

REFER TO CIA 1328AS

South Africa: Profile of An Angry Young Black [REDACTED]

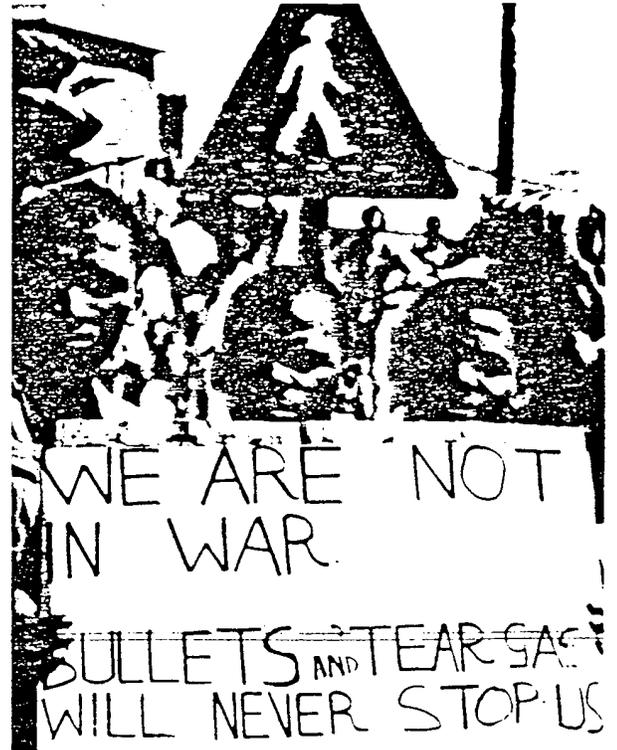
Black violence in South Africa has spiraled since the implementation in 1984 of a constitution giving limited political rights to Coloreds and Indians but denying them to blacks. Pretoria's efforts to control black unrest have been hampered by its pervasiveness and intensity, by a failure to eradicate the underlying causes of black dissatisfaction, and by an inability to control the major perpetrators of violence: black youths. [REDACTED]

The black youths who terrorize townships and stretch the resources of the security establishment are poorly educated, unemployed, and undisciplined. They go by several names, but "comrades" appears to be the most popular. Some youths belong to "youth congresses," "youth committees," and student organizations, but most belong to poorly organized street gangs, each led by the neighborhood's toughest, most violent black. The gangs are most active in eastern and western Cape Province and in the black townships surrounding Pretoria and Johannesburg. [REDACTED]

Opposition groups, such as the outlawed African National Congress (ANC), have long called for the violent overthrow of the white minority regime. There are growing indications that many South African blacks, particularly those under 25, have come to share this view, and many observers now describe the situation in South Africa as prerevolutionary. The following profile—a composite drawn from numerous reports of separate individuals and incidents—describes a black teenager who, we believe, typifies today's angry youth. [REDACTED]

Mike

Mike, 16, lives in Alexandra, a black township on the northern outskirts of Pretoria, with his mother (45) and four younger siblings. An older, married sister resides in Soweto; one of two older brothers lives elsewhere in Alexandra—the other brother left the country several years ago for parts unknown. Mike's family are Tswanas, and he has many relatives living



The youth [REDACTED]

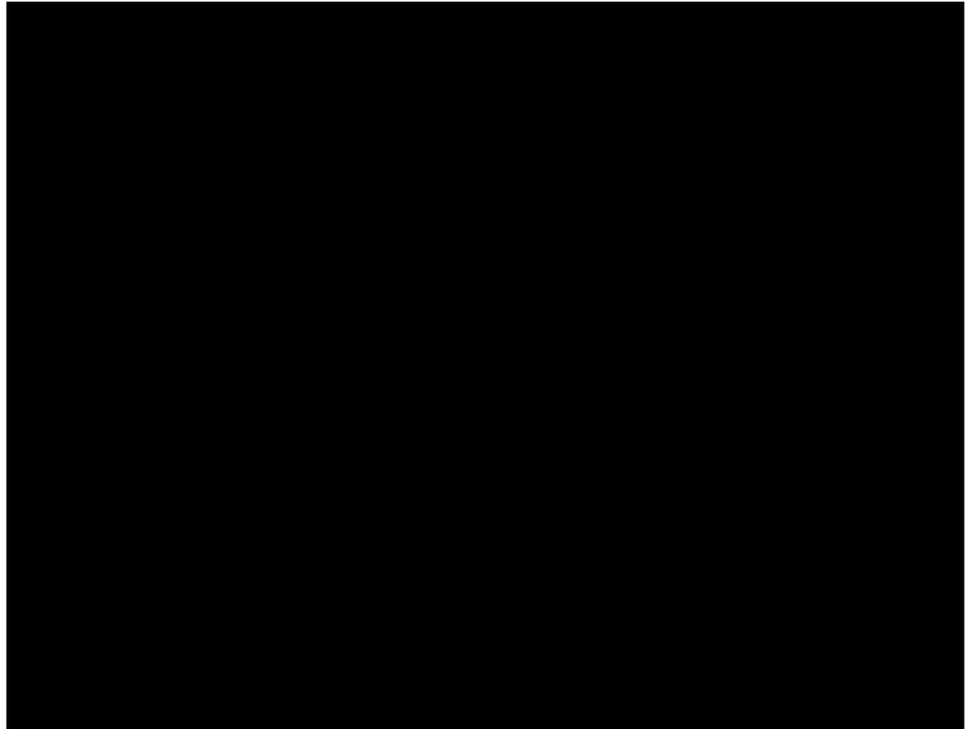
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in the independent homeland of Bophuthatswana, which has been devastated by a lengthy drought. [REDACTED]

Mike last saw his father in 1982, when he was laid off by a subsidiary of a Western fast food conglomerate: his father abandoned the family shortly thereafter. Mike has almost nothing in common with his mother, who belongs to the conservative Zion Christian Church, the largest black religious organization in the country. He has unsuccessfully tried to persuade her to support the "cause," the boycotts, and the need for violence, but she has only attempted to get him off the streets and into school. [REDACTED]

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Typical black violence in western Cape Province ■



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Except for intermittent tutoring sponsored by the antiapartheid United Democratic Front (UDF), Mike has not attended school since 1984. He does not plan to resume his education until the ruling Afrikaners are driven out of power. He and his friends believe there will be enough time for education after blacks take over the country, which they believe is certain to happen within the next few years. In any case, they fear returning to school because the police often raid schools to arrest suspected troublemakers. Mike has never held a full-time job, but he occasionally makes a few rand selling parts from burned-out cars to local garages. ■

Mike has never traveled outside Transvaal Province and has only vague impressions about the outside world. Most of what he thinks he knows has been picked up from friends and older comrades; his friends tell him the United States supports the Boers because it opposes a black-ruled South Africa. Unsophisticated and naive, he accepts this. He also believes what the older comrades tell him about the virtues of socialism and Marxism, the power of the

masses, and the Soviet Union. In recent months, he has read banned books about Marxism and tracts published by the ANC; his reading skills are poor, however, and he only vaguely understands political concepts. ■

Involvement in Violence

Violence gives Mike a feeling of power, enables him to "express his feelings," and, probably most important, gives him something to do—he likes violence. His favorite activities have included throwing rocks at armored police vehicles and doing his part to enforce periodic UDF-sponsored boycotts of white stores. He is disappointed that most blacks now boycott stores voluntarily. Mike and his friends used to help the process along by employing strongarm tactics to enforce the boycotts. He found this an excellent way to supplement his income and get desired consumer goods because he was always able to wring some money out of a cowed boycott violator or to keep confiscated merchandise. ■

Executed collaborator [REDACTED]



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Rock throwing also has its rewards. Mike often tells his friends how he almost became a media star the day he and several other comrades were throwing rocks at white policemen in the presence of a Western television crew. His stint in the limelight was cut short, however, when the policemen counterattacked and confiscated the newsmen's cameras. His opportunities to gain additional media exposure have been limited since the government banned press coverage of violence late last year. [REDACTED]

Mike has yet to serve on the jury of a "people's court," to firebomb a black policeman's home, or to participate in a "necklace" killing of a collaborator. He wants to do all of these things, however, and believes that the killing of black informants is necessary. Black policemen are a favorite target, but they have become more difficult to find now that they and their families are moving out of the townships. Mike and his friends know that black policemen are beginning to lash out against the comrades; in April off-duty policemen entered the township and began

attacking some of Mike's friends. He is eager to confront such blacks and only wishes he had a gun. [REDACTED]

Attitudes Toward Whites and Reforms

Mike hates whites, particularly the Boers, because he believes they are arrogant and treat blacks like stupid children. He also believes all whites are really racists, and he has little time for liberal social workers who occasionally try to help him or his friends. Last month some whites from a neighboring suburb attended a funeral for victims of unrest in Alexandra. Mike was not impressed. [REDACTED]

Mike's big ambition in life (besides celebrating black rule) is to walk into the adjoining white suburb (unlike many black townships, Alexandra is adjacent to a white residential area) and firebomb a white home or perhaps even attack a white man. He is deterred, however, by the ad hoc patrols that have been

established by the white residents. For now, he is content to throw rocks at white policemen and at motorists traveling to the nearby international airport. [REDACTED]

On the basis of a superficial knowledge, Mike dismisses the government's reform program as irrelevant. The only opinion he has about Pretoria's proposal to include blacks in new government institutions is that blacks willing to participate in such schemes are selling out to the system. Similarly, he had little respect for Alexandra's former black mayor, although the mayor's decision to resign earlier this year met with the comrades' approval. [REDACTED]

Involvement With the ANC and UDF

Mike does not belong to the ANC, but he supports it because he knows it opposes the government. He believes ANC leader Nelson Mandela is the country's legitimate leader, but he knows little about other ANC leaders. Mike is not as committed to the UDF because of its failure to endorse violence. He doubts the claims of UDF members in Alexandra who say they secretly work for the ANC. (C NF)

Mike suspects that an older comrade who recently moved to Alexandra from Bophuthatswana belongs to the ANC. Some of his friends have told him the organization has a large arms cache, which will be broken out when the "time is right." Mike does not know where his expatriate brother lives or what he does, but he has boasted that his brother belongs to the ANC's military wing and may have been involved in ANC military operations along the Zimbabwe-South Africa border. This tall tale has earned Mike the respect of many of his peers. [REDACTED]

Mike thinks that he may have to leave Alexandra soon to avoid the police, and he has considered leaving the country to join the ANC. He is concerned, however, that it will be years before he is trained as a guerrilla and allowed to return to South Africa. Mike believes that he can do more to hurt whites by remaining at home. Most of his comrades agree with him. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Statistical Picture

Of the thousands of blacks detained by police during the State of Emergency from July 1985 to March 1986 (a new State of Emergency was declared on 12 June 1986), more than 25 percent were under 18 and more than 60 percent were under 25. According to government and press reports, more than a quarter of the almost 800 blacks killed in 1985 were under 18. Three of the 12 detainees who died in police cells that year were under 17. The demographic picture is also sobering: half of the country's 24 million blacks are under 21. [REDACTED]
