

**THE AFRIKANER TAKEOVER: NATIONALIST POLITICS  
AND THE COLONIZATION OF  
SOUTH AFRICA'S PARASTATALS, 1948 TO 1960**

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**Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

This paper focuses specifically upon the question of control of the state-owned economic institutions, parastatals, after 1948 and during the 1950s. This question is raised in the context of the National Party's (NP) election victory in 1948, the relative economic weakness of Afrikaners compared to English speakers<sup>2</sup> and the growing influence of the Broederbond. It is therefore concerned with the process by which Afrikaner nationalists came to dominate and control these institutions. There were two dimensions to this. The first was the pursuit, albeit a relatively pragmatic one, of the nationalist cause, and the second was the development of a network of clientelist relations through the allocation of "jobs to pals".

This question has not been the subject of any previous detailed analysis by historians or political scientists. The little existing work on parastatals by Christie and Clark has not focused on the process of the Nationalists' takeover.<sup>3</sup> The traditional assumption amongst writers, especially prior to the work of Lazar and Posel on the 1950s,<sup>4</sup> was that process of transition whereby the Afrikaner nationalists colonized state institutions should be conceptualized in terms of an immediate seizure of power following the 1948 election. The senior personnel of the state were regarded as having been purged of their "English" elements and state policies immediately altered in ways which favoured Afrikaner interests over other white interests.<sup>5</sup> The South African state in the 1950s had therefore been characterized by radical change following the 1948 NP election victory rather than by continuity.

This paper challenges such a view in the case of the state-owned economic institutions. It argues that the reality was somewhat more complex. While the 1948 election victory did lead to immediate, politically-inspired changes at the South African Railway and Harbour Administration (SAR&H), changes were more limited elsewhere. The result was that in the case of the main industrial parastatals, the Electricity Supply Corporation (Escom), the South African Iron and Steel Corporation (IsCOR) and the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), Nationalist domination was far from complete by the end of the 1950s. This situation prompted an informal investigation<sup>6</sup> which concluded that the organizations remained "English" in character and called for drastic changes to be introduced. In the years following this, the restructured NP government with much closer ties to the Broederbond, in conditions of economic and political crisis, renewed the Afrikaner nationalist strategy to take full control of these institutions. This came to be implemented in the 1960s.

Therefore the purpose of the paper is not to argue that the NP's victory of 1948 had no effect on the parastatals but rather to show that it had a less dramatic effect than has tended to be assumed and that it was only in 1960-1 that the Afrikaner nationalist strategy to take full control of these institutions was pursued more systematically so that a full Afrikanerization took place during the 1960s. These case-studies also show the need to disaggregate the South African state when analysing the transition process and not to treat it as a monolithic structure, so as to allow for a variety of experiences by its different elements.

This paper accords closely with the recent work by Lazar and Posel on the 1950s which has emphasized the extent to which the Nationalists lacked a clear blue-print for action when they came into power in 1948.<sup>7</sup> Posel has questioned the "Grand Plan" notion of apartheid by showing that important aspects of the policy had not been formulated when the NP won power and only crystallized during the course of the 1950s. Lazar has shown that the Broederbond did not assume dominance of the NP immediately after 1948 and it only did so towards the end of the 1950s. Furthermore, in both cases their work has pointed to the period between 1958 and 1961 as the critical phase in these transitions. The periodization

of the transition process for the established industrial parastatals analysed in this paper also identifies this as the crucial period in which Afrikaner nationalists assessed their lack of control and began to take steps to change the situation.

### **Politicians and Bureaucrats**

The main department which supervised the activities of the industrial parastatals was the Department of Commerce and Industries.<sup>8</sup> After the NP election victory the existing minister, S. F. Waterson, was replaced by E. H. Low who, as we shall see, began the process of reshaping the directorates of the parastatals. However his changes were limited, as were those of his successor, Dr van Rhijn.

Furthermore, despite the change of ministers in 1948, the department did not see any immediate politically-inspired change in its most senior personnel. Instead there was considerable continuity amongst the civil servants in the Department of Commerce and Industries. Towards the end of the war in 1944 Frans du Toit had become the Secretary of the Department and De Waal Meyer the Under-secretary.<sup>9</sup> In March 1949 du Toit became a special adviser to Louw, who appointed him as one of Iscor's directors.<sup>10</sup> This was no sideways appointment. du Toit became Louw's special representative on the Iscor Board, entrusted with the task of ensuring that the Minister was kept fully informed,<sup>11</sup> and shortly afterwards he was chosen as the first Chairman of Sasol and Foskor. It is striking that Louw was able and prepared to utilize an official who had been appointed to a senior position during the war. Following du Toit's departure his deputy de Waal Meyer was made Secretary and he remained in this position virtually until the end of the 1950s. It is this continuity which enabled the UK's High Commissioner to comment in 1958 that:

... the damage to the nation's economy which wholesale economic favouritism could inflict has been avoided largely through the fearless advice, and where necessary opposition, of the very competent officials at the head of the Economic Departments of the Government.<sup>12</sup>

The High Commissioner was concerned that Verwoerd's restructured NP government would pursue the cause of Afrikaner economic nationalism more ruthlessly at the expense of English interests. He feared correctly that this, combined with the growing habit of making senior civil service appointments on the basis of political acceptability, would lead to changes in the senior economic positions within the state.<sup>13</sup> Verwoerd had appointed Diederichs to the Economic Affairs Ministry. Diederichs held a senior position in the Broederbond and had close ties with the Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut (AHI).<sup>14</sup> He made changes in the department and, following an investigation, began a more concerted attempt to colonize the senior positions of the parastatals with Afrikaner nationalists and members of the Broederbond which was implemented in the 1960s.

The emphasis on continuity amongst very senior personnel until the late 1950s was not mirrored in all other government departments. Most notably the Department of Defence and the Department of Railways witnessed politically-inspired change immediately after the NP came to power. In the South African Defence Force, only forty-three days after the NP's victory, the Defence Minister Erasmus moved General Poole, the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, to the head of the South African Military Mission in Berlin to stop his succession as the Chief of the General Staff.<sup>15</sup> In the Department of Railways the Nationalists forced the General Manager of the Railways, W. Marshall Clark, into early retirement although he still had at least thirteen years to serve in 1948. His deputy, W. H. Heckroodt, an early member of the Broederbond, was appointed as his successor. Marshall Clark meanwhile became a director and manager of Anglo American, a director of De Beers, of General Mining and Finance Corporation, and of Rand Mines.<sup>16</sup> Clearly the NP's victory in 1948 did not have a uniform impact on government departments. Similarly amongst the different parastatals the process of Afrikaner takeover varied.

## **The Parastatals**

### *Sasol, Foskor and the South African Railways*

These institutions do not seem to have posed the Nationalists with much problem in establishing their dominance and control. Unlike Escom, Iscor and the IDC they were not the subject of the Diederichs investigation. The reason why the Afrikaner colonization after 1948 was unproblematic and relatively quick was, in the case of Sasol and Foskor, their circumstances of formation, and, in the case of SAR, its institutional position. While the origins of Sasol and Foskor lay in the pre-1948 period neither Corporation had been formed as a public enterprise by 1948. The NP was therefore able to take over the idea and ensure it was implemented in a way which gave them the control they sought. Indeed when Sasol reported large losses, in the mid-1950s, it became a matter of Nationalist prestige that the Corporation was turned into a profit making concern. By contrast it was because the SAR, since 1916, had been run as a government department with very little autonomy from politicians that colonization was carried through quickly.

Sasol's origins extend back to the 1930s when there was a private attempt to launch a company to produce oil from coal. The Anglo Transvaal Investment Company, which had acquired the South African rights to the German Fischer Tropsch gasification process, established a company in 1936. The project failed and after the war the company approached the government for assistance in raising capital, which the Smuts government gave in 1947.<sup>18</sup> However by 1950 the necessary capital still had not been raised. The NP government was keen to establish the industry but was nervous of being seen to be assisting a mining company and instead decided that a "national undertaking" should be created. The government therefore decided that rather than the IDC make a loan to Anglovaal it should buy the company's South African rights and create a corporation itself, which it did in 1951. The committee appointed in June 1950 to work out the details was strongly Afrikaner nationalist, consisting of F. J. du Toit, H. Van Eck, Dr M. S. Louw, and P. E. Rousseau, though it did also contain two Anglovaal representatives, S. G. Menell, and A. F. Faickney. Rousseau later became Sasol's Managing Director, du Toit the Chairman and Van Eck, Louw and Faickney directors when Sasol was formed in 1951.<sup>19</sup>

Foskor was set up in 1951 with the IDC again providing the necessary capital. Foskor was developed to replace the imports of raw materials of phosphates needed to manufacture fertilizers. Phosphate deposits had been discovered at Phalaborwa by Anglo American which was interested in the property. However the NP government, as in the case of Sasol, decided that the corporation should be a "national undertaking" and therefore, like Sasol, a corporation was created through the IDC, and F. J. du Toit was made the Chairman.<sup>20</sup>

While the SAR was a parastatal in the sense that it was a fully government-owned institution operating in the economy, it had been run since 1916 as a government department. This institutional difference had two important consequences. Firstly, political intervention by the minister in managerial appointments and labour relations was simpler since the changes were being made in departmental staff rather than the personnel of a public corporation. Furthermore by 1948 this was a long-established practise. Secondly, the degree of parliamentary accountability and influence was much larger which meant that the pressure on the early NP governments to ensure that Afrikaners took control, and that Afrikaner grievances were dealt with swiftly, was much greater.

Almost immediately after the NP came to power, while Marshall Clark was still the General Manager, the government appointed a commission of enquiry into SAR operations between September 1939 and June 1948. Its remit was to investigate the grievances of white employees with respect to their appointments, promotion, transfers and gradings where these had arisen because of discrimination on the grounds of political considerations or in connection with national war policy. Internal committees were also set up to look at the behaviour of the Railway Police Force during the same period, and the extent of bilingualism in the railway service.<sup>22</sup>

In 1946 approximately 75 per cent of the total white workforce employed on the Railways was Afrikaans-speaking while 75 per cent of the heads of department were English-speaking. During the first half of the 1950s the senior officers of the railway service underwent considerable change. By 1952 of the General Manager and Principal Officers



who constituted the most senior officers in the service, only two men remained who had held a position of this rank before the NP came to power. These were D. H. C. du Plessis, who in 1955 was General Manager and had been the Chief Harbour Shipping and Development Manager, and D. M. Robbertze, Deputy General Manager in 1955, who had previously been Chief Commercial and Industrial Manager. These changes also involved a complete Afrikanerization of the positions. In 1949 four of the nine positions including the General Manager were held by English-speakers but by 1955 there were none. In the case of the General Managers department which consisted of 18 posts, approximately half were staffed by English-speakers in 1949 but by 1955 they were all staffed by Afrikaans-speakers of whom only four had been in similar posts in 1949.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Industrial Development Corporation.**

The Industrial Development Corporation had been formed by the Smuts government in 1940 with van der Bijl as Chairman and Van Eck as the Managing Director.<sup>25</sup> It was launched as part of van der Bijl's strategy for the state to assist private industrialists to take advantage of the industrializing opportunities created by the war.<sup>26</sup> From the beginning the Corporation was dominated by Van Eck,<sup>27</sup> and in 1944 he became the Chairman, remaining in that position until his death in 1970.<sup>28</sup>

The IDC's initial role was to assist the Union's industrial development by advising and financing prospective and existing private companies.<sup>29</sup> In 1942, after a number of investigations, the enacting legislation was changed to allow the IDC to set up companies.<sup>30</sup> The IDC's activities hereafter need to be divided into two kinds: firstly its activities under section 3(a) of the Act in which the Corporation set up and financed a concern, and secondly those under section 3(b) where the Corporation merely loaned money and helped existing private companies.<sup>31</sup> The power under the 1942 amendment was later used by the Nationalists to create Sasol and Foskor.<sup>32</sup>

The IDC was clearly the ideal institution for the NP to capture, concerned as it was to increase Afrikaner control of the economy and advance the interests of Afrikaner businessmen. Therefore it was not surprising that soon after the arrival of the Nationalists in government the NP began to change the complexion of the IDC's Board. In 1948 the IDC's board with the exception of Van Eck contained no Afrikaners. The Board consisted of Van Eck, A. B. McDonald (a businessman in the shipping industry), E. Langely Jackson (a former senior manager with Barclays Bank), J. D. F. Briggs (the former Labour Party politician), C. E. James (the chairman of a Durban commercial house), and G. H. Starck.<sup>33</sup> In 1949 the new Minister of Commerce and Industries, E. H. Louw, immediately made some changes to the Board introducing Dr M. S. Louw, a senior Afrikaner businessman in Sanlam and member of the AHI, J. M. van Tonder, a Cape businessman, and A. J. Bosman, a former civil servant in the Department of Commerce and Industries.<sup>34</sup> These appointments had the effect of boosting the Afrikaner complexion of the Board significantly. Subsequently in 1954 and 1956 other Afrikaners were appointed to the Board.<sup>35</sup> These changes were faster and larger than anything at Iscor or Escom.

However, while the Afrikanerization of the IDC's Board was far reaching this failed to alter dramatically the operation of the Corporation and turn it into an organization which favoured the development of "Afrikaner" as opposed to "English" business.<sup>36</sup> This was largely the result of the continuity of the IDC's senior managers, who were still overwhelmingly English-speaking by the end of the 1950s. The internal language of the Corporation, as the Diederichs investigation discovered to its horror, was still English. Only the Corporation's correspondence with the Department was in Afrikaans. Only two out of the six senior management positions were occupied by Afrikaans-speakers: that of the General Manager, by G. S. J. Kuschke, and an assistant manager, by S. F. Malan.<sup>37</sup> Below the senior management level, predictably, the position of the Afrikaner was better but far from dominant: of the total 76 personnel only 50 per cent were Afrikaans-speakers.<sup>38</sup>

Dr Wassenaar has claimed that after 1948 the Malan government used the IDC "to strengthen [the] Afrikaners' participation in South Africa's industrial progress".<sup>39</sup> However the evidence for this is not very strong. Instead it appears that by 1958 in their ten years of being in power the NP government had done little to foster private-sector Afrikaner businessmen through the IDC. The Corporation had employed an Afrikaner accounting

firm, Hoek, Wiehahn and Cross, in addition to its existing auditor Deloitte, Plender, Griffiths, Auman & Co, but was still banking with Barclays.<sup>40</sup> More importantly, if the Corporation's activities under section 3(b) (under which it made loans to private companies) are examined there is little to suggest that the IDC was fostering Afrikaner concerns during the 1950s. By end of the 1958 financial year the IDC had an accumulated total investment under section 3(b) of £10,166,626, which represented an increase of 195 per cent on the 1948 level, but only approximately £250,000 was invested in Afrikaner enterprises.<sup>41</sup> This represented approximately 2.5 per cent of the total. In addition not all of the investments in Afrikaner enterprises were made after 1948.<sup>42</sup>

Table 1 shows that in terms of the number of applications accepted by the IDC in the ten financial years after the Nationalists came to power only 11 per cent were from Afrikaner undertakings. This low percentage extended to the total applications to the IDC, where only 12 per cent of the total applications came from Afrikaner concerns. This data seems to reinforce Lazar's conclusion that during this period there was no dramatic growth in the number of urban Afrikaners who became entrepreneurs and industrialists; rather it was the existing large Afrikaner businesses such as Sanlam, Rembrandt, and Volkskas which developed.<sup>43</sup>

This picture of the failure by the IDC to foster Afrikaner businesses during the 1950s requires one important qualification. During this period the bulk of the Corporation's activities took place under section 3(a) under which the IDC set up and controlled entire enterprises rather than simply making loans or owning some share capital. The Corporation's accumulated investment at the end of 1958 was approximately £60 million, of which, as pointed out above, £10m was s.3(b) type investment, leaving £50 million as type s.3(a) investment.<sup>44</sup> The Corporation's investments in two parastatals Sasol and Foskor amounted to approximately 90 per cent of this total, or £45 million.<sup>45</sup> Given that these parastatals were dominated by Afrikaners it could be argued that the IDC did at least help to foster Afrikaner state capital. While this is an important qualification, however, it was not regarded as significant by the Diederichs investigation which concluded in 1959 that the IDC was an "English organization" which needed "purifying".<sup>46</sup> The investigation led Diederichs to appoint Dr A. J. Visser<sup>47</sup> and Dr F. J. de Villiers<sup>48</sup> as directors. Changes were made to the IDC so that during the 1960s the IDC favoured Afrikaner applications and worked closely with large private Afrikaner companies,<sup>49</sup> though it should be remembered that the IDC never gave up doing business with English or foreign companies.<sup>50</sup>

### **The Electricity Supply Commission**

Escom took complete control over the electricity industry in 1948, prior to the Nationalists' victory, when Escom nationalized the Victoria Falls Power Company.<sup>51</sup> Escom therefore represented an important parastatal for the NP to colonize in order to advance their economic power. However while some advances were made during the 1950s, by 1959 Afrikaner nationalists and in particular the Broederbond did not regard themselves as in control of Escom. Indeed, as Christie has shown, while in the early 1950s independent Afrikaner coal-owners prospered partly through state encouragement, it is important to recognize that Escom played a minor role in this. It was the SAR's truck allocation policy and the granting of export licenses by the officials in the Department of Commerce and Industry which were most significant.<sup>52</sup>

The Diederichs investigation into Escom discovered that it was only after 1953 that Afrikaans had begun to replace English as the internal language of Escom. By 1959 at Escom House in Johannesburg, the Commission's Head Office, there was a rough equality between English- and Afrikaans-speakers, which was similar to the overall situation at Iscor's Head Office. However amongst the most senior positions at Escom English-speakers continued to dominate. Dr van der Bijl had been succeeded by J. R. Fulton as Chairman of Escom who in turn had been replaced by A. M. Jacobsin in 1955. Neither men were Afrikaner nationalists, rather both were long standing colleagues of van der Bijl who had been involved in Escom from its early years. By 1959 an Afrikaner, Dr J. T. Hattingh, had become chairman but he was described by the investigation as being very "English-orientated".<sup>55</sup> Out of the other four members of the commission two were English-speakers,<sup>56</sup> and two were Afrikaans-speakers but only one was described as a Nationalist.<sup>57</sup>

The position of Afrikaner nationalists in Escom's management was even weaker than on the Commission's board. The top management committee contained only one clear Nationalist, S. van Niekerk,<sup>58</sup> the other five members were English-speakers, though two were considered to be slightly Nationalist in attitude.<sup>59</sup> Amongst the senior staff in the Administrative Department only two out of the twelve positions were considered to be staffed by Nationalists.<sup>60</sup> In the Department of Finance the ratio was one out of three,<sup>61</sup> and in the Engineering Departments, both electrical and mechanical, three out of ten positions were staffed by Nationalists.<sup>62</sup> Finally both the company secretary and the chief legal adviser were English-speaking non-nationalists.<sup>63</sup> Overall only nine out of the thirty-three most senior management posts were staffed by Afrikaner nationalists, in other words less than 30 per cent of the senior management of Escom in 1959 were regarded by the government as their supporters. This position was radically changed in the 1960s. The new era was initiated by Diederichs's appointment of Dr R. L. Straszacher as Chairman of Escom in 1962.

### **The South African Iron and Steel Corporation.**

Just as the electricity industry was dominated by Escom, Iscor-dominated the steel industry. In addition, Iscor was a large employer of white, almost entirely Afrikaner, labour.<sup>64</sup> It was therefore an important target for Afrikaner colonization, and the NP's arrival in government signalled the beginning of a process of change in the composition of Iscor's Board. However, during the 1950s, the process was neither a swift nor a straightforward nationalist political colonization. Furthermore the pattern established prior to 1948 of using directorships as rewards for service to the government continued. This helped to ensure that Iscor was effectively run by its management, and here, as in the case of the IDC and Escom, colonization was even more tardy.

During the period between 1949 and 1955 the members of the Iscor Board were changed completely by the NP government. However the appointees were not all Afrikaner nationalists and with one possible exception do not seem to have been members of the Broederbond.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore Louw had explicitly chosen to appoint some English-speaking members. Most importantly in 1950 he had appointed I. G. Fleming to the Board. Fleming was a successful English businessman.<sup>66</sup> The NP government was clearly concerned to try to appease the English business community and Fleming's appointment was part of this attempt. The Board was not changed again prior to the Diederichs investigation.

Before 1948 Iscor's senior management had been overwhelmingly dominated by English-speakers. While Afrikaners made some advance during the 1950s by the end of the decade they were still not in a dominant position. In 1954 and again in 1956 back-bench Nationalist MPs objected to the lack of progress made by Afrikaners.<sup>68</sup> In 1954 Dr Carel de Wet complained that, "... the Afrikaner still does not take up his rightful place in Iscor, and fair opportunities in every sphere are not at present offered to him".<sup>69</sup> However, neither Louw nor his successor van Rhijn were prepared to intervene directly to change Iscor's management profile.

This is not to suggest that the NP victory in 1948 had no impact on Iscor's senior management but rather that it did not precipitate a quick politically-inspired transformation. Nationalist politics did make their presence felt regarding the job of General Manager. In 1950 Iscor's General Manager, A. M. Hagart, resigned because he felt he could not work within the context of a NP government.<sup>70</sup> He joined his brother R. B. Hagart in the Anglo American Group becoming the Managing Director of African Explosives and Chemical Industries.<sup>71</sup> This left a gap at the top of Iscor's management structure which was not formally filled until 1955 when an internal Afrikaner nationalist candidate with senior management experience, Dr Kruger, was appointed. His appointment was later celebrated by the Diederichs investigation as the one positive change in Iscor's senior management during the 1950s.<sup>72</sup>

At the end of the 1950s the lack of progress made by the Afrikaner at the Corporation since 1948 was condemned by the investigation. Although Afrikaans-speakers had achieved approximate parity with English-speakers amongst the Corporation's 92 most senior positions this was not regarded as sufficient. What Afrikaner nationalists found particularly disturbing and unjust was the disparity between the English dominance of



senior management and the Afrikaner dominance of the labour force.<sup>73</sup> They were, of course, only interested in the white labour force which in fact only accounted for approximately half of the total.<sup>74</sup> For the Afrikaner nationalists the history of Iscor was "tragically ironic". As they saw it Iscor had been originally formed by the National Party but had been taken over by Dr H. J. van der Bijl, and "English orientated" directors and managers from Escom. During the growth of the Corporation from 1934 to 1948, the Afrikaner had been doomed to a menial role so that even at Iscor they remained "drawers of water and hewers of wood". After 1948 Afrikaners had naturally anticipated that things would change but the investigation concluded that in just over ten years they had gained little.<sup>75</sup> Afrikaans had not yet ousted English as the language of internal correspondence within Iscor, though the Minutes of the Board had become bilingual in 1953. The investigation expressed its greatest concern in relation to Iscor's management. The Administrative Department in particular was castigated because it was still non-nationalist in orientation. The investigation concluded that despite Dr Kruger's appointment the position of the Afrikaner at Iscor was "... dangling by a thread ...", and if Dr Kruger were removed there would be no hope for Afrikaners.<sup>76</sup>

Following the investigation Diederichs took some action. Iscor was required to submit detailed personnel charts which it did, ironically, in English. These showed that in 1960 Afrikaners were far from dominant and still tended to be employed in lower-paid occupations compared to English-speaking whites. Table 2 gives a breakdown of the most senior positions. Of the top 94 posts in the Corporation, with salaries over £2,200, Afrikaners occupied only 49 per cent. This was better than the position within the total white population, but not dramatically so. The overall profile of Afrikaans-speaking employment at Iscor, shown in Table 3, was heavily skewed towards the lower occupations. Furthermore, only one of the five most senior positions<sup>78</sup> at the apex of Iscor's management was occupied by an Afrikaans-speaker who was regarded as a Nationalist.<sup>79</sup> It was partly for this reason that Professor P. W. Hoek was appointed as commercial manager in 1961.<sup>80</sup> Diederichs also acted, in 1960 and 1961, to ensure Afrikaner nationalist control of Iscor's Board. He appointed Dr Kruger, J. van der Merwe and P. E. Rousseau, Professor H. J. Samuels and J. J. Vermooten as directors.<sup>81</sup> Therefore it was not until the 1960s, as at Escom and the IDC, that Afrikaner nationalists came to dominate Iscor's senior positions.

## Conclusion

The paper has investigated the dynamics of the Afrikaner takeover during the 1950s. Through a disaggregation of the state it has shown that there was a variety of experience. In the cases of Sasol and Foskor nationalist control was ensured from the outset, and at the SAR the process of capture was implemented relatively quickly and effectively. However the paper has shown that this experience was not universal. During the 1950s not only did Afrikaners face a struggle in establishing themselves in the private sector manufacturing and mining industries but also within parts of the public sector.

The paper has argued that the economically powerful institutions, Iscor, Escom and the IDC, were only slowly and incompletely captured by the NP government during the 1950s. This is not to argue that nationalist politics had no impact on the parastatals during the 1950s but rather that there was not a simple seizure of these organizations by the NP to further the aims of Afrikaner nationalism. It was their failure to secure complete domination and dramatically advance the interests of Afrikaners which the Diederichs investigation found disturbing. The investigation and the subsequent efforts by Diederichs to improve the position need to be understood in terms of the wider problems which faced the government in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Verwoerd and close colleagues, including Diederichs, faced internal political problems within the National Party and at a wider political level the government faced its biggest challenge to date from black political resistance. To aggravate the situation, economic growth and private investment were falling and the outflow of foreign capital after Sharpeville added to the sense of economic crisis. In this context securing dominance of these economically powerful institutions by trusted Afrikaner nationalists was given an enhanced relevance. Consequently Diederichs appointed members of the Broederbond to the Boards of Directors and, in the case of Iscor, to its senior management. These helped to create the circumstances in which full Afrikanerization of the institutions personnel could take place during the 1960s.

Finally it is interesting to consider what parallels this discussion of the transition of the South African state in the 1950s has with the 1990s. Despite all the differences between the situation of the NP in 1948 and the likely situation of a new black government if one comes to power, similarities exist in terms of the wish to reward colleagues and supporters combined with the sense of economic impotence and the desire to secure their rightful share. In a context where large scale nationalization looks increasingly unlikely, a black government might well pursue a strategy of colonizing the remaining parastatals such as Escom, the IDC and Transnet. However if the experience of the Afrikaner nationalists in the 1950s is anything to go by this could be a slow process.

**Table 1**

Industrial Development Corporation  
Investment Proposals under s.3(b) 1949 - 1958.  
By Language

Year Received	Received				Authorized			
	Afrikaner	English	Other	Total	Afrikaner	English	Other	Total
1949	6	56	11	73	2	15	3	20
1950	7	19	5	31	1	2	1	4
1951	3	13	6	22	1	4	4	9
1952	1	16	6	23	0	3	1	4
1953	3	20	3	26	0	4	0	4
1954	1	15	5	21	0	3	2	5
1955	2	29	4	35	2	10	2	14
1956	6	26	3	35	1	7	2	10
1957	5	37	6	48	5	20	6	31
1958	9	37	5	51	2	22	1	25
Period								
Total	43	268	54	365	14	90	22	126
%	12	73	15	100	11	72	17	100

Source: Extracted from statistics in MES H4/12 volume 2, SASAP. The classification of the proposal was determined by the language of the applicants.

**Table 2**

Senior Positions at Iscor, 1960.  
Employees in all Divisions by Language.

Language	Top 94 Posts with Salaries over £2,200		All Posts with Salaries over £1,200	
	No.	%	No.	%
Afrikaans	49	52	504	54
English	42	45	384	41
Other	3	3	47	5
Total	94	100	935	100

Sources: Calculated from personnel charts in MES H4/12/4 vol.1, SASAP. The top 94 positions represented the managerial elite of Iscor which by 1960 employed 24,300 people.



**Table 3**

Afrikaans-speakers at Iscor, 1960.  
Number of Employees by Salary Level.

Level	No.	%
Over £2,200	49	1
£1,200-£2,200	455	5
Under £1,200	1,931	22
Daily Paid	6,501	72
Total	8,936	100

Sources: Op. cit. Table 3.1. The under £1,200 column only includes white-collar workers.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Beit Trust, the George Webb Medley Trust and Lincoln College for their financial assistance. I also thank Stanley Trapido and Gavin Williams for commenting on earlier drafts.

### NOTES

- 1 In this paper the terms "Afrikaner", "Afrikaans-speaking", and "English-speaking" are used to distinguish between those members of the white South African population who were descendants mainly from Dutch settlers and those who were descendants mainly from British settlers. Since during the period under consideration not all Afrikaans-speakers supported the NP those that did have been distinguished by use of the term "nationalist".
- 2 In 1948-9 the Afrikaner's share of the private sector of the South African economy was 25 per cent and when agriculture was excluded this fell to 10 per cent. See H. Giliomee, "The Afrikaner Economic Advance", Table 3 (based on a table prepared by J. L. Sadie) in H. Adam and H. Giliomee, *Ethnic Power Mobilised: Can South Africa Change?* (New Haven, 1979).
- 3 See R. Christie, *Electricity, Industry and Class in South Africa* (London, 1984), and N. Clark, "From Dependence to Defiance: South African State Corporations, 1920 - 1960", Ph.D. Thesis, Yale University, 1988.
- 4 See J. Lazar, "Conformity and Conflict: Afrikaner Nationalist Politics in South Africa, 1948-1961", D.Phil Thesis, Oxford University, 1987, and D. Posel, *The Making of Apartheid, 1948-1961* (Oxford, 1991).
- 5 See for example B. Bunting, *The Rise of the South African Reich* (London, 1964), p 121, and for a recent statement of the view S. Terreblanche and N. Nattrass, "A periodisation of the political economy from 1910", p 12, in N. Nattrass and E. Ardington, *The political economy of South Africa* (Cape Town, 1990).
- 6 During 1958-9 a number of reports were carried out into Iscor, Escom, and the IDC. Whether these investigations were the result of work by the Department of Economic Affairs or another organization is not entirely clear. The commissioning of these reports and their conclusions will be hereafter referred to as the "Diederichs investigation" after the Minister who was in charge of the Department of Economic Affairs at the time.
- 7 See Lazar, "Conformity and Conflict" and Posel, *Making of Apartheid*.
- 8 This department was renamed the Department of Economic Affairs in 1953.
- 9 Union of South Africa, *Official Year Book, 1946-1949*.
- 10 HEN 509/2 volume 5, South African State Archives, Pretoria (Hereafter SASAP). Louw to du Toit, 15 March 1949. The appointment is discussed later.
- 11 Louw was convinced that in the past Iscor under its Chairman van der Bijl had operated with too much autonomy from the Department.
- 12 D035/8710, Public Record Office. UK's High Commissioner report to Commonwealth Relations Office, 24 Sept. 1958.
- 13 *Ibid.*

- 14 Dr N. Diederichs had been Chairman of the Broederbond from 1938 to 1942. See I.  
 15 Wilkins and H. Strydom, *The Broederbond* (London, 1979), pp 47-8.  
 16 *Ibid.*, pp 119-121.  
 17 *Ibid.*, pp 122-125.  
 18 See Dr A. J. van Rhijn's Memoirs, pp 130-131, The Institute of Contemporary  
 19 History, Bloemfontein. This took the form of a conversion of the government's loans  
 20 to Sasol into equity with no immediate requirement to pay a dividend.  
 21 Liquid Fuel and Oil Act 1947.  
 22 See J. Meintjes, *Sasolburg 1950-1975* (Cape Town, 1975), especially ch. 3; A. J.  
 23 Norval, *A Quarter of A Century of Industrial Progress in South Africa*  
 24 (Johannesburg, 1962), pp 33-4, p 101; and Clark, "From Dependence to Defiance", pp  
 25 338-343.  
 26 See Norval, *Industrial Progress*, pp 36-39; and Clark, "From Dependence to  
 27 Defiance", pp 343-4.  
 28 M. De Kock, *Government Ownership in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1922), pp 12 -  
 29 17.  
 30 South African Railways and Harbours, *General Managers Report for the year ending*  
 31 *31 March 1949*, p 97.  
 32 1946 *Census statistics*, quoted in S. Trapido, "Political institutions and Afrikaner  
 33 social structures", *The American Political Science Review*, 1963, pp 78-9.  
 34 South African, *Who's Who* (Johannesburg, 1949), p 45, and *Who's Who*, 1955, p 37.  
 35 HEN 506/1/5 volume 1, IDC Board Minutes. 1/1940, Industrial Development Act  
 36 1940.  
 37 Christie, *Electricity, Industry and Class*, p 123.  
 38 Van Eck created the Corporation, appointed its staff and worked out its role in  
 39 conjunction with the management consultants Price Waterhouse, Peat & Co. See  
 40 HEN 506/1/5 volume 1, IDC Board Minutes, 4/1940.  
 41 *Dictionary of South African Biography* (Pretoria), vol. 4, p 696.  
 42 See House of Assembly *Debates*, (Hereafter HAD) 1940, 3937-3942 Industrial  
 43 Development Act 1940.  
 44 This power was initially conferred under the War Measure Act of 1940 s1. See HEN  
 45 506/1/5 volume 1, IDC Board Minutes, 24 Feb. 1942. Later the IDC Act was  
 46 amended along these lines. See Industrial Development Amendment Act 1942.  
 47 Industrial Development Amendment Act 1942.  
 48 See above.  
 49 E. Rosenthal, *Industrial Development Corporation* (Johannesburg, 1960), p 10.  
 50 These replaced McDonald, James and Briggs. See Rosenthal, *Industrial*  
 51 *Development Corporation*, p 10, 14; and D. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*  
 52 (Johannesburg, 1983), p 100, pp 107-12 for Dr M. S. Louw's background.  
 53 C. L. F. Borckenhagen (a former civil servant who had been the first Director of  
 54 Imports and Exports), E. O'C Maggs (a director of the South African Reserve Bank),  
 55 and K. Schoeman (a successful Transvaal farmer). Rosenthal, *Industrial*  
 56 *Development Corporation*, p 14.  
 57 MES H4/12 volume 2, SASAP, Report on The Industrial Development Corporation,  
 58 1959.  
 59 The rest of the management consisted of W. Miller, G. Macmillan, S. E. Fleming, and  
 60 B. C. Brayshaw.  
 61 Report on IDC, 1959.  
 62 A. Wassenaar, *Assault on Private Enterprise* (Cape Town, 1977), p 123.  
 63 Report on IDC, 1959.  
 64 Calculated from figures given in *Ibid.* Investments included both loans made to  
 65 companies and shares held in companies.  
 66 See for example, the Afrikaner company Agricultural Laboratoria Limited established  
 67 in 1945 by the IDC together with Bonuscor, Federale Volksbelegging. See Norval,  
 68 *Industrial Progress*, p 36. Bonuscor (Bonus Investment Corporation of SA) was  
 69 connected with Sanlam.  
 70 See Lazar, "Conflict and Consensus", pp 109-119. However it is possible that  
 71 Afrikaner manufacturing entrepreneurs just did not consider the IDC as a source of  
 72 help and finance.  
 73 Report on IDC, 1959.  
 74 *Ibid.*  
 75 *Ibid.* "Die Afrikaner met beginsels wat nie voor Mammon wil buig nie, voer 'n  
 76 opdraande en tewens hopelose stryd in die onderneming."

- 47 A leading member of the Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut.
- 48 An industrial adviser to the Department of Commerce and Industry.
- 49 Interview with a senior official in the Department of Commerce and Industries during the 1960s and later with the IDC, Johannesburg, 1991.
- 50 See D. E. Kaplan, "Class Conflict, capital accumulation and the state: an historical analysis of the state in twentieth century South Africa", D.Phil, University of Sussex, 1977, pp 400-406.
- 51 For a discussion of this see Christie, *Electricity, Industry and Class*, ch. 7, and Clark, "From Dependence to Defiance", pp 264-267.
- 52 Christie, *Electricity, Industry and Class*, p 153.
- 53 MES H4/12 volume 2, Escom, List of Senior Personnel, 1959.
- 54 Electricity Supply Commission, *Annual Reports*, 1948-55.
- 55 Escom, List of Senior Personnel, 1959. Hattingh was an engineering graduate of Rhodes University who had joined Escom in 1923. See *Who's Who*, 1960.
- 56 J. P. Stratten and I. G. Fleming. See Escom, List of Senior Personnel, 1959.
- 57 W. H. Andrag was a Nationalist, and Dr R. L. Straszacher's political attitude was, at that time, described as unknown.
- 58 Head of the Finance Department.
- 59 These two were G. R. D. Harding and R. H. Gregory. The other members were I. de Villiers, Dr D. B. Reay, and E. T. Price. See Escom, List of Senior Personnel, 1959.
- 60 These were H. de Villiers and J. H. v.d. Walt.
- 61 J. A. Bothma was considered to be a Nationalist.
- 62 C. H. Wessels, F. Stegman, and F. C. Klopper.
- 63 Escom, List of Senior Personnel, 1959.
- 64 In June 1948 it employed almost 5,000 white workers.
- 65 In June 1955 the Board consisted of Dr Meyer, R. Dyason, I. Fleming, K. Rood, R. Elliot, F. J. du Toit, G. J. van Zyl. Only van Zyl appears to have been a member of the Broederbond at this stage.
- 66 He had been President of the Federated Chamber of Industries (FCI) from 1947 to 1950 and was a director of many companies. See *Who's Who*, 1953.
- 67 This point was made by Louw in his speech to the FCI in 1950. See FCI, *Annual Report*, 1950.
- 68 See Dr Carel De Wet (MP for Vereeniging) in HAD, 1954, 5533, and Mr van der Walt (MP for Pretoria West) in HAD, 1956, 6170.
- 69 HAD, 1954, col.5533.
- 70 Interview with a Iscor Manager from the early 1950s, Pretoria, 1991.
- 71 See *Who's Who*, 1953. R. B. Hagart was Anglo's deputy chairman during the 1950s.
- 72 MES H4/12/1 volume 2, Report on Iskor, 1959.
- 73 This is a good example of the populist dimension which has always been present in Afrikaner nationalism.
- 74 This populist sentiment has parallels with the 1990s. Demands have started to be made for the boards and management of companies to reflect the "colour" of their labour forces in post apartheid South Africa. For example in November 1990 Nafcoc declared that Africans should account for 30 per cent of board members and 60 per cent of top management and personnel in all quoted companies within ten years. See *Financial Mail*, Johannesburg, 30 Nov. 1990.
- 75 Report on Iskor, 1959.
- 76 MES H4/12/1 volume 2, The Afrikaner at Iskor, 1959.
- 77 In 1960 of the total white population approximately 80,000 people had an income which was greater than £2,200 per annum, of which Afrikaans-speakers accounted for 36 per cent. Calculated from Personal Income Statistics in Bureau of Statistics, *Population Census 1960*, vol. 5: Personal Income.
- 78 Iscor's senior management consisted of E. D. B. Rush, Dr C. P. Warden, E. Klein, J. E. K. Tucker, and Dr C. M. Kruger.
- 79 Whether this meant that their political affiliation was anti-NP is debatable but for Diederichs and his colleagues that was not the point.
- 80 Hoek was a Pretoria accountant who was a senior member of the Broederbond. He later played a crucial role in defining Iscor's strategy response to Anglo American's formation of the Highveld Steel and Vanadium Corporation in the mid to late 1960s.
- 81 All were Afrikaner businessmen and members of the Broederbond.



**SCHOOL, STREET AND IDENTITY**  
**Soweto Youth Culture 1960-1976**

*Clive Glaser*

The 1976 Soweto youth uprising has received a great deal of attention historically yet, somewhat surprisingly, very little has been written on Soweto youth culture in the 1960s and 70s. Historians have tended to ignore the complexity of the youth culture itself and, instead, to concentrate on the immediate political antecedents to the 1976 uprising.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the 1960s have all but been discarded historically because of the apparent political acquiescence of the decade. The 1960s receive attention only where early origins of the uprising can be detected. This emphasis on an explosion of cathartic violence and resistance has obscured important, though perhaps less spectacular, historical processes such as the development of day-to-day coping strategies and the formation of youth identity. The chroniclers of the uprising have shown some token sensitivity to division within the Soweto youth constituency but they have underplayed, and certainly failed to explore, this diversity. Hirson, for instance, observes that only about a third of Soweto's population under the age of 20 was registered at school at the time and that "there was no reason to suppose that those rejected by the school system had any particular regard for those receiving an education".<sup>2</sup> Brooks and Brickhill note that "the lumpen sub-stratum of the tsotsi... played an ambivalent role in the uprising, at times exploiting situations to loot, rob and extort, at other times joining in with the students in the battle against their common foe, the police."<sup>3</sup> Yet neither study pursues the theme of youth diversity any further.<sup>4</sup> I approach Soweto youth culture from two uncharted directions. First, I begin my study in the politically quiet 1960s and, second, I concentrate on the every-day experience of youth.<sup>5</sup> Political activism, although growing in prominence from around the end of the 1960s, is seen as one option in an array of possible social strategies.

The emergence of mass schooling under Bantu Education had a profound impact on youth culture in the 1960s. During the 1940s and most of the 1950s schoolgoing children were a small constituency in Soweto and the Western Areas. As I have argued in my M.A. thesis, "Anti-Social Bandits", the gang and streetcorner subculture predominated amongst male teenagers and young adults. During the 1960s school became an increasingly common and significant feature of township experience. Until the early 1970s Bantu Education emphasized primary schooling in the urban areas at the expense of secondary education. High school students remained a small constituency but, by the mid 1960s, almost all Sowetan children had gone through at least some primary schooling. From around 1972 Soweto's secondary schooling, freed from its 1960s stasis expanded dramatically. Outside of the home, then, school became an increasingly important counterforce to street culture. In other work I will focus more directly on the school and street culture themselves. This paper examines school and street as opposite poles in an array of possible youth identities. I will argue that there was substantial overlap between school and street. Male youths, both school-going and non-school-going, shared many common experiences through neighbourhood networks and streetcorner gangs. Nevertheless, identities, although strikingly fluid, suddenly solidified around school, gang or neighbourhood at moments of threat and heightened competition.

### **The Spectrum**

From its inception, the Bantu Education Department placed enormous emphasis on the first four years of schooling. This was "seen as providing a basis for semi-skilled labour requiring minimal numeracy, literacy and work discipline".<sup>6</sup> Although standards dropped, the system accommodated far more lower primary students than had the old missionary system. By 1960 about 1.5 million Africans enrolled in school nationally; the figure had risen to almost 2 million by 1965; 2.74 million by 1970 and about 3.7 million by 1975. A small proportion of students remained at school beyond Standard Two and fewer still beyond Standard Six. Lower primary school (Sub A through to Standard Two) accounted for around 70 per cent of the total enrolment throughout the 1960s, dropping to 64 per cent by 1975. The proportion in higher primary (standard three to standard six) gradually crept up from 22.7 per cent in 1960 to 27.4 per cent in 1975. Those who made it through to

secondary school represented a tiny elite: 2.2 per cent in 1960; 4.48 per cent by 1970 and increasing substantially during the early 1970s to reach 8.61 per cent by 1975.<sup>7</sup>

Although the vast majority left school prematurely, the *Bantu Education Journal* could boast that in 1963 over 80 per cent of "educable" African children between the ages of 7 and 14 were accommodated in school.<sup>8</sup> The 1960 median age in standard six was 16.63 for boys and 15.89 for girls. Given also that numerous lower primary school places were occupied by children over 14, it is reasonable to argue that a substantial proportion (if only a large minority) of 15 and 16 year-olds were also attending school.<sup>9</sup> As for Soweto itself, the official school population in 1964 was 84,000; "more than 90,000" in 1969; 110,000 in 1973 and, according to Hiron, about 170,000 in 1976.<sup>10</sup> The sudden increase in the last figure has to do with the Vorster government's go-ahead in 1972 to the Johannesburg City Council, boosted by the TEACH fund, to build new schools, including several secondary schools, in Soweto.<sup>11</sup> A somewhat more *verligte* faction of the National Party came to the fore in 1972 which accepted the need for urban secondary school expansion.<sup>12</sup> During the 1960s the government virtually froze urban African secondary school construction. In line with its determination to develop the homelands, the establishment of new high schools was confined to the homelands, so that Soweto's secondary school population was only 8,000 in 1966.<sup>13</sup> By 1971 there were 8 high schools in the area.<sup>14</sup> Relative to the national figures for African education, Soweto had a fairly high proportion of high school students but this had to do with the legacy of the 1940s and 1950s rather than Bantu Education policy. While the ratio of primary enrolment gradually improved throughout the country during the 1960s it declined in Soweto. Lower primary education was, however, widely available to the point that it became rather exceptional for a child to receive no schooling at all.<sup>15</sup> The non-school youth were clustered heavily in the over-16 age group.

The emergence of mass schooling in Soweto did not precipitate a stark division between school and non-school youth. The average neighbourhood would include a spectrum of youths who fitted into one of the following categories: attending school, temporarily out of school, out of school but with several years of schooling, informally employed, formally or domestically employed, and hardcore school "drop outs" or "push-outs".<sup>16</sup> It was common in the 1960s and 1970s for youths to leave school for a year or two, often to seek short term employment, before returning to the classroom.<sup>17</sup> Urban African school-leavers encountered massive problems in finding employment. Despite the energetic efforts of the Johannesburg Juvenile Employment Section, local employers were slow to employ urban juveniles.<sup>18</sup> Generally, they felt that "age, physical appearance and inexperience combined with irresponsibility, high labour turnover and absenteeism, limits the juvenile employment potential".<sup>19</sup> In addition, formal employment was limited to those who had legal urban status. Seeking employment often exposed questionable urban status.<sup>20</sup> Youths who could not find formal jobs often made some money as vendors, shoe-shine boys or shop assistants.<sup>21</sup> Crime was another option, though serious crime was largely confined to the hardcore push-out element, those who left school very early with no intention or possibility of returning. Some chose to leave school, some had to leave because parents could not afford the fees and uniforms, while others were permanently screened out after having failed twice in a row.<sup>22</sup> Girls who were not at school very rarely found formal jobs but tended to be drawn far more thoroughly into domestic duties than boys. One of the most common reasons for girls leaving school was "taking a fall", in other words, early pregnancy. Once they became mothers they were not accepted back into school.<sup>23</sup> Apart from domestic work and motherhood, girls and young women were often employed informally in beer-brewing, waitressing and prostitution.

One experience shared by most school and non-school youth was corporal punishment. Beatings were the accepted method of disciplining children whether at school or in the household. One informant who lived in Rockville as a teenager in the 1960s recalls that "an elder had every right to punish you without question."<sup>24</sup> Corporal punishment was rife in Soweto schools during the 1960s and 70s. According to Khehla Shubane, who attended Molapo Secondary and then Morris Isaacson High during the 1970s, corporal punishment was universal: "it was part of everyday life ... Schooling meant you had to be *moered*."<sup>25</sup> Parents generally supported and encouraged the practice; school was seen as an extension of their generational authority. As Linda Duma, who started his schooling in Soweto in the late 1960s, puts it: "The authority of the school has to be seen in the context of the dominant culture outside the school ... in the sense of the school being viewed ... as a place where kids had to learn about respect ... That is why discipline was seen as an important

part of the school because even the parents gave the school that authority to reinforce respect."<sup>26</sup> When children reported back home about beatings, parents generally assumed the punishment to have been legitimate and sometimes even beat their children again to reinforce the message.<sup>27</sup> It has even been suggested by ex-students that corporal punishment contributed to the high truancy and drop-out rates.<sup>28</sup> Shubane loathed the routine beatings; he remained at school only because his parents forced him to. The neighbourhood street networks, which included students and non-students, represented on one level a flight from the regimes of adult authority both at home and at school. The street was a realm in which young males could make their own rules.

Despite the expansion of schooling, Soweto's streetcorner networks continued to proliferate throughout the 1960s and 70s. Young men who had grown up together congregated at corners to socialize and pass the time. The networks shaded from indistinctive play-groups to non- or petty-criminal gangs through to hardcore criminal gangs. "Every little corner of the township," recalls Murphy Morobe, "had its own gangsters."<sup>29</sup> At the core of these groups were non-school-going, unemployed males, aged roughly 14 to 20, who had an enormous amount of unsupervised free time on their hands. Neighbourhood networks, however, did not exclude students or formally employed youths. Although school itself was a world cut off from non-students, students did participate significantly in street life. Khotso Seathlolo, for instance, as a student in Naledi during the early 1970s, would "mill around with other neighbourhood kids, at streetcorners ... We were all boys from the same area ... I always spent most of my idling time with fellows who weren't going to school."<sup>30</sup> Denis Nkosi recalls that in Meadowlands over the weekends it was difficult to recognize the difference between school-going and non-school-going youth.<sup>31</sup> Even well-known identifiable gangs, some of which were involved in serious criminal activities, had a smattering of school-going members. Murphy Morobe, despite a strict Christian homelife, became "associated" with the Green Berets of Orlando East "because most of the youngsters were people I grew up with ... playing soccer together, chasing girls together ... It's like a family, an association of close friends." Morobe himself never carried a knife and avoided serious gang fights. He acquired the name "Professor" "because my close colleagues considered me too bookish". He spent too much time studying "when they had more exciting things to do outside school hours".<sup>32</sup> Two members of the Biafras, including the "boss", Hector, and at least one member of the notorious Damaras were apparently "regulars" at Madibane High School in Diepkloof during the early 1970s. Most of the Diepkloof gangs had members who went to school.<sup>33</sup> Johannes Radebe, while still attending school at the age of 18, became the leader of the Top Eleven gang of Central Western Jabavu in 1965. "I attended school as usual and after school I would take off my school clothes and wear my gang clothes to take up the leadership where I left off when I was at school."<sup>34</sup> Although most of the members later dropped out of school, The Dirty Dozen apparently emerged out of a group of friends at Pimville High School.<sup>35</sup> Even some members of the most feared gang in Soweto in the early 1970s, the Hazels of Mzimhlophe, attended school at least initially.<sup>36</sup>

The street networks or gangs would assemble around the nearest shops for companionship and entertainment. "That's where you'd have to go to touch base with people."<sup>37</sup> They would gamble, "chase girls" and smoke dagga. Soccer was a particularly important point of connection; if there were a nearby soccer field, that too would become a central gathering point.<sup>38</sup> These neighbourhood networks developed a strong sense of parochial identity. As Morobe comments: "One love of every youngster growing up in the township is to have your group of colleagues who[m] you meet at the shops or the streetcorner ... Over time it graduates into ... a bunch of youngsters who begin to look at themselves in terms of the territory in which they play around."<sup>39</sup>

Youths were also more or less forced into identifying with local neighbourhood gangs out of a need for protection. An individual youth needed group support to survive on the streets. In order to avoid bullying, harassment and extortion from territorial local gangs he had to join a gang himself. In the Green Berets, Morobe observes, "Invariably, when one gets threatened ... it becomes the responsibility of all to come to the protection of that one member."<sup>40</sup> Non-aligned individuals were always vulnerable. Johannes Radebe, for instance, joined the Top Eleven "because I could see I was not going to survive if I did not join them."<sup>41</sup> Gangs often emerged precisely to counter the force and terror of another powerful gang. Apart from provident companionship and entertainment, then, gangs functioned as local youth defence networks.<sup>42</sup>



The majority of streetcorner gangs were not involved in serious crime or violence. They were generally nameless and individual members were known only very locally. Petty crime such as pickpocketing was common, but streetcorner gangs would rarely steal from people in their immediate neighbourhood. Gangs often fought amongst themselves, as I will show later, when territorial codes were breached or when they competed over women and facilities. But the average gangs fought with their fists or stones. When knives were used victims were "scratched" with surface wounds rather than seriously injured.<sup>43</sup> The really serious youth crime and violence (mugging, abduction and gang rape, housebreaking, murder) was associated with distinct notorious gangs which were numerous, particularly in the early 1970s, but nevertheless relatively marginal.

These hardcore criminal youth gangs had large and stable memberships (usually between 20 and 50), clearly defined territory, distinctive names and style. They were famous beyond their own neighbourhood. Their targets for criminal activity were trains, buses, stations and the Johannesburg Central Business District. Members were often slightly older than those of neighbourhood gangs, sometimes even reaching into their mid-twenties. It is difficult to draw a clear line between the neighbourhood gangs and hardcore criminal gangs; the categories tend to blur and shade into one another through time and space depending on levels of criminality, size, fame and coherence of style and membership. The hardcore gangs should be seen as the end of a continuum rather than a separate category. Morobe's neighbourhood gang, the Green Berets, started out as an association of friends who supported and protected one another "and then it snowballed... into massive gang warfare". Similarly, large, feared gangs such as the Dirty Dozen of Moroka/Pimville and the Japanese of Jabulani started out as small, defensive networks which gradually became more violent and assertive.<sup>44</sup> Although I have emphasized the overlap between school and street, there was a fairly clear correlation between early school-leaving and violent, anti-social gangsterism. Most hardcore gangsters had dropped out of school by Standard Two or earlier.<sup>45</sup> Without school absorbing their time and providing a counterbalancing set of influences and aspirations, and with little chance of finding employment until at least their later teens, these dropouts were, in the words of Fanyana Mazibuko, "sitting ducks for the gangs".<sup>46</sup> Gang life provided school pushouts with a sense of companionship and belonging. Money, and consequently crime, became increasingly necessary for items such as cigarettes, dagga, liquor, stylish clothing, presents for girlfriends. The quest for these goods went beyond hedonism and consumerism; they were important for subcultural status and acceptance.<sup>48</sup> It had an aura of freedom, independence and excitement which encouraged boys to drop out of school, particularly those who had a taste for gang life after hours. Gangs seemed attractive to many who laboured under the school regime of discipline, drudgery and corporal punishment.

The hardcore gangs were intensely conscious of style and identity. There were certain city-slicker clothing styles to which all gangsters aspired during the 1960s and 70s. This *clever* style, which I discuss later, was not necessarily confined to gangsters. The *tsotsi* pants of the 1940s and 50s gradually gave way to gaberdines and Dobshires. Sportie caps and lumberjackets became popular by the late 1960s. Smart clothes were generally combined with sports shoes. Even if a gangster were very poor it was important for him to acquire certain basic style items. He also had to learn to walk in the "limping" *clever* style. Linda Duma recalls the style of two rival Diepkloof gangs in the 1970s, the Hyenas and the Biafras. "They dressed in specific ways ... they had takkies called PFs, that was very common amongst the so-called clevers, the streetwise ... and gaberdine trousers were common, others wore the Lee's jeans ... and floral shirts with big blocks, things like that ... sportie caps ... and they had a particular way of walking: limping, limping, limping ... that's how we recognised them." What distinguished the Hyenas from the Biafras was not so much dress codes as "the area of operation".<sup>49</sup> Although gangsters were generically identifiable, the more famous gangs liked to dress in a distinctive colour or make of clothing. The Hazels were known for their expensive clothing tastes. According to "Bra Foca", an ex-member of the gang, they frequented a particular shop in town called the American Showroom. They chose exclusive labels. Most distinctively, they wore Barracuda lumberjackets and sportie hats.<sup>50</sup> Hazels often wore army jackets which were unusual in that they were blue rather than khaki.<sup>51</sup> According to Mary Modise, a Mzimhlophe resident, Hazel molls, or girlfriends, were identified by their red berets.<sup>52</sup> Some gangs identified themselves in other ways. The Msomis of Orlando East, for instance, painted distinctive question mark tattoos on their foreheads<sup>53</sup>; the Apaches of White City Jabavu wore

Nazi-style helmets and rode bicycles<sup>54</sup>; the Eleven Boys wore an easily recognizable earring in one ear.<sup>55</sup>

Three broad young male subcultural styles could be identified in Soweto during the 1960s and 1970s: *clevers*, *ivies* and *hippies*. Gangsters were invariably *clevers* but non-gangsters often aspired to the same style. The term "clever" can be traced back into the 1930s, predating even "tsotsi", which emerged in the early 1940s. *Clevers* were streetwise city-slickers. They asserted an urbanness which defined insiders according to dress, language and stylecodes. The antithesis of clever was "moegoe" or "country-bumkin". The *tsotsi* style was initially a sub-*clever* style in the 1940s but eventually became almost synonymous with *clever* by the 1950s. The term *tsotsi* gradually developed a far clearer criminal connotation through time.<sup>56</sup> The gang style described above epitomized high *clever* style in the 1960s and 1970s. Non-criminal youths who aspired to "cleverness" would either have to acquire money through formal or informal employment or belong to wealthier families. *Hippies* and *Ivies* were clearly non-criminal and therefore tended to be employed or better-off youths. *Ivies* wore a different cut of clothes from the *clevers*. Whereas *clevers* wore their pants resting on their hips, the *Ivies* wore their pants above the belly-button. The *Ivy* style was clean-cut and dandyish, even prissy; it would emphasise, for instance, makes of aftershave and deodorant. *Clevers*, with their particular brand of urban machismo, generally regarded them as "good boys" and "sissies".<sup>57</sup> *Hippies* became increasingly popular in the late 1960s. They wore bellbottoms, sandals and peace signs and linked up to white *hippie* culture. The fringes of non-criminal gang culture often participated in *Ivy* and *hippie* style. *Clever*, *Ivy* and *hippie* were loose style categories which cut across school and non-school township youth.

Although many township girls participated indirectly in gangs as girlfriends, they were basically excluded from street culture. As in the 1940s and 1950s, the exploration and assertion of masculinity was central to gang culture.<sup>58</sup> Outside of school life female teenage culture was fragmented into the household. Parents tended to be more strict about the movement of girls and drew them more effectively into domestic duties.<sup>59</sup> Wilkie Kambule, the headmaster of Orlando High School during the 1960s and 1970s, suggests that boys became increasingly difficult to control as they matured physically around 15 or 16 years of age, particularly in the numerous female-headed households.<sup>60</sup> Girls generally completed more years of schooling than boys. Although their numbers thinned in Form Four and Five, the 1960 census figures for Johannesburg suggest that fewer girls than boys dropped out during the higher primary and early high school stages. One table provides an age and gender breakdown for African educational levels. In the 15-24 age category, which records a total of 57,000 males and 54,000 females, over 17,000 males had no schooling at all, compared to only 7,000 females. Perhaps even more significantly, just over 19,000 males compared to almost 28,000 females had a Standard Five, or higher, qualification.<sup>61</sup> Fanyana Mazibuko argues that this is partly explained by the powerful counter-attraction of gangs for boys. The church and Christian youth clubs represented alternative points of social contact for girls outside of the home and school. According to the 1960 census figures on African religious affiliation in Johannesburg, 16,500 males in the 15-24 age category had "no religion" or no religious affiliation, compared to only 4,500 women. The 1970 census data do not supply a Johannesburg breakdown but nation-wide "urban" figures suggest at least continuity in the relative apathy of young males towards religion.<sup>62</sup> Wayfarers, Sunbeams and Girl Guides had a real presence in the township but, according to one ex-Girl Guide from Rockville, they organized primarily through the schools and therefore failed to draw in a non-school constituency.<sup>63</sup> Like boys, girls frequented soccer matches, shebeens and cinemas but usually through linking into male networks rather than establishing their own.

A further division in Soweto youth identity during the 1960s and 1970s was that between the so-called *ndofaya* and *kalkoen*. This division first emerged in the 1940s. The *nsafaya* were youths of Sophiatown/Western Areas origin. They had grown up speaking a *tsotsitaal* based on Afrikaans, probably because they came from mixed African/coloured residential areas. They called youths of Soweto origin *kalkoene*, taunting them that they spoke "like turkeys". The *kalkoen tsotsitaal* was Zulu-based and evolved into *scamtho*, the dominant street language in Soweto today. The term of derision was eventually adopted positively by the youths of Soweto origin themselves. The two groups had subtly discrete styles which each portrayed as the authentic urban youth fashion. Non European Affairs Department social worker, Seadom Tloteng recalls, for instance, that the *ndofaya* liked jazz music while



the *kalkoene* liked *mbaxanga*. Competition was heightened following the Western Areas removals as the *ndofaya* were resettled in the heart of *kalkoen* country, in parts of Rockville, Meadowlands, Mofolo and Diepkloof.<sup>64</sup> Males were central in asserting *ndofaya* and *kalkoen* identities (which were to some extent sub-*clever* identities). Nevertheless, unlike *cleverness*, these categories included girls.

Soweto youth culture, from as early as the 1940s, emphasized urbanness and underplayed ethnic diversity. (I exclude here the specifically migrant and largely insulated youth groups such as the *Amalaita*). This "melting pot" effect was reinforced by the existence of *tsotsitaal*, a hybrid language which, although regionally diverse, was intelligible throughout Soweto. However, during the implementation of ethnic zoning in the 1960s, ethnic identity became increasingly noticeable in urban youth culture. Through ethnic zoning, many neighbourhoods, and by extension local gangs, became ethnically uniform. Gang competition was highly localized ensuring that inter-ethnic conflict remained fairly rare. Nevertheless, there were certain zone border areas where gang and ethnic conflict began to overlap. On the border between Zola, which was a predominantly Zulu area, and Naledi, which was a Sotho area, youths on either side of the dividing road identified themselves ethnically during the 1960s.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, Linda Maselo recalls that in the ethnic zones of Diepkloof gangs could be classified ethnically by the 1970s. The Biafras of Zone 6 were "Sotho" and the Mongols of Zone 3 were "Shangaan".<sup>66</sup>

Soweto youths had a very narrow range of role models during the 1960s and 1970s. They lived in a parochial world of limited horizons and aspirations. For boys, gangsterism was romantic and alluring. Famous gangs such as the Hazels and movie gangsters and bandits were idolized by younger boys.<sup>67</sup> Al Capone and the Mafia were admired.<sup>68</sup> These distant exotic figures were made more tangible through much admired "senior clevers" such as Peggy Bel Air, an ex-member of the Americans of Sophiatown.<sup>69</sup> Sports stars, particularly in soccer and boxing, were also powerful role models. Gangsterism and sports provided routes to fame and stardom outside of the drudgery of education. Many youths who stayed on into high school aspired to become *Umapalani*, the learned and literate, essentially teachers and clerks. Girls had the popular option of nursing.<sup>70</sup> During the early 1970s a political role model became increasingly attractive within the school environment. Young university-educated teachers, such as Abram Tiro, disseminating Black Consciousness ideology had a powerful impact in Soweto schools in the early 1970s. They were important in initiating, politicizing and popularizing school debating and public speaking societies. They had the effect of widening intellectual horizons and raising confidence and aspirations. Their highly intellectual approach was, however, almost entirely inaccessible to non-school youths.

### Conflict and Solidarity

A Soweto male teenager could think of himself all at once as, say, a Green Beret, an Orlando High School student, a Sotho, a *clever* and a *kalkoen*. These were all possible identities which could be drawn on according to time and circumstance. Specific moments of conflict, threat and competition sharpened these identities. Gang, neighbourhood and school were crucial loci of potential protection and support.

Although gangs within a neighbourhood competed locally, they also felt a neighbourhood solidarity. When threat arose from outside the neighbourhood local gangs would generally club together in support. In the 1960s and early 1970s, according to Thebo Mohapi, Orlando youths fought regularly with those from Meadowlands over access to a dam on the border of the two areas. Although there were internal tensions amongst Orlando gangs, the "kids from Meadowlands" were identified clearly as the rivals. Cattles and stones were used in these heated fights. *Ndofaya* and *kalkoen* identities were activated here to reinforce neighbourhood unity. Meadowlands was heavily occupied by ex-Western Areas residents. "They would call us *kalkoen* and we would call them *ndofaya*".<sup>71</sup> Similarly, neighbourhood and, in this case, ethnic solidarity was evoked in the border wars between Zola and Naledi youth. There were routine stone-throwing fights across the dividing road in the 1960s.<sup>72</sup> Khotso Seathlolo provides another, perhaps less aggressive, example of neighbourhood unity in Naledi. He recalls that local non-school youth would come to Naledi High School soccer matches and root for the local team even though they were themselves pushouts. They felt "a certain loyalty" to the high school in their area.<sup>73</sup>



Gangs felt a protectiveness towards their own neighbourhoods. Residents, unless they were themselves members of rival street gangs, rarely felt threatened by a local gang. There was protection in familiarity. It was almost unheard of for a gangster to mug a person he knew. If a gangster killed or mugged a local he would be socially ostracized from that community. Danger lay precisely in anonymity; "outsiders" were victimized.<sup>74</sup> The Dirty Dozen, for instance, were not feared by Moroka residents.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, the Hazels "never troubled" the residents of Mzimhlophe.<sup>76</sup> They robbed and mugged on trains or in areas where they were not known as individuals. A similar observation can be made, more cautiously, with sexual harassment. The relationship between gangster and moll was itself infused with compulsion but local women were nevertheless provided with a certain protection from outside harassment.<sup>77</sup> The victims of gang rape were invariably outsiders.<sup>78</sup>

Territoriality was at the root of intense gang conflict. Masculine status and prestige were inextricably linked to territory. It was essential to gang honour to hold your ground. To achieve "name and fame" a gang had to expand its territorial influence.<sup>79</sup> Prestige and status aside, territoriality involved competition over women and material resources such as parks, halls and shebeens. Disputes over women were probably the single most important cause of friction. Gangs regarded women as territory-bound. An outsider courting a local woman represented the most serious breach of gang territorial codes. It would immediately trigger intense gang identification and conflict.<sup>80</sup> But women were only one focus of competition. A Phiri resident, "Johannes", accounts for local gang wars in the early 1970s as follows. "It's true sometimes girls were a problem. Mostly we fought for scarce... facilities, things like community halls and parks... Parks were created between two territories and the children of both territories could fight for the sole ownership of that park. The war between the Sleep Out Gang and the ZX5 was fought [over a] park..." Spokes Ndlovu also recalls that the Sleep Out Gang clashed with the Movers of neighbouring Mapetla during a concert at the local community hall; they were competing for "ownership" of the hall.<sup>81</sup> The large criminal gangs often clashed when they attempted to establish exclusive access to areas of criminal operation. Bra Foca explains the Hazel's war with the Dirty Dozen largely in these terms. "We fought with the Dirty Dozen in town for a place of operation and domination plus the name and fame."<sup>82</sup> Revenge and counter-revenge nourished gang conflict. Gangs would organize reprisals in response to attacks on their own members, or even attacks on members of the neighbourhood to which they felt a loyalty. This would set in motion a cycle of violence which heightened gang identification.<sup>83</sup>

As I have pointed out, neighbourhood association obscured divisions between *local* school and non-school youth. Nevertheless, throughout the 1960s and early 70s tension mounted between schools and gangs. School-goers were subjected to constant harassment and robbery from gangs, generally coming from outside neighbourhoods. This often led to outbursts of violent conflict. Pushout gangsters felt a contradictory mix of resentment and scorn towards schoolchildren. They felt resentment because they had been excluded from the education system; they adhered to the scornful anti-education, anti-work ethic of the gang culture, which, it could be argued, was reinforced by that very exclusion.<sup>84</sup> School-goers were also ideal targets for gangsters. Female students, who were generally strictly controlled domestically and rarely ventured out unescorted after dark, were vulnerable and exposed on their way to and from school. These moments provided gangsters with opportunities for sexual harassment, abduction and rape.<sup>85</sup> Pocket money could also be robbed and extorted with relative ease.<sup>86</sup> Gang harassment seemed to get steadily worse during the 1960s and peaked during the period of secondary school expansion in the 1970s. Two Sowetan headmasters observed in 1972 that students were staying away from certain schools for fear of gang harassment.<sup>87</sup> By 1973 it was reported that several schoolchildren died at the hands of gangsters annually. Moreover, "the toll of brutally assaulted pupils" was "on the increase."<sup>88</sup> It is possible that the expansion of secondary schooling itself was the source of rising tension. Unlike the highly localized primary schools, high schools drew in students from a much wider geographical spread. This had distinct territorial implications. High school membership cut across neighbourhoods, competing with, and threatening, intensely localized identities. Conflict and threat, in turn, activated powerful school identifications. School identity emerged sharply out of the tangle of school, street and neighbourhood loyalties when fellow schoolmembers were subjected to assault or harassment.

School students responded to harassment with united anti-gang operations. Morris Isaacson and Orlando High School had long traditions of effective resistance. Headmasters

and teachers at these two schools cooperated actively with the students. By the late 1960s they had become no-go zones for the gangs. As early as 1959 Morris Isaacson conducted a successful "war" against the Apaches.<sup>89</sup> Fanyana Mazibuko recalls that when he joined Morris Isaacson in 1966 there was a "spirit of unity and mutual support at the school". By the late 1960s every *tsotsi* in the White City-Jabavu area knew that "he had to leave town" if he meddled with students from Morris Isaacson. He and a few other teachers were given the responsibility of stamping out Dirty Dozen activity in the area. The gang had been terrorizing and harassing students on their way to school and back. Things came to a head when a student was stabbed while trying to rescue some Morris girls from molestation. A group of students went out and fetched the gangster responsible. The gangster was "roughed up" and then handed over to the police, who promptly released him. Shortly thereafter another Morris student was stabbed in revenge. Mazibuko asked the headmaster for a day off school to clean up the gang properly. He went out with a huge force of students and systematically rounded up 70 Dirty Dozens. They were easy to identify because they had a distinctive tattoo on their arms. They were an enormous gang "so it was only when they realised that there were 800 boys out looking for them that they knew they were tangling with big trouble". Many of the gangsters were charged and jailed but, more importantly, the schoolboys gave them a stern warning.<sup>90</sup> Mary Mxadana, who taught at "Morris" between 1968 and 1976 was also impressed by the unity with which students disciplined criminal elements. "If you wore a school uniform you were really protected." *Tsotsis* never entered school property.<sup>91</sup> In February 1976, Morris Isaacson students made headlines when they beat up a "youth" who had allegedly been molesting students. They resisted attempts by the police to intervene and proceed with official charges, claiming that the police were ineffective and that they had their "own courts" to deal with the youth.<sup>92</sup> Orlando High had a similar history with gangs. In the early 1960s the school suffered harassment from the Apaches, Berlins and, most persistently, the Black Swines. After a "serious incident", Kambule, the headmaster, called out every male student from class and told them that a group of Black Swines from Jabavu was causing trouble. He ordered the students to "bring every one of those boys" to his office. "It was the most dramatic day the school had ever had." The Black Swines were dragged to Kambule's office where he personally sjambokked them severely. From then on anyone who interfered with an Orlando High School student had to "answer to the whole school". "Here at Orlando High," Kambule used to say, "we are one gang."<sup>93</sup> Curtis Nkondo, who taught at Orlando High School in the 1960s, makes the same point. When schoolgirls were molested or abducted "that resulted in the schoolboys becoming very angry and going into the location hunting for these *tsotsis*."<sup>94</sup> Naledi High School and Sekano Ntoana developed a similar reputation in the 1970s. At Naledi the students had a real sense of "self-identity" and "solidarity". If any student suffered at the hands of gangsters the student body would organize self-defence units to punish the culprits.<sup>95</sup> At Sekano Ntoana, Jake Msimanga recalls, the gangsters "really lacked the guts just to pounce on you. There would be no school for two or three days until they were apprehended. So they knew what it meant." Msimanga goes on to observe that this was a common experience in the townships. "From very early on in my township experience people had no faith in the police. People would go out, bring them back into the schoolyard and thrash these guys."<sup>96</sup>

School responses, which tended to be extremely angry and often brutal, reflected an intense student self-identification. Johannes Radebe describes the reprisal of his school, Mncube High, against the persistently troublesome Top Five gang in 1969. There was striking unity and eagerness on the part of students when the headmaster gave the go-ahead for action. "When the principal said they must go and discipline the gang, a wide variety of weapons was raised up and students said 'Yes Sir' with their weapons pointing up. They had waited for that time ... We left singing, both boys and girls hunting the gang members." Radebe himself had a big axe with him that day which he named "Love and Peace". Nineteen gang members were rounded up. "At school every student was forced to whip a gang member once on his buttocks. Imagine, we were more than 600 students and this means that each gang member was given more than 600 whips by students. From then on the gang disintegrated and they started respecting students."<sup>97</sup>

Gangsters were killed and assaulted in a number of school offensives during the 1970s. In August 1972 sixteen Pimville school students appeared in court following the death of an X5 gang member in a school reprisal. The students offered in their defence that the Kliptown police failed to act against the gang which had been making life "unbearable" in Pimville.<sup>98</sup> In April 1974 a Zola youth, who had apparently been involved in ongoing gang



harassment, was stoned to death by a group of students from Jabulani Junior Secondary School.<sup>99</sup> The best publicized incident occurred in November 1974 when students from the Phiri Higher Primary School clashed with the ZX5 gang. Two gangsters were killed and five injured. Two teachers and seven students were later committed for trial. The accused were "said to have cornered them in a house after an intensive search." The trialists were eventually given suspended sentences after the headmaster of Phiri Higher Primary led evidence in mitigation, much as in the Pimville X5 case, that students had been subjected to ongoing harassment and were frustrated by the failure of the police to act effectively.<sup>100</sup> Two informants who witnessed the Phiri reprisal emphasize the brutality of the students. It was rumoured that when the brother of the ZX5 leader was killed: "his intestines were taken out of his stomach".<sup>101</sup> Spokes Ndlovu, an ex-member of the gang, recalls that students were in the process of hacking the leader's leg with a hacksaw when the police intervened.<sup>102</sup> In another well publicized case in May 1976 two "thugs", who were molesting a school teacher on her way to work, were beaten to death by students in Orlando North. "The children stormed out of the school and attacked the men when they heard [the teacher] screaming for help. The two would-be robbers fled when they saw the hundreds of children pouring out of Orlando North Secondary School. But one of them was caught and stoned near the school. The other was beaten to death by a group of children who chased him more than a mile through the streets before cornering him in a yard... An onlooker said later that he had never imagined that schoolchildren could be so vicious."<sup>103</sup>

### Conclusion

In accounts of the Soweto uprising, historians have tended to take a united identity for granted amongst the African youth. Clearly a black consciousness, reinforced by pass controls and other apartheid laws, was latent and potentially powerful throughout the 1960s and 1970s. But the process whereby this consciousness became a positive identity which united the youth needs to be plotted carefully. Throughout this period youth identities were fractured into extremely parochial entities of neighbourhood, school and gang. Horizons were defined by a radius of walking distance. The Black Consciousness Movement had to work hard to forge a wider racial consciousness and unity. The expansion of schooling from around 1972, made this process possible in Soweto.<sup>104</sup> Schooling had the effect of creating wider youth collectivities. It provided a context in which to build an identity beyond the very parochial. It must also be emphasized that the movement towards youth unity was partial even during the uprising itself. Although the National Youth Organization (NAYO) was formed primarily to reach youth beyond the schools, Black Consciousness activists made very little real progress in "conscientizing" and mobilizing youth gang elements. Although gangs often took it upon themselves to enforce boycotts and stay-aways, their activities were sporadic and uncoordinated and their violent methods contradicted Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC) policy. Gangs also collapsed definitions between political activity and ordinary criminality. The SSRC eventually formed "squads" to discipline and monitor youth gangs and protect residents from harassment.<sup>105</sup> Clearly, many non-school Soweto youths did identify themselves as part of a wider black resistance movement at certain moments during 1976-7. But powerful parochial identities and antagonisms continued to overlap and intersect with broader notions of identification. An identity can never be assumed: it is a latent resource which can be triggered historically or actively welded through ideology.

### NOTES

- 1 Baruch Hirson, *Year of Fire, Year of Ash: The Soweto Revolt: Roots of a Revolution?* (London, 1979); A. Brooks and J. Brookhill, *Whirlwind Before the Storm* (International Defence and Aid fund for South Africa, London, 1980); J. Kane-Berman, *Soweto: Black Revolt, White Reaction* (Johannesburg, 1978); see also P. Frankel, "The Dynamics of a Political Renaissance: The Soweto Students Representative Council", *Journal of African Studies*, c1980 and N. Diseko, "The Origins and Development of the South African Student's Movement (SASM)", *Journal of Southern African Studies* (JSAS), vol. 18, no 1, 1991.
- 2 Hirson, *Year of Fire*, p 194
- 3 Brooks and Brickhill, *Whirlwind*, p 151; see also pp 207-208.



- 4 See also Kane-Berman, *Soweto*, p 8 and p 125; Diseko, "Origins and Development of SASM", p 52, touches on student/*tsotsi* interaction and Frankel, "Dynamics of a Political Renaissance", deals with the limited appeal of the SSRC programme beyond the schools, pp 173-4.
- 5 This can be seen, in some senses, as a sequel to my M.A. research, which dealt with the *tsotsi* youth gang subculture in Johannesburg during the 1940s and 1950s.
- 6 J. Hyslop, "State Education and the Social Reproduction of the Urban African Working Class: The case of the Southern Transvaal 1955-1976", *JSAS*, vol. 14 no. 3, 1988, p 451. See also general discussion, pp 450-458.
- 7 SAIRR, *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa* (SRRSA), education reviews 1960-1976.
- 8 *The Star*, 13 Jan. 1964.
- 9 SRRSA, 1961, p 230.
- 10 *The Star*, 6 May 1964; *The Star*, 7 Jan. 1969; *Rand Daily Mail*, 29 June 1973; Hirson, *Year of Fire*, p 194.
- 11 Hyslop, "State Education Policy", pp 469-470. Lomula High in Meadowlands, accommodating about 1,500 students, was one of the new schools set up in this period. Curtis Nkondo was its first principal.
- 12 Hyslop, "State Education Policy", pp 469-475.
- 13 *The Star*, 23 March 1966.
- 14 Hyslop, "State Education Policy", p 458.
- 15 For example, Bongki Makhabela, who was brought up in Zola in the 1960s, recalls that every child in her street at least attempted school. Interview, History Workshop Soweto Film Project 1991-2 (HWSFP). Thebo Mohapi, interview, HWSFP, has similar recollections for Mzimhlophe in the 1960s.
- 16 The term "pushouts" is favoured by many observers because "dropout" implies a voluntary process, whereas "pushout" emphasizes structural dead-ends and constraints. I tend to use "pushouts" but not without some reservation because the term underplays the often voluntary reasons for leaving school.
- 17 Interviews with the author, Khotso Seathlolo 2 Sept. 1992 and Khehla Shubane 24 Aug. 1992.
- 18 See Clive Glaser, "Public Enemy Number One: crime and policing in the era of high apartheid", Social Sciences Graduate Seminar, University of the Witwatersrand 1992. See also interviews with the author, Seadom Tloteng 18 Nov. 1991, William Carr 5 Aug. 1992 and Jean McMurchie 21 Sept. 1992.
- 19 Industrial psychologist, E. A. Galli, quoted in *Rand Daily Mail*, 21 Oct. 1967. See Phil Bonner, "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness on the East Rand 1939-1955", *JSAS*, vol. 15, no. 1, 1988, pp 404-405, and Deborah Posel, *The Making of Apartheid 1948-1961: Conflict and Compromise* (Oxford, 1991), particularly pp 158-164.
- 20 See C. Glaser, "Anti-Social Bandits: Juvenile Delinquency and the Tsotsi Youth Gang Subculture on the Witwatersrand 1935-1960", M.A. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1990, particularly ch.1, for a discussion on youth unemployment in the 1930s-1950s.
- 21 Interview with the author, Steve Lebelo 2 Sept. 1991 and interview with M. Koetz, L. Nkosi, Aug. 1992. See also *The Star*, 2 May 1955.
- 22 Shubane 24 Aug. 1992; Mohapi, HWSFP; see also interview with Shubane Khumalo in *Rand Daily Mail*, 21 Oct. 1972, "Poverty creates *tsotsi* truants".
- 23 Interview with the author, Qedusizi Buthelezi 30 Oct. 1991; interview with M. Koetz, Mrs M. Dlamini 5 Sept. 1992; Makhabela, HWSFP.
- 24 Mrs Dlamini 5 Sept. 1992.
- 25 Shubane 24 Aug. 1992; see also discussion in Diseko, "Origins and Development of SASM", particularly pp 46-49.
- 26 Interview with the author, Linda Duma 10 Aug. 1992.
- 27 Shubane 24 Aug. 1992; Mrs Dlamini 5 Sept. 1992; interview with M. Koetz, Denis Nkosi 5 Sept. 1992; interview with the author, Curtis Nkondo 2 Sept. 1992, who recalls that parents used to say to him, "if he is neglecting his work, he must be thrashed."
- 28 Shubane 24 Aug. 1992; Mrs Dlamini 5 Sept. 1992.
- 29 Interview, Murphy Morobe, HWSFP.
- 30 Seathlolo 2 Sept. 1992.
- 31 D. Nkosi 5 Sept. 1992; Tloteng 18 Sept. 1991; interviews with M. Koetz, Alex Ngobese 19 Apr. 1992 and Godfrey Simelane 18 Apr. 1992 who make similar observations

- respectively about Moletsane in the late 1960s and early 1970s and Orlando East in the 1960s.
- 32 Morobe, HWSFP.
- 33 Lebelo 27 Sept. 1991.
- 34 Interview with M. Koetz, Johannes Radebe 5 Sept. 1992.
- 35 Interview with M. Koetz, Aug. 1992.
- 36 Interview with M. Koetz, Manfred "Bra Foca" 17 June 1992.
- 37 Shubane 24 Aug. 1992.
- 38 Shubane 24 Aug. 1992; Seatholo 2 Sept. 1992; Morobe, HWSFP; Mohapi, HWSFP.
- 39 See also interview with the author, Mike Siluma 13 Dec. 1992, who also talks of a territorial "ganging together".
- 40 Morobe, HWSFP.
- 41 Radebe 5 Sept. 1992.
- 42 Shubane 24 Aug. 1992; interview with the author, Santu Mofokeng 2 Oct. 1991.
- 43 Interview with M. Koetz, Zakes Thotela 5 Aug. 1992. Generally on street gangs and levels of criminality: Siluma 13 Dec. 1992; Shubane 24 Aug. 1992; Mofokeng 2 Oct. 1991; Mrs Gibi, August 1992; Ngobese 19 Apr. 1992; Morobe HWSFP.
- 44 Interview with M. Koetz, Mrs Hlatswayo, August 1992; Mrs Gibi, August 1992.
- 45 Interviews with the author, Wilkie Kambule 14 Dec. 1991, Fanyana Mazibuko 4 Dec. 1991 Jake Msimanga 23 Jan. 1992, Isaac Motaung 27 Nov. 1991; also Nkondo 2 Sept. 1992; Siluma 13 Dec. 1991; Duma 10 Aug. 1992; Tloteng 18 Nov. 1992.
- 46 F. Mazibuko 4 Dec. 1991; a point echoed by Nkondo 2 Sept. 1992.
- 47 F. Mazibuko 4 Dec. 1991; Tloteng 18 Nov. 1991; see also my discussions on subcultural style in "Anti-Social Bandits", African Studies Institute, Wits University, seminar paper September 1990 and "The Mark of Zorro", *African Studies*, vol. 51, no. 1, 1992. See also my discussion on the contradiction between consumerism and scorn for middle-class values in "Urban Youth Culture and Politicization: A Comparative Perspective", ch.1 of my Ph.D. thesis.
- 48 Interviews with M. Koetz, Happy Mokgotsi 5 Sept. 1992 and "Sister Grace" 17 June 1992; F. Mazibuko 4 Dec. 1991; Motaung 27 Nov. 1991; see also my, "Anti-Social Bandits".
- 49 Duma 10 Aug. 1991; Sister Grace 1 June 1992.
- 50 Bra Foca 1 June 1992.
- 51 Mofokeng 2 Oct. 1991.
- 52 Interview with M. Koetz, Mary Modise 14 June 1992.
- 53 Simelane 18 Apr. 1992. This is not the same gang as the notorious Msomis who operated in Alexandra during the late 1950s. The use of the name suggests that the reputation of the Alex gang lived on in memory and was seen as a role model by these Orlando youths.
- 54 Interview with M. Koetz, Reverend Thape 6 July 1992.
- 55 Sister Grace 1 June 1992.
- 56 See "Anti-Social Bandits", M.A. thesis, ch.2, for a discussion on the origins of *clever* and *tsotsi*, particularly pp 83-87.
- 57 Interview, Seth Mazibuko, HWSFP; Morobe, HWSFP.
- 58 See my "Mark of Zorro", which examines the construction of masculinity in the *tsotsi* subculture.
- 59 F. Mazibuko 4 Dec. 1991; Motaung 27 Nov. 1991; Msimanga 23 Jan. 1992; Modise 14 June 1992; interviews with M. Koetz, Musa Khoza 12 Apr. 1992 and Mrs S. Mbuli 11 Apr. 1992.
- 60 Kambule 14 Dec. 1991.
- 61 Population Census 6 Sept. 1960, vol. 7, "Educational levels, Africans, Johannesburg". Figures rounded off. Unfortunately, there were no similar age breakdowns in the 1970 census figures, which makes it impossible to compare the 1970 data. See also the SRRSA 1961, p 229. Kambule 14 Dec. 1991 recalls that well over half of the students at Orlando High School were girls by the mid-1960s, a reversal of the situation earlier in the 1950s.
- 62 *Population Census*, 6 Sept. 1960. Report on the Metropolitan Area of Johannesburg, vol. 2, p 9, "Bantu: Religion by Age". Figures here are rounded off. For 1970 figures, see *Population Census 1970*, Report No 02-05-03, "Religious breakdown by Age (SA: urban)".
- 63 Mrs Dlamini 5 Sept. 1992.
- 64 Mrs Dlamini 5 Sept. 1992; Tloteng 18 Nov. 1991; interview with M. Koetz. Miriam Sirurufu 26 Sept. 1992.

- 65 Makhabela, HWSFP.
- 66 Interview with M. Koetz, Linda Maseko 26 Sept. 1992.
- 67 Mofokeng 2 Oct. 1991; Lebelo 27 Sept. 1991; Nkondo 2 Sept. 1992.
- 68 Ngobese 19 Apr. 1992.
- 69 Seth Mazibuko, HWSFP.
- 70 Seth Mazibuko, HWSFP; Makhabela, HWSFP.
- 71 Mohapi, HWSFP; interview, Whitey Khanyeza, HWSFP, who talks about the danger of crossing the territorial divide between Orlando East and Mzimhlophe.
- 72 Makhabela, HWSFP.
- 73 Seathlolo 2 Sept. 1992.
- 74 Mofokeng 2 Oct. 1991; Simelane 18 Apr. 1992; D. Nkosi 5 Sept. 1992; Siluma 13 Dec. 1992; interview with M. Koetz, Tsidi Nkosi 4 July 1992.
- 75 Mokgotsi 5 Sept. 1992; T. Nkosi 4 July 1992.
- 76 Interview with M. Koetz, "Gladys" 14 June 1992.
- 77 See discussion of this issue in my "Mark of Zoro".
- 78 Interview with M. Koetz, Mrs S. Khumalo, August 1992; Gibi, August 1992.
- 79 Interview with M. Koetz, Mrs Mampiki 13 June 1992; Thotela 5 July 1992; Duma 10 Aug. 1992; Seth Mazibulo, HWSFP.
- 80 Interview with M. Koetz, Mrs Sentsoe 4 July 1992; Mofokeng 2 Oct. 1991; Mrs Dlamini 5 Sept. 1992; Mrs Gibi, August 1992; Bra Foca 17 June 1992; Thotela 5 July 1992.
- 81 Interviews with M. Koetz, "Johannes" 21 June 1992; and Spokes Ndlovu 22 June 1992.
- 82 Bra Foca 17 June 1992.
- 83 Interview with M. Koetz, L. Kheswa 21 June 1992; Mokgotsi 5 Sept. 1992; Mampiki 13 June 1992; Morobe, HWSFP.
- 84 Kambule 14 Dec. 1992; Nkondo 2 Sept. 1992.
- 85 For example, see Johannes 21 June 1992 for Khotso High School in Phiri, Tsidi Nkosi 4 July 1992 for Thethene High in Moroka, Thotela 5 July 1992 for Emdeni, Mrs Gibi, August 1992, for Musi High in Pimville during the mid-late 1960s.
- 86 Simelane 18 Apr. 1992; Duma 10 Aug. 1992.
- 87 G. M. Simelela, headmaster of Madibane High, and Wilkie Kambule of Orlando High in *The World*, 4 Oct. 1972; Kambule observed earlier in *The World* 2 Feb. 1972 that year that many students refused to go to the new Orlando North Secondary School for fear of the Hazels.
- 88 *Rand Daily Mail*, 30 April 1973.
- 89 Thape 6 July 1992.
- 90 F. Mazibuko 4 Dec. 1991.
- 91 Interview with the author, Mary Mxadana 31 Jan. 1992.
- 92 *The World*, 13 Feb. 1976.
- 93 Kambule 14 Dec. 1991.
- 94 Nkondo 2 Sept. 1992.
- 95 Seathlolo 2 Sept. 1992; Siluma 13 Dec. 1991.
- 96 Msimanga 23 Jan. 1992; Duma 10 Aug. 1992 talks also of organized reprisals by Diepkloof Junior Secondary School against the Damaras in 1976. After the Damaras "butchered one of our boys ... we went to their homes; we rounded them up and quite a lot of them were severely beaten ... We were wild."
- 97 Radebe 5 Sept. 1992.
- 98 *The World*, 23 Aug. 1972 and 2 Sept. 1972.
- 99 *The World*, 9 Apr. 1974.
- 100 *The World*, 13 Nov. 1974, 15 May 1975 and 24 Sept. 1975.
- 101 Johannes 21 June 1992.
- 102 Ndlovu 22 June 1992.
- 103 *The World*, 13 May 1976; *Weekend World*, 16 May 1976.
- 104 This process will be explored in some detail in ch.9 and, more obliquely, in ch.5 of my forthcoming Ph.D. See also Diseko, "The Origins and Development of SASM" on BCM activity in Soweto schools during 1968-76.
- 105 Seathlolo 2 Sept. 1992.