mthambeleni 'The South African', p.117
[1974] Heller 'Reclaiming Democratic', p.158
[1975] Seekings 'SANCO: Strategic Dilemmas', p.12
[1976] Mthambeleni 'The South African', p.117
[1977] Ibid., 119
[1978] Ibid.
[1979] Ibid., p.121

later events would demonstrate. SANCO's decision drew heavy criticism from within its ranks. Mzwanele Mayekiso described this decision "… as the first step in moving from the position of powerful watchdog to becoming a lapdog".[1980] Tsenoli defended SANCO's decision, declaring "… there was no reason for SANCO to change its decision to support the ANC".[1981] It was not long before Mzwanele Mayekiso's prediction was realised. Gradually SANCO was marginalized in the negotiations and policy-making directly affecting its constituencies at the local level. The ANC assumed the central role. SANCO trailed behind, and this caused it to be reactive. This was the source of tension between the two organizations, particularly at the local level.

In Maokeng this tension was not more evident than in the negotiations for the local government models as stipulated in the Local Government Transitional Act (LGTA). The ANC, possibly with the full knowledge of the SANCO provincial leadership, without consultation "imposed" its representatives to re-negotiate the model to be applied in Kroonstad. It is important to study this incident in detail.

The LGTA of 1993 was finally promulgated in February 1994, after painstaking negotiations at the Local Government Negotiating Forum (LGNF), in which SANCO played a central role.[1982] The LGTA, according to Lanegram, "outline[d] a transformation process comprised of three phases: the pre-interim, interim, and final phase".[1983] The major function of LGNF, established in March 1993, was to negotiate:

a) Which transitional model was to be applied and its function;
b) The number of seats on the new transitional council, taking the existing number of seats as a departure point; and
c) Which councillors were to be nominated to the new transitional council …[1984]

Tumisi recalls that he, as the deputy chairperson of the SANCO branch in Kroonstad, had attended a SANCO national meeting in Olifantsfontein, in the then PWV area (now Gauteng Province), where these issues were discussed,[1985] and all the resolutions taken there were

[1980] Ibid.
[1981] Ibid.
[1982] See Lanegram Civic Associations',, pp.121-2
[1983] Ibid., p.122; pre-interim phase (1994-1995 - ended after the local government elections). During this phase, councils (comprised of equal number of 'statutory' and 'non-statutory' members) were appointed to run local government whilst the precise boundaries and electoral arrangements for post-apartheid local government were being finalized; the interim phase started after the 1995 local government elections were held for restructured and non-racial local authorities. This phase was initiated under the terms of the interim constitution; and the final phase followed the adoption of a permanent, national constitution in 1996. See Seekings 'No Home', p.7
[1984] Havenga, B. 'The restructuring of local government with specific reference to the City of Tshwane' (University of Pretoria, D. Phil Thesis in Public Administration, 2002), p.119
[1985] Interview with Tumisi, 22 September 2009; 17 April 2012 telephonically

submitted to the LGNF which then submitted them to the government. At the LGNF SANCO, according to Tumisi, agreed on three options: A, B, and C.[1986] The LGTA delineated these as follows:

1. "Option A" (or a Transitional Local Council/TLC) - an appointed body divided equally between representatives of 'statutory' and 'non-statutory' members[1987];
2. "Option B" (or a Transitional Metropolitan Council/TMC) – it added an additional tier of government so that an area is governed by one Metropolitan Council and a series of Transitional Metropolitan Sub-structures composed like TLCs; and
3. "Option C" (a Transitional Coordinating Committee/TCM) – the existing racially-based local authorities institutionalize their cooperation[1988]

In terms of these models, "Option C" (or TCM), Tumisi contends, was erroneously opted for Kroonstad instead of "Option A", which Tumisi and others in SANCO Kroonstad branch envisaged.[1989] Tumisi blames this on the interference of the ANC, and partly SANCO provincial leadership. Tumisi and his group had hoped that the existing municipalities managing Kroonstad and Brentpark, and Maokeng would be dissolved and a new body comprised of representatives from the two municipalities, on an equal basis, would be appointed to manage Kroonstad, Brentpark and Maokeng during the pre-interim phase. It is possible that this was based on the view that the TLC would be better empowered to draw some of the resources from the Kroonstad municipality, the better resourced municipality compared to Maokeng (which had been badly affected by non-payment of rent and service charges), and distribute them equally between the three residential areas. The leadership of SANCO in Kroonstad felt that the ANC provincial leadership failed to consult them and was unnecessarily imposing its will on it regarding local matters, of which, regrettably, it had little, if any understanding. It seems the Free State ANC provincial leadership did not consult with the leadership of the SANCO branch in Kroonstad and mandated their own representatives to negotiate with the local authorities in Kroonstad on behalf of the "community" of Maokeng.[1990] As it turned out this decision was disastrous. Tumisi explains

[1986] Interview with Tumisi, 22 September 2009

[1987] The 'statutory' component was comprised of members of existing local government bodies, or persons representing bodies of organizations, such as ratepayers' associations approved by the forum as part of such a component. And 'non-statutory' side was comprised of those who were not part of the statutory forum and had a vested interest in the political restricting of local government, such as political organizations as the ANC and Pan Africanist Congress, as well as civic organizations such as SANCO. Havenga 'The restructuring of local', p.118

[1988] Lanegran 'Civic Associations', p.122

[1989] Interview with Tumisi

[1990] This seems to have been a widespread belief within the ANC. For example, the executive member who chaired the non-statutory delegation … believed that in the season of negotiated settlements, political parties in George must play a leading roles. He thought civics were skilled at resistance than negotiation. See Lanegran 'Civic Associations', p.128

> When it came to negotiations we had representatives from SANCO … They agreed on three options ... A, B and C. Now, we were supposed to take option A. It *was* stated that if … the town was a Grade 9 and the township was a Grade 7, you were supposed to choose the higher grade, which was Grade 9. All the municipalities that were below Grade 9 formed the Coordinating Committee. That's where the existing councillors were *left* intact. If they were Grade 9, they were disbanded and formed part of the TLC. It was 50-50. Now, we were supposed to have done those things. Now, during the negotiations we realised that the province had chosen people who didn't know anything about the negotiations; whereas, we knew about the negotiations. … We realised that there were two representatives from the ANC but we didn't know who chose them. We were all members of the ANC. How did they choose [Butana] Khompela and [Vax] Mayekiso? We didn't know the criteria that were used. There were also two representatives from SANCO, Seun Mohlatsi and Sammy Moletsane – we also didn't know who chose them. As the negotiations progressed, we realised that ... these people didn't understand anything. Vax was not aware … the way the structure was constituted. We were not supposed to form a coordinating committee. When he tried to explain what was going on, the whites … said to him "It was stated that if the local had agreed on the model, the upper structure cannot change anything". They said to him "Shut up, we are the ones who were negotiating. That's what the rules state". So, Vax had to keep quiet[1991]

According to Belinda Havenga

> Forums were obliged to notify the Administrator or provincial committee of the results of the negotiation for the pre-interim model within 90 days after the activation of the LGTA. If agreement was not reached within this time (or an allowed extension), the Administrator or provincial committee could, within 30 days, institute a process of independent mediation in order to reach an agreement. If this did not provide an agreement, the Administrator had to appoint … in non-metro forums … in cases which were constituted Grade 9 or higher level authorities, either a TLC or Local Government Coordinating Committee (LGCC)[1992]

[1991] Interview with Tumisi, 22 September 2011; 17 April 2012 (my emphasis); it is actually Option C and not B that was adopted; Mayekiso writes "SANCO and the ANC Alliance agreed that in each locale, delegates from the "non-statutory" side would gain a 50 per cent say in local government decisions prior to formal elections, working with delegates from the parties who, under apartheid, held office in white, "coloured," and "Indian" areas. In some areas that could not reach agreement of this nature, there were other options for joint governance in the interim period", see Mayekiso *Township Politics,* pp.225-6

[1992] Havenga 'The Restructuring of local', p.121

In line with these regulations, in December 1994 Ouma Motsumi, the Free State MEC for Local Government, proclaimed the LGCC in Kroonstad.[1993] Butana Khompela was appointed as the first chairperson of the Local Government of Greater Kroonstad. He was followed by Mr Corry.[1994] Additional members from the 'non-statutory' body included Vax Mayekiso, Sammy Molotsane, Seun Mohlatsi and Maggie Petersen.[1995] In protest some of the disgruntled members of SANCO in Kroonstad decided to stage a sit-in at the council's offices – and this lasted for a week. Remembering this incident, Rantie had this to say

> I can still remember that at some point we embarked on a sit-in. This was the time when there was an interim committee managing the Council, which included Sammy Moletsane, Seun Mohlatsi, Koekoe, and others. We asked who elected these people? Nobody could give us an answer. We went there and had a sit-in. During this time members of the AF attended an ANC meeting in Welkom. It was in that meeting when Lekota heard about our sit-in. He asked the delegates: 'Is Kroonstad present?' And they said yes. But he then said 'How come because I heard that members of the ANC in Kroonstad are having a sit-in'. They were chased away from that meeting. And when they arrived they threatened to attack us. We said come. The "comrades" were there to protect us. We continued with our sit-in. It lasted for a week. No one could enter the offices. Lekota came. We informed him about our problem. We told him that we've just heard that there were people who had been elected as an interim committee but we do not know who elected them. He promised to disband that interim committee[1996]

Although Tumisi concurs with Rantie, he recalls the incident differently. According to him, the sit-in was organized by some of the members of SANCO Kroonstad branch, who referred to themselves as members of the Maokeng Civic Association (this should not be confused with the earlier MCA). They demanded that the LGCC be replaced with a TLC.[1997] Unlike Rantie, Tumisi blames their attack, which Rantie claims was led by the members of the AF, on both members of the ANC and SANCO who supported the LGCC. He claims that during the attack Moferejane, who was part of the sit-in, was beaten and when he (Tumisi) tried to help him, he was stabbed in the back.[1998]

[1993] *The Citizen, 6 February 1995,* also see Minutes of the Two Hundred and Thirty Council meeting of the City Council of Maokeng, held at Council Chambers, Maokeng, 17 October 1994

[1994] See Pherudi, M. *Who's who in Maokeng, Vol.1* (Gaborone, Printing and Publishing Company Botswana, 2009), p.165

[1995] Interviews with Tumisi, Ditseki Mooketsi and Joseph "Slovo" Matli, telephonically, 30 April 2012

[1996] Interview with Rantie; At this point, the AF (and MDCC) had been disbanded and formed the branch of the ANC. But in Moakeng members of the ANC who were known to have had links with the AF in the past in 1995 were still regarded as the AF (and or MDCC)

[1997] Interview with Tumisi; *The Citizen, 6 February 1995*

[1998] Interview with Tumisi; Interview with Matli he also remembered that the MCA staged a sit-in in protest against the appointment of the LGCC

Conversely, Ditseki, a member of the ANC at the time, agrees that as members of the ANC they forced their comrades who were staging a sit-in to disperse, because their action was an embarrassment to the ANC government. He explains

> Eh, people like Blakie Tumisi, they went to do a sit-in at the council's offices and Terror [Lekota] was during that time already a premier in 1994. So we had to go there and remove them. We had to explain that we were in government and shouldn't be doings things like that. But Terror did come to speak to them and they dispersed[1999]

After the disgruntled members of the ANC explained their problem to Lekota, the latter promised to disband the LGCC. But this never happened. After learning that the interim committee delegated to the LGCC was elected at the ANC meeting, which some of the members of the ANC in Kroonstad had decided to abandon, Lekota decided not to continue with his decision to disband the LGCC. Rantie recalls

> But the mistake was committed by our own comrades such as Blackie Tumisi, who attended a meeting. You see, the ANC's constitution states that if you have received a letter inviting you to an elective conference and you decide not to attend, or you attend but then later decide to leave, whatever decision is taken in that meeting you have to abide by it. It looks like some of our comrades attended that meeting but later decided to leave. The meeting continued and the interim committee was elected. So, when Lekota made enquiries about this interim committee he was shown a register of all the people who attended the meeting and our comrades' names were there and they had signed that they were present. So, there was no legal base to challenge the election of the interim committee. Lekota could not disband the committee. But then it was agreed that it would be in power for six months and thereafter we would be going to the local government elections, where we would elect new people[2000]

It is difficult to substantiate this claim without supporting evidence. But what is clear is that the LGCC in Kroonstad was not disbanded. Thus in its final attempt to force the provincial government (by extension the ANC) to disband it, the disgruntled members of SANCO Kroonstad branch led a campaign to request the residents to suspend registering for the local government elections to be held in November.[2001] This laid the foundation for the establishment

[1999] Interview with Mooketsi
[2000] Interview with Rantie
[2001] *The Citizen, 6 February 1990*

of the "new" Maokeng Civic Association (MCA), which attempted to contest the local government elections independently of the ANC towards the end of 1995.

Another contentious issue between SANCO branches and the ANC was the resumption of the payment of services. Seekings notes "the closer the ANC got to public office, the more worried its leaders became about the effects of boycotts on public finance and hence housing and infrastructural development".[2002] Although in January 1994 SANCO, together with the ANC and the government, signed a formal agreement on rents and services that provided for arrears to be written off and end boycotts, SANCO failed to convince its branches to call off the rent boycott. This infuriated the ANC's leadership. In November 1994 the ANC-led government announced 'Masakhane' campaign and insisted that residents would have to pay for the services to enable the government to implement the RDP.[2003] SANCO national leadership reacted indecisively. On the one hand, it supported the continued rent boycott and, on the other hand, it supported the campaign (later SANCO leaders came out strongly warning members that 'SANCO was no longer a movement of boycotters').[2004]

The ANC and government officials described SANCO's response as irresponsible.[2005] This widened the tensions between the ANC and SANCO. This was evident when in 1995 the ANC criticized SANCO's Port Elizabeth's branch for marching to the city centre to protest against the service charges levied by the ANC-dominated Transitional Local Council.[2006] Janet Cherry, cited by Mthambeleni, contends "the ANC's criticism of the march indicated the beginning of a reluctance to tolerate dissent from any organization not playing the party political game".[2007] It is important to note that it was not all SANCO branches which opposed the ANC's insistence on the resumption of payment of services. Some endorsed this position. A few months before the announcement of the 'Masakhane' campaign, Mr Slabbert, Head of Community Development reported to the Council meeting that he received a telephone call from Senator Dennis Bloem, informing him that residents would be marching to the offices to pay the proposed R20 flat-rate on service fees on Mon 3 Oct 1994.[2008]

Recognizing the potential threat the tension might cause in the upcoming local government elections, the ANC and SANCO attempted to close the rift between them. They organized a summit in 1995 to discuss their differences. "A three-a-side committee", writes Seekings "was

[2002] Seekings 'After Apartheid', p.218
[2003] Ibid.
[2004] Zeurn 'Continuity in Contradiction', p.9; Seekings 'SANCO: Strategic Dilemmas', p.13
[2005] Seekings 'After Apartheid', p.217
[2006] Mthambeleni 'The South African', p.120
[2007] Ibid.
[2008] Minutes of the Hundred and Nineteenth Council meeting of the City Council of Maokeng, held in the Council Chambers, Maokeng, 29 Sept 1994

set up to deal with problems as they arose".[2009] But the tensions had simmered to the extent that "the committee was clearly ineffective".[2010] In the run up to the local government elections these tensions were explicitly displayed in public.

The MCA and ANC: The battle for the heart and soul of Kroonstad

Just as it did in the 1994 national elections[2011], SANCO agreed to support the ANC in the local government elections. Pro-ANC civic leaders campaigned for the ANC and helped build ANC branch organization.[2012] But most importantly, SANCO had agreed to help the ANC in the elections on the basis that it would participate in the selection of ANC candidates, and support them fully.[2013] But when the ANC overlooked some of the candidates selected by SANCO branches, or when the ANC imposed candidates not approved by the branches, squabbles arose in some areas. Some of the members of SANCO contested the elections as independent candidates.[2014]

In Maokeng, the situation turned out differently. The SANCO Kroonstad branch did not seek to oppose the ANC in the local government elections. Instead some of the disgruntled members of SANCO decided to establish a civic structure to contest the elections independent of the ANC. This was after these members felt that the ANC provincial (and national) leadership had imposed its decisions on them rather than engaged them in proper consultation. Their main contention was the inclusion of Caswell Koekoe, the former mayor of Maokeng under the apartheid regime, in the election list. This was despite arguments against this decision. To fully understand this development, it is important to, first, look at the differences between the ANC leadership in the northern Free State province.

Tom Lodge dates these differences back to 1993 after Elias Ace Magashule had been asked by the national leadership to step down as premier-candidate to make room for Lekota.[2015] Chitja Twala argues "this was despite the fact that the majority of members of the ANC in the Free State had nominated Magashule as the premier candidate at the expense of Lekota".[2016] The

[2009] Seekings 'SANCO: Strategic Dilemmas', p.15

[2010] Ibid.

[2011] According to Mzwanele Mayekiso, in November 1993 SANCO agreed to endorse the ANC's 1994 election campaign, because it was the only one aligned to the civics' development program. Mayekiso *Township Politics,* p.259

[2012] Seekings, 'After Apartheid', p.210

[2013] Seekings 'SANCO: Strategic Dilemmas', p.15

[2014] Seekings 'No Home', pp.8-10; Mthambeleni 'The South African', p.122

[2015] Lodge, T. *South African Politics Since 1994* (Cape Town and Johannesburg, David Philip Publications, 1999), p.19

[2016] Twala, C. M. 'From Pedagogue to Politician: Winkie Direko in the Free State, 1994-2004' (University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, Ph.D Thesis, 2010), p.62; Twala notes that when the ANC's provincial nomination list before the 1994 elections Magashule was number 1 and Lekota 35

reason the ANC national leadership wanted Lekota to become the premier of the Free State it was because he was the chairperson of the northern region and one of the senior politicians within the ANC before the April 1994 elections.[2017] But this view ignored Magashule's role and popularity within the Free State, particularly within the northern region where in the early 1980s he operated as an organizer for the UDF, and later in the 1980s as an ANC underground operative.[2018] Without doubt this must have caused Magashule to develop some resentment for Lekota. What perhaps really aggravated Magashule was that Lekota was perceived by his supporters in the Free State political circles as a relative 'outsider' imposed upon them by national leadership.[2019] Lekota had spent most of his political career outside the Orange Free State, mainly in Natal and the Transvaal.[2020] The tension further deepened when the Magashule supporters viewed the Lekota premiership as spending more time focusing on reconciliation with whites, particularly the Afrikaans-speaking whites. For Lodge, this was the main ground for the rift between Lekota and Magashule. The latter and his supporters argued that Lekota "had taken reconciliation with conservative whites too far".[2021] According to Lodge

> It is true that since the 1994 election Lekota had developed good relations with members of the old regime, in particular Dr. L. van der Walt, former Free State administrator, whom he appointed to his cabinet over the heads of the National Party hierarchy. Freedom Front leaders were also well disposed to Lekota …[2022]

The differences between the two leaders finally caused splits within the ANC in the Free State. On the one hand, it was the Magashule-Pat Matosa (Magashule's right-hand man and later the provincial chairperson of the ANC in the Free State) faction and, on the other hand, it was the Lekota (supported by Papi Kganare) group. These splits had a deep impact on the local politics of Kroonstad. This was evident after Lekota was ousted as the chairperson of the ANC in the Free State by Matosa (by extension by the Magashule/Matosa faction).

The Magashule-Matosa faction led a division within the ANC in the Free State and the Lekota-Papi Kganare split led another group.[2023] This was confirmed in the interview with Mahlomola Majake, Sthembiso Mthombeni and Neo Muhao. In this interview Majake recalled an incident when the two groups held meetings in different places:

[2017] Ibid., p.62; In 1970s Lekota was a leading figure in the Black Consciousness Movement, and in the 1980s played a crucial role as the Publicity Secretary of the United Democratic Front.
[2018] Ibid., p.50 foot note number 4; also see interview with Elias Ace Magashule by Moses Mzwandile Hadebe, for the African National Congress Oral History Project, no date.
[2019] Lodge *South African Politics,* p.50
[2020] Ibid.
[2021] Ibid., p.19
[2022] Ibid., p.20; also see Twala 'From Pedagogue to Politician', p.60
[2023] See, for example, Lodge *South African,* pp.19-20

> Terror Lekota had just emerged as the provincial chairperson (1994) of the ANC … He organized Basotho all over the country and they came [sic] to Clocolan to celebrate his victory. As Terror was celebrating in Clocolan, the leadership of the ANC led by Ace Magashule visited [Ivy] Matsepe-Cassaburri, but they met at T.V. [Tsiu Vincent] Matsepe's house, in Welkom. Now there was talk that Terror was in Clocolan and had made a 'Clocolan Accord'. And others also said the leadership of the ANC also met at T.V. Matsepe's house and that is how the other group came to be known as T.V. In the politics of the Free State we in Qwaqwa have always sided with Magashule. But other people sided with Terror[2024]

However, it was the ousting of Lekota by Matosa as the chairperson of the ANC in the Free State that was to have a direct effect on the local politics in Kroonstad. *Die Volksblad* reported in November of 1994 that President Nelson Mandela was asked to intervene in the election of the chairperson of the ANC in the Free State. Following the election of Pat Matosa, as the chairperson, defeating the Free State premier Mosiuoa Patrick "Terror" Lekota by 244 votes[2025], the Maokeng ANC branch led by [Dennis] Bloem and Oupa Ramasia (also a leader in the SANCO branch) refuted the outcome, claiming that the elections "were not free and fair".[2026] Writing about this elective conference Mathata Tsedu, editor of the *Sowetan,* observed

> The delegates' mood at this first unified provincial conference held in Qwaqwa became ugly when the leadership results were announced. Lekota's supporters accused Matosa and Magashule of having rigged the voting results, accused the northerners of packing in the delegates and inflating their delegation numbers for the purpose of winning the contest … The northerners accused Lekota of being a 'bad loser'[2027]

It can be speculated that following this incident, an acrimonious relationship between the provincial leadership of the ANC and some members in the leadership of the ANC Kroonstad branch developed.[2028] The first signs of public disagreements between the two groups emerged when the ANC Orange Free State regional leadership attempted, through Mandela, to impose Koekoe on the ANC in Kroonstad. Ditseki Moeketsi, a member of the ANC in Kroonstad in

[2024] Interview with Mohlomola Majake, Mthombeni Sthembele and Neo Muhao by Tshepo Moloi, for the SADET Oral History Project, Phuthaditjaba, Qwaqwa, 29 May 2011

[2025] According to Twala, Matosa defeated Lekota by 73 votes after receiving 263 votes as opposed to Lekota's 190; Twala 'From Pedagogue to Politician', p.65

[2026] *Die Volksblad, 23 November 1994; The Cape Times, 29 November 1994;* Magashule won the deputy chairperson position after receiving backing from 26 branches. See Twala 'From Pedagogue to Politician', p.65

[2027] Twala 'From Pedagogue to Politician', p.65

[2028] Twala indicates that one branch of the ANC in his hometown, Kroonstad, tried to challenge the outcome of the ballot but in vain. This branch argued that the results of the vote were manipulated. Twala 'From Pedagogue to Politician',p.66

favour of Koekoe's acceptance in the ANC, claims that the issue to endorse Koekoe's membership in the ANC was raised by Nelson Mandela in an ANC meeting held in Parys. Lekota was also in attendance.[2029] Mandela revisited this issue when he visited Kroonstad.

In February 1994 Mandela, in his election campaign in the Orange Free State, visited Kroonstad.[2030] He tried in vain to convince the "community" of Maokeng to accept Koekoe in their ranks. Reporting about this visit the *City Press* wrote

> After an enthusiastic welcome by supporters at Maokeng Stadium, Mandela was jeered when he pleaded with residents to accept in their ranks local mayor Caswell Koekoe[2031]

Similarly, Tumisi recalls that Mandela tried to convince the masses at the stadium using the analogy of a witch. He explains

> *Ntate* Mandela ... was visiting the towns of the Free State. When Mandela was here, the way the province had explained the situation to him, Mandela tried to motivate that people should welcome him (Koekoe) back. But the community rejected him. It was that time when it was said that Mandela was howled ... He was at the stadium. The people went there. Mandela was addressing other issues, and the people who were asking questions raised that issue and the stadium erupted. He said 'If someone is a witch, we must get him on our side so that he could teach us how to bewitch'. Angry people wouldn't listen to that; people who struggled because of that person; those who suffered; those who lost their children, because of him ... Yes, they refused[2032]

The relationship between the ANC Free State provincial leadership and some of the members of the ANC in Kroonstad deteriorated further after the ANC provincial leadership endorsed the candidacy of Koekoe. The disgruntled members of the ANC (and SANCO) in Kroonstad vigorously disapproved this decision. It is not clear where the suggestion that Koekoe's name should be included in the ANC's election list came from. A plausible explanation was offered by Rantie, who was both in the executive committees of the ANC and SANCO in Kroonstad. She believes that the problem relating to Koekoe's candidacy was made public after the provincial leadership had delegated Papi Kganare to Kroonstad to revive the ANC branches in anticipation of the upcoming elections. She remembers

> Papi Kganare, who was the MEC for Education in the Free State, was deployed

[2029] Interview with Moeketsi
[2030] *The Citizen, 5 February 1994*
[2031] *City Press, 6 February 1994*
[2032] Interview with Tumis; also see interview with Matli

> to come to Kroonstad to revitalize the ANC's branches. It so happened that when the Phomolong branch was supposed to launch most of the members of the ANC there decided to abstain and sat at the clinic. This meeting was postponed. The second meeting was called. I went to the office and said to the comrades we must mobilize the residents to attend that meeting, because if they nominate Koekoe there we won't be able to reverse the decision. Kganare had warned us that this was a final meeting. The residents refused to budge. Koekoe was nominated to be a councillor. I was nominated in Seeisoville. That's how his name was included in the ANC's election list. The next step was that members of the ANC in Kroonstad had to vote for the names on the list. There was a meeting held at Mphohadi Teachers' Training College. When we got there we realized that Koekoe's name was now in the top four amongst those who were earmarked for the mayoralship. This really hurt me. I asked that my name should be removed from the list. I won't serve in the same council with Koekoe. Many people were really hurt, and we were crying[2033]

Mamokhele Sebetoane, who had attended this meeting, concurs with Rantie. Recalling the pain that the inclusion of Koekoe's name in the election list of ANC caused, Sebetoane remarked

> It caused a lot of trouble. I remember … *(pauses for a while)* Oh, it caused a lot of trouble, especially by that time. There were kids that were shot and killed by him. So, you know, some people won't forgive and forget. I remember we were at Mphohadi [Teachers' Training College] it was during the elections of the councillors and his name was on the list of the candidates. It was so chaotic that people were crying, especially those that had lost their kids because they felt that even though he didn't personally shoot their kids, but he was responsible for their murder. I can't remember exactly what happened, but it was not resolved very easily. Because I remember there were continuous discussions about the issue of him being a councillor. Now there was a time when he was asked to voluntarily step down, because some of us we felt that the ANC constitution says if *botho ba hao, kapa ho thongwa ha hao mo mokgahlong ho baka moferefere* (if your standing or election in the organization causes problems), if you really do care, you must step down. But he never did that[2034]

[2033] Interview with Rantie; Rantie's objection was both politically and personally motivated. In the early 1990s her son, Solomon Rantie, was murdered by the TMG. At the time there were rumours doing rounds in the township that Koekoe supported the TMG. http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/welkom/welkom3.htm

[2034] Interview with Sebetoane, 13 August 2009; In early 1990 the municipal police opened fire and killed two young boys, aged 10 and 18, and injured eight, when residents of Maokeng were preparing to march to the local town council. See *Weekly Mail, March 2 to 8 1990*

Despite the vociferous disapproval of Koekoe's candidacy, the ANC leaders in the province and nationally chose to ignore the community of Maokeng. Could this have been because the new leadership of the ANC in the province intended to demonstrate to the ANC branches in Kroonstad who was now in charge of the ANC in the province?

It was at this stage that some of the members of the ANC and SANCO in Kroonstad decided to establish the Maokeng Civic Organisation (MCA) to prepare to contest the local government elections. According to Rantie

> That's when the idea of forming the MCA arose. Dennis Bloem came to see me at home and told me that I should stand for the elections, because the residents of Maokeng do not want Koekoe. I refused and said 'Dennis, you told the residents of Phomolong not to attend the meeting where Koekoe's name was nominated. What you're trying to do won't succeed'. He then said we're going to do it as MCA[2035]

"Blakie" Tumisi, a founding member of the MCA, explains the reason for forming the MCA

> *MCA* was led by me. They said Dennis (Bloem) was supporting us. But he was already in Parliament. There were a handful of people. There were nineteen people. Frank Mabitle, Patala, Ramasia. It was a number of us. *The main reason for establishing* the MCA was to contest the elections. But we didn't plan to break-away from the ANC. We had planned that if we win the seats, we would go back to the ANC with those seats … You must remember we were closer to the people. We understood the situation. We were aware that the people were complaining that they were not going to vote for the ANC if Koekoe was on the list. It was this thing of imposing leaders on the people …[2036]

In spite of Tumisi's claim of being unaware of Bloem's role in the establishment of the MCA, there is evidence to suggest that indeed Bloem played a role. Bloem first raised the issue of establishing the MCA in September 1995. Addressing a 'Masakhane' meeting, attended by the Speaker of the Free State Legislature Motlalepula Chabaku, Bloem said "Many residents are unhappy about the names in the ANC's list … There is an organization that will contest the local elections against the ANC in the forthcoming local elections."[2037]

Joseph "Slovo" Matli supports the view that Bloem manipulated some of the members of SANCO to establish the MCA. He explains

[2035] Interview with Rantie
[2036] Interview with Tumisi (Italics my emphasis)
[2037] *Die Volksblad, 11 September 1995*

> Dennis Bloem manipulated these people … Most of the *members of the* MDCC were then talking "correct" politics, because we were no longer pushing *a* particular agenda. That's when Dennis formed the MCA. MCA definitely came as a result of the MDCC activities. But they were haywire. They wanted to replicate what the MDCC did, but the timing was wrong. Like now you can't be throwing petrol bombs. You'll be arrested. They wanted to be radical. They wanted to be known. They never understood that there is this compromise …The ANC put in a list of candidates for leadership in government. Then the MCA also put in a list of their own, because they never liked people who were on the list. One of the people on the list was Caswell Koekoe[2038]

Tumisi refutes the argument that they were manipulated. For him, the establishment of the MCA was a strategic move. He argues that they, as the representatives of the "community", were aware that the people would not vote for the ANC as long as Koekoe's name was in the list. Therefore, to save the ANC they would use the MCA to contest the elections on behalf of the ANC. He observes

> But what happened was that we couldn't contest the elections as SANCO because we were in an alliance with the ANC. And we couldn't contest as members of the ANC, because the ANC rejected us for other people. You must understand that the ANC – the province had more power … to send names *and* decide which list could be adopted. So, it was very difficult for the province to understand. There were two ANC factions that didn't agree. But when they were supposed to come and sit down with us so that we could show them our reasons … *they didn't.* Actually, there was a lack of intervention … There was a deadlock. But how do we solve this thing? So, there was no way around that. But because we wanted to save the ANC, we decided to contest the elections via the civic. After winning the elections, we would go back to [the ANC]. It would still have been the ANC that had won. That's how we saw it. The comrades didn't understand. It was a misunderstanding among the comrades[2039]

Despite this explanation, the ANC provincial leadership remained intransigent. The MCA compiled its own list of candidates and planned to register with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) as a contesting party. The Free State ANC applied to the Bloemfontein Supreme Court to have the MCA barred from taking part in the election.[2040] The Court agreed with the ANC and barred the MCA from participating in the elections. Paul Mahlatsi, the Free State elections co-ordinator explained this process as follows

[2038] Interview with Matli
[2039] Interview with Tumisi. (Italics my emphasis)
[2040] *Business Day, 1 November 1995*

> Last night the court had barred the association from the elections and had struck nine of its 10 candidates from the elections[2041]

After losing the case at the Bloemfontein Supreme Court, the MCA was instructed to pay the costs of the court proceedings. But it responded by lodging an appeal and was successful. However, more damaging was that the MCA was disqualified from contesting the elections.[2042] At this stage the ANC had relented and removed Koekoe's name from the election list. According to Rantie, "Koekoe's name was removed from the list a day before the elections".[2043]

The MCA, which had by then reinvented itself as the 'Concerned Group', continued in its defiance position, and now included in its demands a call for the removal of 12 Maokeng candidates from the list and a review of the selection process. This Group drew up a petition of 5000 signatures and sent it to premier Lekota.[2044] The 'Group's' main concern was the equal representation of the alliance partners in the election list. Tumisi, a spokesman for the Group, was reported having said "As we understand it, according to the guidelines of the national list committee, each member of the electoral alliance should have equal representation at the list conference".[2045] He went further to note this discrepancy: "The Maokeng list committee had allocated 60 delegates to the ANC, 40 to the ANC Women's League, 10 to the ANC Youth League and 10 to COSATU".[2046]

The SANCO and ANC provincial leadership dismissed the Concerned Group's concerns. Johannes Melani, SANCO provincial co-ordinator argued: "The guidelines of the national list committee were open for interpretation and the situation differed from town to town".[2047] The SANCO provincial leadership's uncompromising response seemingly was influenced by the threat of disciplinary measures, issued by the president of SANCO national, Mlungisi Hlongwane, against SANCO members who contravened the code of conduct.[2048] And the ANC's provincial spokesman Joe Khambule, on the other hand, admitted that the "call by the Concerned Group was a serious cause for concern", and went on to appeal to the Group to "accept the

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[2041] Ibid.
[2042] The Free State Supreme Court Judge ruled that the candidates' names be struck from the proportional list and that the MCA be removed as a contesting party as its constitution was not lodged with the electoral officers in time. See, http://webcahe.googleusercontent.com/search, 'Voting disrupted by stone-throwing civics supporters, Bloemfontein, November 1
[2043] Interview with Rantie
[2044] http://www.anc.org.za/locelect/1ge0904.01 'Residents of Free State town threaten elections boycott'; *Business Day, 2 November 1995*
[2045] http://www.anc.org.za/locelect/1ge0904.01 'Residents of Free State town threaten elections boycott'
[2046] Ibid.
[2047] Ibid.
[2048] *The Star, 9 November 1995*

verdict of democracy".[2049] SANCO's position was not surprising. After all it had forged an alliance with the ANC. It "… ruled out protest action against the representative of the government" – by extension the ANC.[2050]

On the day of the elections supporters of the MCA/Concerned Group went on a rampage; disrupting the elections. The South African Press Association (SAPA) reported that "Angry supporters of disqualified candidates in Maokeng, Kroonstad, on Wednesday morning stoned the community centre, disrupting voting there".[2051] The SAPA went further to note that "1000 people were demonstrating against a Free State Supreme Court decision to disqualify 19 of 20 candidates from the MCA".[2052] Rantie recalls this day as follows

> Koekoe's name was removed from the list a day before the elections. And MCA's names were also removed. The MCA started to fight people who went to the polling stations. They were trying to stop people from voting. But people went to vote, especially at night just before the stations closed[2053]

In a meeting organized by the Concerned Group/MCA, the residents of Maokeng resolved to embark on rent boycott, and later a consumer boycott, protesting the disqualification of civic association candidates in the local government elections.[2054]

Not surprisingly, under the prevailing political climate, Kroonstad experienced a very low voter turnout. This cost the ANC Kroonstad branch valuable votes. As a result it did not perform well as expected in the elections. The National Party and other organizations gave it a stiff competition. The NP won the local government elections by 3 843 votes to the ANC's 3 427 votes, out of the 30.81 percent total votes.[2055] This was in contrast to the large voter turnout during the 1994 national elections, where in the Orange Free State 1,059,313 registered voters made their mark.[2056] It is possible that Kroonstad contributed a sizeable number of these. Tumisi claimed that over 80 per cent of the registered voters abstained.[2057] The Council's seats were divided as follows: the National Party had 10 members (four as proportional representatives), the African National Congress 13 members (five proportionally elected[2058]) and the Kroonstad

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[2049] http://www.anc.org.za/locelect/1ge0904.01 'Residents of Free State town threaten elections boycott'
[2050] Heller and Ntlokonkulu 'A civic movement', p.16
[2051] http://webcahe.googleusercontent.com/search, 'Voting disrupted by stone-throwing civics supporters', Bloemfontein, November 1; also see *The Star, 9 November 1995;* interview with Matli
[2052] 'Voting disrupted'
[2053] Interview with Rantie
[2054] Ibid.
[2055] *Beeld, 3 November 1995* 'Min stem op Kroonstad; NP vaar goed'
[2056] http://www.elections.org.za/content/Report=Elections 'National and Provincial Elections'
[2057] *Die Volksblad, 3 November 1995*
[2058] These were George DS, Kanono ME, Leeage F., Mantso KM, and Pietersen ML; see *Die Volksblad, 10 November 1995*

Residents Association won five seats (three proportionally elected). And the two independent candidates made up the 30 seat Council.[2059]

Perhaps feeling indignant after the elections, the ANC Free State provincial leadership suspended all the members of the MCA from the ANC. But the suspension was later lifted by the ANC national. Tumisi recalls

> There was no official letter of suspension. When people are in power, they use ways and means that you won't understand. They said we were independent. That's all. That we contested the elections in another organization. We only heard from the radio that we were given a certain time to be back in the ANC [2060]

The leadership of the ANC in the Free State then turned on Bloem. He was instructed to disband the MCA in public and vow to co-oporate with the leaders of the ANC branch in Brentpark, Kroonstad and the party's executive committee in the Kroonstad district and the provincial executive committee.[2061] In addition he was ordered to appear before the ANC disciplinary committee chaired by Kader Asmal to account "… for the blank ANC membership cards *found in his possession*?"[2062]The MCA was finally disbanded and Tumisi returned to the ANC.

Conclusion

The ANC Kroonstad branch did not perform well in the first democratic local government elections in November 1995. This was caused by the tension between the ANC provincial leadership and some of the members of the SANCO and ANC Kroonstad branches. This was mainly due to the ANC provincial leadership's lack of consultation and its tendency to impose decisions on the local 'progressive' structures. In other areas, the ANC was able to defeat its members (and former members) who contested the elections as independent candidates, especially in the Western Cape and Natal.[2063] But in Kroonstad the ANC was forced to seek a court interdict to stop the Maokeng Civic Association (MCA) from contesting the elections. Evidence suggests that had the MCA contested the elections it would have won – and thus embarrassed the provincial leadership. There are two important lessons that can be drawn from the incident that took place in Kroonstad.

First, Maokeng, in Kroonstad, provides an interesting case study. In contrast to other places, Maokeng did not have a civic organization until 1990. Its establishment coincided with the

[2059] *Die Volksblad, 3 November 1995*
[2060] Interview with Tumisi
[2061] *Die Volksblad, 20 August 1996*
[2062] Ibid. (Italics my emphasis); Bloem informed the newspapers that he appeared before the disciplinary committee and it does not seem that any action was taken against him.
[2063] Seekings 'No Home'

unbanning of the ANC. Inevitably, civic activists, who in the 1980s supported the UDF/ANC in Maokeng, became members of the ANC and helped form branches of the ANC in Kroonstad. Some of them were even elected into leadership positions in these branches. It was against this background that when the ANC wanted to begin to stamp its authority in the local politics in various townships, the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) Kroonstad branch (and avoidably the ANC Kroonstad branch) was split into two between those who agreed to 'toe the ANC's line' and those who challenged some of the decisions imposed by the ANC, particularly the Free State provincial leadership on the local politics in Kroonstad. Finally, this caused some of the disgruntled members of SANCO and ANC Kroonstad branches to establish the 'new' Maokeng Civic Association (MCA) to contest the first local government elections independent of the ANC in 1995. This group did not terminate their membership in the ANC. They argued that the establishment of the MCA was a strategic move to win the ANC votes. In other areas such as the Western Cape and Natal, disgruntled members of SANCO and ANC branches left the ANC and stood as independents in the local government elections.

And second, in spite of the close working relationship between the ANC and SANCO, which after 1993 restricted the civics from openly challenging the ANC, and also marginalized the civics' traditional role of embarking in rent and services charges boycott, the MCA, in contrast, used the civics' traditional role when it opposed the decision to impose the name of Caswell Koekoe in the ANC election list. It mobilized members of the "community" to voice their disapproval. This was reminiscent of the 1980s civics. This paid off because Koekoe's name was removed from the list of candidates, and the ANC underperformed in the elections, because the majority of the members of the community rallied behind the MCA and boycotted the elections.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

The central concern of this thesis has been to explore and examine political mobilisation and protests in Kroonstad's black residential areas from 1976 to 1995. In doing this, the thesis attempted to explain the reasons why political mobilisation and protests lagged behind in these areas (compared to other areas), and why when local political activists finally managed to mobilise their communities, they could not sustain the political momentum. It is the contention of this thesis that these two factors distinguished the politics of Kroonstad's black townships from other townships across the country.

Kroonstad's black politics have largely been shaped and influenced by 'conservative' bodies or individuals, except for brief moments in the mid-1950s and early 1960s. Because of this Kroonstad's black residential areas remained quiescent and tranquil until 1985. The role played by bodies such the Native Advisory Board (NAB) and the Joint Europeans and Natives Council (JENC) after the demise of the radical and confrontationist Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU), severely restricted radical and confrontationist politics in Kroonstad which were being experienced elsewhere in the country. Although African women trading illegally in home-brewed beer in Kroonstad experienced constant harassment by the police and discriminatory laws in much the same manner as African women in areas like KwaZulu and Durban in the late 1920s, they never organised and openly challenged the municipal laws prohibiting them from brewing and selling liquor. Instead, it was the JENC that challenged the government on behalf of the African women in Kroonstad. The NAB and JENC adopted a moderate approach to raise issues and to challenge the government and/or white local municipalities. When these bodies failed to meet the black residents' needs, the latter lost hope in them and stopped supporting them. Racial tensions within the JENC further affected its activities to the extent that in the late 1940s it finally ceased to function.

In contrast, the Orange Free State African Teachers' Association (OFSATA) and the Society of Young Africa (SOYA), although radical, concentrated their energies in organising and mobilising a particular constituency, teachers. This precluded them from attracting large numbers of people to their organisations. The teachers' interests and needs varied from that of the larger community, especially the working class in the community. Furthermore, the existence of these two bodies helped to divide the community between the 'elites' and the other members. Phyllis Ntantala admits in her book that when she arrived in Kroonstad to take up a teaching position at Bantu High School (in 1967 it was renamed Bodibeng High) she, as a member of the elite, did not associate with all and sundry, even at social gatherings. "We (teachers) felt that, as the elite", she writes "we simply could not mix and dance with anybody".[2064]

The election of Alfred Bitini Xuma to the presidency of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1940 ushered in new radical developments in the organisation. First, the ANC leadership in 1941

[2064] Ntantala *Life's Mosaic,* p.87

agreed to revive the women's section within the organization. Two years later the ANC Women's League was formed, but it was inaugurated in 1948. In 1944 the ANC Youth League was formed. Five years after its formation the ANC adopted the ANCYL's 'Programme of Action', which convinced the ANC's leadership to abandon petitioning and pleading with the British government to intervene on behalf of the African masses, and to adopt a defiance line. The Congress Movement's Defiance Campaign in 1952, protesting the National Party government's discriminatory laws, and women's resistance against pass laws revived radical politics in Kroonstad. African women in Kroonstad, led by Majoro Matseki, marched and demonstrated against the government's imposition of passes on African women. Although the police were able swiftly to curtail the women's resistance in Kroonstad, radical ideas had been planted.

In 1960, following the shooting of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) demonstrators in Sharpeville, south of Johannesburg, a number of PAC supporters in Kroonstad established a cell to recruit more members. At this stage the PAC in exile in Basotholand was preparing for war with the government. Just as in the case with the ANCWL, however the PAC's activities were quickly halted. This was after the leader of the cell was arrested and sentenced to three years on Robben Island.

The combination of state heightened suppression and economic boom of the 1960s cowed people and shifted their attention to eking out a living. During this period Kroonstad's black residential areas, particularly Maokeng, like many other townships across the country underwent a phase some commentators describes as a period of 'political lull'. However, unlike other townships in Bloemfontein and parts of the Eastern Cape, Maokeng lacked active underground structures, particularly those linked with Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) in places like Basotholand (in 1966 renamed Lesotho after gaining independence). Chitja Twala and Jeremy Seekings, and Janet Cherry in their studies, in the Free State and Eastern Cape, respectively, demonstrate the role played by individuals in these areas who were members of MK or who had returned from Robben Island in helping politicise some of the young people in their areas, who in turn joined MK and carried out military attacks on state apparatuses. Because of this Maokeng (and Brentpark) remained quiet for the remainder of the 1960s and early 1970s.

In 1959 the government enacted the Bantu Universities Act, which established separate universities and colleges for blacks. The government had intended that these institutions would produce graduates who would service their homelands. It was in these institutions where many blacks were introduced to politics and the Black Consciousness philosophy, after joining the South African Student Movement (SASO). In 1972 more than a thousand students were expelled from the University of the North (also known as Turfloop) after they had embarked on a strike, protesting the dismissal of Abram Onkgopotse Tiro, who had attacked the university's administration, Bantu Education and the apartheid system. A significant number of these students returned to their home towns to take up teaching posts in the local schools.

Bodibeg High School in Maokeng employed some of these young and politically conscientised teachers. When they started to teach, they influenced their students. For example, as a result of this some of the students formed the branch of the South African Student Movement (SASM), a BC-inspired student organisation. Others established the Maokeng Student Art Club (MASAC), where they did not only engage in art lessons but in political discussions as well. The BC-influence radicalised the students at Bodibeng High. They started questioning the blatant discriminatory laws practiced in Kroonstad. For example, they demanded to know why black people were not allowed in town after 9 o'clock at night and why blacks used a separate entrance points in shops in town. On 24 August 1976 students at Bodibeng High took to the streets demonstrating, in solidarity with their counterparts in Soweto, where the student uprising erupted on 16 June 1976. Again, this attempt was swiftly curtailed after the police arrested the student leaders and the teacher who was accused of having agitated the students.

The last attempt at mobilizing in the 1970s was through church activities, particularly the Roman Catholic Church. Young people in this church formed the Young Christian Workers (YCW), which initially focused its attention solely on recruiting and conscientising young workers. Some of the members of the YCW attempted to spread the group's activities to include the larger community. For example, they built shelters at the bus stop to protect the commuters. It was not long before the activities of the YCW could be detected by the police. The latter began to harass the members of the YCW. Because of police brutality the group was forced to change tactics and decided to engage the government militarily. Although this was an ambitious task, because none among the members of the YCW in Kroonstad had received military training, their actions as discussed during their trial, developed an interest among some of the people in Kroonstad in the politics of resistance. The YCW ceased to exist after two of their members were found guilty of plotting to use military means against the state. They were sentenced to prison terms. The rest of the members of YCW either left Kroonstad or stop participating in the activities of the YCW.

In the post-1976 period the government introduced reforms to discourage demonstrations akin to the student uprisings of 1976/77. Among the reforms the government introduced was the establishment of the community councils, which functioned between 1977 and 1983. The community councils were to be run by members of the community elected by the residents. However, they had limited powers to govern the townships, and under the supervision of white officials. For example, the Kroonstad Community Council (KCC) was supervised by white officials in the Northern Orange Free State Bantu Administration Board (NOFBAB), who imposed unpopular decisions on it to implement. The most important duty of the KCC was to mediate in domestic disputes. The government stipulated that the community council should have to source funding on their own to finance the maintenance of the townships under their management. Because of the unavailability of sources of funding in the townships, particularly after the municipalities had privatized municipal beerhalls, the community councils across the country resorted to increasing rent and service charges. In many townships this prompted the

establishment of civic associations which mobilized and organized the residents to resist this. Maokeng, by contrast, remained unorganized and calm. Instead, the opposition party within the KCC challenged, sometimes successfully, the governing party whenever it introduced unpopular decisions. This made the residents complacent and they remained unorganized.

When the government realized that the community councils were no longer implementing their mandate, as signaled by their inability to provide infrastructural development, pervasive allegations of corruption against councillors, and the persistence in raising rents, it introduced the Black Local Authorities Act of 1982. The Act upgraded the community councils to town (and village) councils. These, unlike the community councils, were given more powers, which included building infrastructure like houses and schools, allocating business sites, and maintaining roads. But, just like the community councils before them, they were not supported financially. They had to devise ways of sourcing funding. They, too, resorted to increasing rent and service charges. The town councils took over when South Africa was undergoing economic meltdown, which caused a significant number of people to loose their jobs. The increase in rent and service charges incensed many people in the townships. Their indignation was further compounded by the allegations of corruption on the part of the councillors. Township residents complained that they were paying rent and services charges but there was no evidence of what their monies were used for, because townships continued to lack development. Instead, town councillors became richer, owning chains of stores and bottle-stores, some of which they had bought from the municipalities after the latter had privatized them.

It was at this stage that local politics in many townships across the country shifted from quiescence to confrontation, led by civic associations. The latter, assisted by students and youth organizations, resisted increased rent and service charges. They mobilized the communities to boycott paying rent and services charges, in the hope that the town councils would reconsider and decrease them. When the town councils remained intransigent, the residents under the leadership of civic associations confronted the councillors, demanding that they should resign. When the latter refused they were attacked, and some were even killed. By the mid-1980s many town (and village) councils across the country had been forced to dissolve.

Unlike other townships, in Maokeng and Brentpark no civic association and no action was taken against the Town Council of Maokeng (TCM) and the Brentpark Management Committee (Manco). This was because the local authorities in these areas, particularly Maokeng, were in a position to provide the residents with services and not resort to charging the residents exorbitant rental and services charges. The TCM was distinct from other town councils because it was led by a charismatic mayor Caswell Koekoe. Koekoe mediated on behalf of the residents of the township with white authorities and helped find employment for some of them. Under his leadership the TCM made concerted efforts to provide the necessary social services in the township. For example, houses, schools, holiday resort, pensioners' residential area were built.

The township's roads were maintained. This earned the TCM and Koekoe support within the community. It was for this reason that 'progressive' structures, aligned to the United Democratic Front (UDF), in the township could not force the TCM and its councillors to resign.

At the height of the struggle in the mid-1980s students, led by the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), were at the forefront of resistance in various townships. By 1983 students in many townships were already protesting against conditions not conducive to learning at their school. In 1984 COSAS tabled five key demands, which were later taken up by high school students in different areas. It demanded Student Representative Council's (SRC) to replace the prefect system, the removal of the age limit rule, an end to corporal punishment, that teachers should stop sexually harassing female students, and that the police and South African Defence Force (SADF) be withdrawn from schools and townships. In some of the townships student radicalization was made possible by the presence of political veterans who helped to disseminate information about the role of the banned African political organizations such as the ANC and PAC, or veterans who created links between local activists and the banned organizations in exile, and in the process encouraged political mobilization and organisation. Maokeng lacked such political veterans. It was for this reason that students at Maokeng lagged behind in mobilizing and protesting.

The situation changed, however, after students and young people in the townships had been introduced to politics via various routes. Some of the students learned politics at home. Others from church groups like Chiro. A few experienced student politics when they visited relatives in places like the Vaal Triangle. However, it was the interaction between the students at Bodibeng High and political activists who came to hid in Kroonstad running away from the police in places like Soweto that finally give the students at Bodibeng the confidence to mobilize and riot in 1985. The students at Bodibeng demanded similar changes as their counter-parts elsewhere. This was a turning point in the political history of Maokeng. Not long students shifted their attention from educational issues to fighting apartheid in general. It was at this period that some of the students became used military tactics to wage the war against the state, particularly its agents like the police. Police's houses were identified and bombed.

However, the politicisation of students also had unintended consequences. At Bodibeng High generational tensions developed between the students and teachers. Students began to disrespect the teachers. They left school premises whenever they felt like, smoked *marijuana* inside the premises of the school, and even fought with teachers physically. The teachers retaliated by fighting back.

The government responded to the escalating of resistance by declaring a partial state of emergency in 1985 and detained a number of student leaders. Realising that its attempt did not achieve their desired outcome, in 1986 it declared a national state of emergency, in which

thousands of activists, including students were detained for long spells in prison. This affected mobilization in many townships, including Maokeng, but this also contributed to the formation of gangs in various townships. In Maokeng, the Three Million Gang and Canadians Gang were formed, initially as loose groupings involved in dance competitions. Not long after the two gangs became rivals and began to fight each other. Worse, they shifted their activities to robbing and terrorizing members of the community who were employed by the Premier Milling Company. The 'comrade youth' attempt to intervene and stop the war between the two gangs. It was only after the intervention by Minister's Fraternal that the two gangs ceased to function.

In defiance of the State of Emergency, the UDF and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) formalized their alliance and formed in 1989 formed the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM). This changed the situation and helped to revive political activism in townships. At this stage the 'progressive' structure in Maokeng energetically organized and mobilized the community to oppose the TCM (renamed the City Council of Maokeng after the 1988 local government elections). It organized consumer and rent boycotts to force the CCM to resign. The CCM refused to resign and stayed in the Council. The 'progressive' structure's attempts at forcing the CCM to dissolve were disrupted by two factors.

First, it was the split within the 'progressive' structure, resulting in the formation of the Maokeng Democratic Crisis Committee (MDCC) and the Activists' Forum (AF). The two formations differed in their approach: the MDCC favoured a militant line and the AF a moderate approach. Although both the MDCC and AF aimed to achieve the same goal: to remove the CCM, but the MDCC was not in favour of negotiating the removal from office of the CCM. They wanted the Council dissolved. The AF, on the other, believed that it was important to negotiate with the CCM to dissolve, because the members of the AF believed that some of the Councillors, particularly Koekoe, could be rehabilitated and brought to wok for the organization, the ANC. These differences split the community of Maokeng between the two organizations. This hampered political mobilization in Maokeng.

The second factor was the re-emergence of the Three Million Gang (TMG), a vigilante group formed to protect the councillors against attacks by the activists. The TMG terrorized the community particularly members of the 'progressive' structures, which had by then reconstituted themselves as the ANC branches, who opposed Koekoe and his Council. The TMG's reign of terror lasted for two years, 1990-1992. In mid-1991 the TMG joined Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the violence in Maokeng turned into political violence. Political activists focused their energies to fighting the TMG and allies. Attempts at organizing and mobilizing the masses were hindered. After the murder of the leader of the TMG, Ramodikoe George "Diwiti" Ramasimong, in early 1992 violence stopped.

At this point, the ANC, which had been unbanned in 1990, was attempting to stamp its authority in many townships. This was not easy for it because of the existence of the South African National Civic Organisation branches in various areas, including Kroonstad where a SANCO branch was formed. SANCO was formed amidst heated debate about whether civic associations should be left to continue functioning or not. Those who were in favour of their continuation argued that they were closer to the people and were aware of the communities' needs. The others who were against the civic associations' existence contended that they were formed to fight the struggle on behalf of the ANC which was banned in exile. Now that the ANC had been unbanned they felt that there was no need for the civic associations to continue existing. Instead, their role would be taken over by the ANC branches. The situation was aggrevated by the leadership of SANCO when it entered into an alliance with the ANC, which implied that SANCO national and its branches were prohibited from criticising the ANC.

The situation came to a head in the period leading to the first democratic local government elections. In Kroonstad, as was the case in other areas like Western Cape and Eastern Cape, members of SANCO at branch level were angred by lack of consultation by the ANC, both at provincial and national levels. They felt that ANC had developed a tendency to impose its decisions on local community politics. For example, the Free State provincial leadership of the ANC, backed by the national leadership, attempted to impose Caswell Koekoe's name in the ANC's candidates' list for the local government elections in Kroonstad. After numerous attempts to resolve this issue without success, some of the members of SANCO Kroonstad branch decided to form the Maokeng Civic Association (MCA) to contests the elections as independents. The ANC responded by applying to the Supreme Court to oppose the MCA. The latter was barred from contesting the elections, after 19 out of 20 members were disqualified by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). In response the MCA mobilized members of the 'community' to abstain from voting. The overwhelming majority acceded to the call and did not cast their vote. This cost the ANC vital votes. The National Party won the elections.

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3. Oral History Interviews

A. ‘Local Histories and Present Realities’ Programme

Tsepo Oliphant, Kroonstad, 14 November 2007

James Naanyane, Brentpark, Kroonstad, 14 November 2007

Godfrey Oliphant, Eldorado Park, Johannesburg, 5 December 2007

Dennis Bloem, Pretoria, Sheraton Hotel, 14 January 2008

Nana Mahomo, Kempton Park, 10 April 2008

Khotso Sesele, Kroonstad, 13 April 2008

Mpopetsi Dhlamini, Constantia, Maokeng, 14 April 2008

Joseph “Fifi” Nkomo, Seesisoville, Maokeng, 14 April 2008

Tsiu Vincent Matsepe, Welkom, 15 April 2008

Jacob Ramotsoela, Kroonstad, 16 April 2008

Theletsane Mokhele, Constantia, Maokeng, 16 April 2008

Tom Pule Mokuane, Constantia, Maokeng, 18 April 2008

David Lebethe, Khotso House, Johannesburg, 23 April 2008

Mokhehle Letsabo, Kroonstad, 18 May 2008

Liphaphang Frank Mohapi, Ferndale, Johannesburg, 2 July 2008

Simon Mateza, Phomolong, Maokeng, 8 July 2008

John Lewele Modisenyane, Kroonstad, 9 July 2008

Ishmael “Satch” Sefatole, Kroonstad, 9 July 2008

Moses Masizane, Constantia, Maokeng, 10 July 2008

Nthabiseng “Mama” Seheri, Seeisoville, Maokeng, 11 July 2008

Mkhulu Nhlapo, Turfontein, Johannesburg, 15 July 2008

Sesomo Samuel Seakhela, 28 October 2008

Fanela Nkambule, Kroonstad, 28 October 2008

Isaac "Sakkie" Oliphant, Kroonstad, 28 October 2008

Lebone Holomo, Seeisoville, Kroonstad, 29 October 2008

Barbara Mazibuko, Kroonstad, 31 October 2008

Joseph Nchaga Litabe, Kroonstad, 14 January 2009

Michael Molotsi, Brentpark, Kroonstad, 15 January 2009

Leonard Butiboy Mafokosi, Letaba Farm, Kroonstad District, 15 January 2009

Seele Sekonyela, Constantia, Maokeng, 20 May 2009

Ditheko Josias "Makula" Molai, Gelukwaarts, Kroonstad, 20 May 2009

John Taje, Bloemfontein, 21 May 2009

Hilda "Mantho" Motadinyane, Constantia, Maokeng, 22 May 2009

Hennie Ludick, Kroonstad, 22 May 2009

Ditseki Moeketsi, Mphefela, Maokeng, 22 May 2009

Mzimase Gozongo, Vosloorus, Johannesburg, 26 May 2009

Arcilia Makodi Morailane, Siyathemba, Balfour (Mpumalanga Province), 16 July 2008 and 3 July 2009

Mamabolo Raphesu, Vanderbijlpark, 11 July 2009

Mpho Samuel "Bebe" Taka, Mphefela, Maokeng, 13 August 2009

Mamokhele Sebetoane, Seeisoville, Maokeng, 7 July 2008 and 13 August 2009

Daniel George, Constantia, Maokeng, 9 July 2008 and 18 August 2009

Ditsietsi Mmei, Naledi, Soweto, 18 September 2009

Tebello "Blackie" Tumisi, Seeisoville, Kroonstad, 22 September 2009

Machabe Petrus Thulo, Gulukwaarts, Maokeng, 23 September 2009

Tommy Makau, Phomolong, Maokeng, 9 July 2008 and 23 September 2009

Paseka Mpondo, Oupa Mokotla and Phankhe Mbona, Constantia, Maokeng, 24 September 2009

Dikeledi Mary-Jane Tlali, Phomolong, 24 September 2009

Eunice Tsoaeli, Gelukwaarts, Maokeng, 24 September 2009

Mamorena Florence Taje, Gelukwaarts, Maokeng, 25 September 2009

Lindiwe Gladys Mwelase, Constantia, 25 September 2009

Ntai Alfred Matube, Kroonstad, 25 September 2009

Peace Tsotetsi (formerly Modikoe), Dagbreek, Welkom, 25 October 2009

Mamatela Lenong, Gelukwaarts, Maokeng, 26 March 2010

Mantoa Leseri, Gelukwaarts, Maokeng, 26 March 2010

Bethuel Thekiswe, Kroonstad, 26 March 2010

Chabasiele Makume, Seeisoville, Maokeng, 29 June 2010

Sobi Joseph "Slovo" Matli, Kroonstad, 29 June 2010

Paulina Rantie, Seeisoville, Maokeng, 19 April 2012

B. SADET Oral History Project

Thandi Swakamisa by Tshepo Moloi, Thembisa 23 July 2004

Hosia Lengosane by Tshepo Moloi, Tsakane, 1 August 2004

Reuben Mahlagare and Thabiso Radebe by Tshepo Moloi, Thembisa, 26 August 2004

Michael Figo Madlala by Tshepo Moloi, Kempton Park, 7 September 2004

Greg Malebo by Tshepo Moloi, Hospital View, Thembisa, 14 October 2004

Mongezi Radebe by B.M. Makhubalo, Bloemfontein, 20 January 2006

White Mohapi by Chitja Twala, Bloemfontein, 18 January 2008

Molefe Mogorosi by Mpopetsi Dhlamini, Maokeng, 6 May 2011

Musiuoa Seleke by Mpopetsi Dhlamini, Maokeng, 6 May 2011

Molefe Papi Matie by Mpopetsi Dhlamini, Maokeng, 8 May 2011

Mziyafani Pholo by Tshepo Moloi, East Bank, Alexandra Township, 14 May 2011

Medupi 'Professor' Mabo by Vusi Khumalo, Bekkersdal, 19 May 2011

Mathole Maboe by Vusi Khumalo, Bekkersdal, 19 May 2011

Mohlomola Majake, Mthombeni Sthembele and Neo Muhao by Tshepo Moloi, Phuthaditjaba, Qwaqwa, 29 May 2011

Muzi Sikhakhane by Tshepo Moloi, Sandton, Johannesburg, 5 July 2011

Aubrey Matshiqi by Tshepo Moloi, Parktown, Johannesburg, 12 August 2011

Michael "Baba" Jordan by Brown Maaba, for the SADET Oral History Project, Brentpark, Kroonstad, 3 March 2005

C. SAHA/Sunday Times Oral History Project

Anthony Bouwer, Kroonstad, 23 November 2006

Vincent Oupa Matsepe, Welkom, 28 March 2007

Violet Leboseng Selele, Seeisoville, Maokeng, 24 November 2006

Michael "Baba" Jordan, Brentpark, Kroonstad, 24 November 2006

Parkies Setiloane, Constantia, Maokeng, 7 December 2006

Joseph Litabe, Kroonstad, 24 January 2007

Dirk de Hart, Kroonstad, 22 March 2007

Lawrence Prince Tlokotsi by students from Bodibeng High School, Maokeng, 2008

D. Free State Provincial ANC Centenary Oral History Project

Nti Masisi by Gift Poli, 2011

Micheal "Baba" Jordan by Gift Poli and Ace Nyaleke, Brentpark, Kroonstad, 2011

Simon Monne Ramothibi by Gift Poli and Ace Nyaleka, Phiritona, Heibron, 2011

Motlogeloa "Lazzy" Nkitsing by Tshepo Moloi, Phiritona, Heilbron, 8 June 2011

Solly Dhlamini by Tshepo Moloi, Centurion, 19 August 2011

Mogotho Steven "Ace" Mogoera by Tshepo Moloi, Phiritona, Heilbron, 3 November 2011

E. Free State, Department of Sport, Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Library and Archives Service Directorate, Oral History Interviews

V.L. Motlhacwi by T.C. Challa and A.H. Mosoeu , Tswelopelo Public Library, Maokeng, 15 June 2000

Ntlama Abel Kholumo T.C. Challa and A.H. Mosoeu, Tswelopelo Public Library, Maokeng, 15 June 2009

Mrs M.J. Mokoena T.C. Challa and A.H. Mosoeu, TTswelopelo Public Library, Maokeng, 15 June 2009

Dipuo Elizabeth Mamatela by T.C. Challa and A.H. Mosoeu, Tswelopelo Public Library, Maokeng, 15 June 2009

F. Private Collection

Simon Mashishi, Thembisa, 12 March 2003

Simon Mashishi, Tsepo Section, Thembisa, 8 June 2003

Mandla Matlala, Tlamatlama, Thembisa, 12 June 2003

Simon Ramogale, Johannesburg, 7 April and 18 August 2004

Jaki Seroke, Illovo, Johannesburg, 25 August 2004

Modki Maseko, Driefontein, 12 April 2006

Zweli Sidu, Driefontein, 26 October 2011

Mpopetsi Jonas Dlamini: A book by Pherudi, M. The History, an African son from the dusty Marantha-Maokeng, 1965-2007: Life history with pictures (Botswana, PPCB, 2008)

Pule Moino: A book by Odendaal, A.A. Man van Blydskap (Bloemfontein, N.G. Sendingpers, 1976)

Anthony Bouwer: the book by Serfontein, D. Keurskrif vir Kroonstad: ‘n Kroniek van die Onstaan, Groei en Vooruitsgte van ‘n Vrystaatse Plattelandse Dorp (Kroonstad, Stadsraad, 1990)

Nchaga Litabe: Handwritten notes about the split between the AF and MDCC

Bethuel Thekiswe: A photograph

Mamorena Florence Taje: Photographs

Mamokhele Sebetoane: A photograph

Machabe Thulo: Photographs

Hennie Ludick: Photographs and pamphlets

Tsiu Vincent Matsepe: A photograph

Matshidiso Rantie: Photographs

G. Miscellaneous collection

Elias Ace Magashule by Moses Mzwandile Hadebe, for the ANC Oral History Project, n.d.

Enos Ngutshane by Tshepo Moloi, for the Hector Pietersen Memorial and Museum Oral History Project, Woodmead, 28 June 2005

Nkapi Mokuwe by Tshepo Moloi, for the Munsieville Oral History Project, 2006

Conversation with Botikie Oliphant, Marabastad, Kroonstad, 11 December 2007

Mongezi Radebe by Julie Frederkse, UWL AL 2460 (Box A31) Julie Frederikse Collection

Shirley Thathi, by Tshepo Moloi and Tshepo Ramutumbu, for the Johannesburg Development Agency's Vilakazi Street Oral History Project, Orlando West, Soweto, 14 October 2009.

Timothy Mabena by Tshepo Moloi, for the South African History Archive's Thembisa Oral History and Photographic Project, Ester Park, Kempton Park, 23 January 2011

Lazarus Mawela by Tshepo Moloi, for the South African History Archive Thembisa Oral History Project, Umfuyaneng, Thembisa, 30 October 2011

4. Documentary Films

A Blues for Tiro, a documentary film about the life and times of Tiro. The documentary was produced by Steve Mokwena

'Izolo Lokhu: Life on the Bethal Farms', a documentary film produced by the Wits History Workshop, 2009

Mandela's Unbanning and Release'. Documentary Film, produced by Video News Services/ANC2004

Boycott: Start Walking, Montgomery, Alabama 1955, (Time Warner Entertainment Company, 2001)