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Panel 107: "Post-Apartheid Generations. Subjectivities and Engagements," Judith Hayem

The African National Congress Youth League after apartheid: political consciousness, involvement and organisation among the "post-young lions" generation in South Africa

Introduction

The African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) is the youth wing of South Africa's African National Congress (ANC). According to the preamble of its constitution, it "was founded in 1944 as an organisation of the youth committed to the ideals of democracy, freedom and peace, it is governed by and adheres to the policies and programmes of the ANC, and its existence derives from the Constitution of the ANC." Its main purposes are "1. (...) to rally the youth of our country to support and unite behind the ANCYL and actively participate in the struggle to create a non-racial, non-sexist, united, democratic and prosperous society;" "2. Support and reinforce the African National Congress in the attainment of the goals of the National Democratic Revolution;" and "4. Champion the general interests and rights of the South African Youth in the socio-economic and political life of the country." Its members are young South African between the ages of 14 and 35 who, over 18', "shall be obliged to join the ANC." Its constitution also recalls that the "ANCYL shall function as an autonomous body within the overall structure of the ANC of which it shall be an integral part."¹

The ANCYL can therefore be considered as a "youth political organisation," that is a specific section of a given political organisation delimited by the age criterion. As such it aims at

¹. *ANC Youth League Constitution*. As amended and adopted by the 23rd National Congress, April 2008.

playing a role in South African society insofar as it works for the advancement of youth rights at the scale of the country, as well as more immediately to organise a specific segment of the ANC membership in support of the “mother body.” In addition to these “twin tasks,” which can involve possible contradictions since government policy is not necessarily designed for the country’s youth, the fact that it derives from the ANC while also operating as an “autonomous” body suggests potential internal tensions between the two organisations.

My doctoral research in course is focused on the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) since 1994. This paper is based on a previous work conducted on the ANCYL², which I have continuously followed ever since mainly through the press and primary written sources. One common motivation behind these two projects derives from the assumption that it is relevant to approach the ANC from its peripheries, through youth politics or the trade unions movement. Researching on the ANCYL at a time where the rivalry between Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma started to unveil before it became one of the biggest battle in the history of ANC leadership, I realised that youth politics in general and the ANCYL in particular had been largely marginalised by political analysts as insignificant, because they were deemed powerless. Previous to 2005, however, the ANCYL seldom used to break the news. I personally hardly remember to have come across any mention of the youth organisation in public debate during my first stay in South Africa (1999-2000). It is only when the Youth League pronounced itself against Thabo Mbeki that it started to be taken seriously again. It is likely that, once again, the Youth League will play an important part on the road towards the ANC 2012 National Conference, which will celebrate the organisation’s 100 years

². In 2005, I had done fieldwork in Johannesburg and Cape Town, in preparation of my M.A. thesis that was focused on the ANCYL since the 1990s. This research relied on a set of primary sources composed of archives from the South African Congress (SAYCO) and the ANCYL at the turn of the 1990s, contemporary Youth League publications, as well as on a number of semi-directive interviews with past and present ANCYL members and cadres. It was followed by two publications: Raphaël Botiveau, « Les avatars de l’African National Congress Youth League ou l’invention d’une organisation politique de jeunesse sud-africaine (1987-2006) », *Politique Africaine*, no.104, décembre 2006, pp.81-102 ; and *The A.N.C. Youth League or the Invention of a South African Youth Political Organisation*, IFAS Working Papers, no.10, Johannesburg, IFAS, 2007 (72p.).

anniversary. The immediate context of this intervention is that of the ANCYL 24th National Congress which, from June 16 to 20, will gather in Johannesburg to elect a new leadership and set the agenda for the next three years³.

I will first explore the “post-apartheid generation” topic set to our panel through a brief account of the Youth League’s history since the early 1990s, with one particular interrogation in mind: is a “post-apartheid” generational turn possible in the ANC? This thread will then lead me to go more in depth in the generational question through introducing the trajectories of a few youth leaders in the post-1994 era in order to propose some ideal types of post-apartheid political involvement, leadership and career path. I will finally reflect on some of the main ideas the ANCYL is now putting forward, address its claim that it repoliticises public debate, and wonder if it provides South African youth with a recognisable political project.

I – The Youth League of Julius Malema: has the hour for crowning the post-apartheid generation come?

The Youth League’s history is the story of successive political generations. It started in 1944 when a handful of talented young professionals decided to organise themselves both inside and on the margins of the ANC. This small group constituted an elite that can in a way be compared to the Leninist conception of activism in terms of “professional revolutionary.” They came to be known as the “Class of ’44” in reference to the year in which the ancestor of present day ANCYL was formed. Around the charismatic figure of Anton Lembede and his

³. The ANCYL 24th National Congress shall focus on “Youth Action for Economic Freedom in our Lifetime.”

philosophy of African Nationalism⁴, future leaders to be such as Peter Mda, Jordan Ngubane, Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela or Oliver Tambo formed the organisation that would soon take control of the ANC, turn it in a mass-based movement and radicalise its action in the face of a growing repression. A shared political consciousness and experience, close professional trajectories and personal ties formed around a common Eastern Cape origin (for some), a place of living – Soweto – and a place of working – Johannesburg, turned them into a social “generation.”⁵ They can also be viewed, to draw an analogy with the French context of that time and since many of them had received a missionary education at Lovedale, as an “intellectual generation.”⁶ A shared opposition to the political orientations taken by the older generation of ANC leaders, embodied at the time by President Albert Bitini Xuma who was perceived as politically outdated, created the conditions of a “generation gap”⁷ that brought on a leadership change in and deep transformation of the ANC. Their alliance was therefore not mainly based on their youthful condition for this group of young men was composed of family heads in their 40s who were practically old-enough to be grandfathers⁸. It is also worth noting with Edward Feit that “the political clash of generations is seldom clearcut. In this case, a majority of the youth and the aged allied against an aging leadership and a minority of the young.”⁹ The decisive moment in their alliance came in 1949 when James Moroka defeated Xuma with the support of the ANCYL. He became the new president of the ANC with Sisulu as his Secretary General.

⁴. Robert R. Edgar, Luyanda ka Msumza (Ed.), *Freedom in our lifetime: the collected writings of Anton Muziwakhe Lembede*, Athens (Ohio), Johannesburg, Bellville (South Africa), Ohio University Press, Skotaville Publishers, Mayibuye Books, 1996 (xx, 203p.).

⁵. Bernard Zarca, “Mannheim (karl). – *Le problème des générations*,” Book review, *Revue française de sociologie*, vol.33, no.1, pp.130-135.

⁶. Jean-François Sirinelli, *Génération intellectuelle : khâgneux et normaliens dans l'entre-deux-guerres*, Paris, Fayard, 1988 (721p.).

⁷. Margaret Mead, *Culture and Commitment. A study of the generation gap*, New York, Natural History Press, 1970 (xvii, 113p.).

⁸. Tom Lodge, personal interview with the author, April 12, 2005.

⁹. Edward Feit, “Generational Conflict and African Nationalism in South Africa: The African National Congress, 1949-1959,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 5, no.2, 1972, p.181-202, p.183.

As opposed to its historical ancestor, the “new” ANCYL, which was officially formed in 1990, came from a much different background. Launched by high school students at a time in which youth, militancy and political violence were conceived together, the contemporary youth wing of the ANC was born out of the combined histories of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS, created in 1979) on the one hand, and of the mass mobilisation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) on the other hand, whose youth component relied on local Youth congresses in the townships. Those congresses were gathered under the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO), which was launched in 1987 in Cape Town. Its leader Peter Mokaba had gone through the “Robben Island University,”¹⁰ he belonged to Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) and SAYCO was closely linked to the ANC. With the latter’s unbanning in 1990, SAYCO took the initiative to relaunch the Youth League, which had disappeared in exile with only the much reduced ANC Youth Section subsisting. The latter mainly consisted of a “desk” designed to welcome young exiles or to brief activists from the inside. The ANCYL was formally (re)launched at Orlando stadium in October 1990. SAYCO’s structure was incorporated to the new organisation which also integrated the Youth Section. Peter Mokaba was elected president of the new organisation.

The “Class of ‘44” led the ANC for almost fifty years and it was joined in exile and at Robben Island by one or two younger generations of activists¹¹ politicised in the 1970s and in the 1980s.¹² The last ANC conference, in 2007, in Polokwane, achieved to integrate the “Class of

¹⁰. See Fran Lisa Buntman, *Robben Island and Prisoner Resistance to Apartheid*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003 (xviii&340p.).

¹¹. Depending on if one considers separately the “Class of ‘76,” which was politicised during and in the aftermath of the Soweto uprisings, and the “Class of ‘87,” in reference to the young people who founded the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) that year. These two generations are close in time and many activists in fact belonged to both.

¹². On the trajectories of ANC leaders see Marianne Séverin, *Les réseaux ANC (1910-2004) : histoire politique de la constitution du leadership de la nouvelle Afrique du Sud*, Thèse de Doctorat en Science politique, sous la direction de Dominique Darbon, Institut d’Études politiques de Bordeaux, 2006 (1086p.). On the various networks of power in the “new” South Africa: “inziles” and “exiles,” members of the SACP, Youth Leaguers or members of the ANC Women’s League, see Marianne Séverin, Pierre Aycard, « Qui gouverne la "nouvelle" Afrique du Sud ? Élités, réseaux, méthodes de pouvoir (1985-2003) », in Philippe Guillaume, Nicolas Péjout, Aurelia Wa Kabwe-Segatti (dir.), *L’Afrique du Sud dix ans après, Transition accomplie ?*, Johannesburg, Paris,

‘76” in the organisational leadership of the organisation. The end of the Mbeki era and the beginning of the Zuma presidency over the movement and over South Africa indeed marked a generational turn since the Mbeki administration kept many ANC and government leaders who had been in position since 1997 or even before¹³. The succession of generations in the apparatus of the ANC, which is part of a necessary renewal for any organisation, is regarded a posteriori as a smooth process. Leadership is sometimes disputed but the ANC has a vision of its history as a unity. No period is occulted and previous leaders are always portrayed as men of their time, their action is contextualised and it is valued as a necessary contribution to the broad struggle for democracy. As an organisation, the ANC emphasizes on discipline and it values the acquisition of political maturity – which has typically been attained through struggle related achievements – along with seniority in the movement, as the bases for a gradual ascension within the structures of the organisation¹⁴.

This relatively stable “order of things” is what the current ANCYL, headed by Julius Malema since 2008, seems to be challenging. I will come back to the young leader’s profile in the next sections of this paper. Let me just here describe the actual political plot between the ANC and its youth wing before explaining why the latter weighs in case of a disputed ANC election. Just like prior to the 2007 ANC National Conference, the ANCYL is the first influential structure in the overall architecture of the movement to take the initiative. Although no candidate declared itself ready to challenge Zuma, the Youth League would like to remove current ANC Secretary General, Gwede Mantashe, and got him replaced by Malema’s predecessor at its head, Fikile Mbalula. The unions’ movement, the South African Communist

IFAS-Karthala, 2004, pp.17-51 (361p.). The authors identify four generations and three networks of political connections in the history of the ANC.

¹³. Vincent Darracq, *La question raciale à l’African National Congress (ANC) post-apartheid : production de discours, régulation et changement dans un parti politique*, Thèse pour le Doctorat en Science politique, sous la direction de René Otayek, Institut d’Études politiques de Bordeaux, 2010 (411p.), pp.237-238.

¹⁴. In 2005, Fikile Mbalula, who was then President of the ANCYL, explained to me that “the question of succession is about certain principles, it is about seniority, it is about attributes of accountability and being selfless to our people. Zuma possesses that and possesses history and track records for being a leader of the ANC.” Fikile Mbalula, personal interview with the author, Johannesburg, April 13, 2005.

Party (SACP) and the Young Communist League (YCL) would prefer Mantashe to retain his position. Clashes have been regular along the past couple of years with Mantashe condemning Malema’s public declarations and recalling that they were not the position of the ANC. The ANC Secretary General also criticised internal disciplinary procedures in the Youth League against Malema opponents¹⁵. When the ANC National Working (NWC) committee considered whether to discipline Malema and other ANCYL leaders who had disrupted its National General Council, Mantashe recommended disciplinary action but was overrode by the other NWC members, including Jacob Zuma who has been seeking to maintain communication with Malema in order to avoid losing the Youth League’s support¹⁶. If the generational shift, in the sense of a clear-cut between the old ANC guard and the post-apartheid generation is not likely to be a sudden change, the election of Mbalula as Secretary General of the ANC would set a precedent. Indeed, although he is not of the generation of Julius Malema, who is ten years younger, the perspective of having a 40-years old secretary general with little experience if one compares him with previous Secretary Generals of the ANC (Mantashe but also Kgalema Motlanthe or Cyril Ramaphosa) would represent a decisive step towards a broader generational turn. This will also be a test of strength for the Youth League since the position of Secretary General is a difficult one to conquer.

The question that can now be asked regards the weight of the ANCYL in the designation of ANC leaders and policy. The ANCYL says it has 1.330 branches “in good standing”¹⁷. It claimed a membership of around 300.000 before its last congress¹⁸ but its size is subject to important variations: pre-election times are typically moments in which regional secretaries

¹⁵. Lionel Faull, Mmanaledi Mataboge, “ANCYL: Mantashe undermines party procedures,” *Mail & Guardian*, July 28, 2010.

¹⁶. Mmanaledi Mataboge, Matuma Letsoalo, Mandy Rossouw, “How Julius got off the hook,” *Mail & Guardian*, November 19, 2010.

¹⁷. This means branches that held their Annual General Meeting and Congress to elect delegates for the 24th National Congress. Floyd Shivambu, ANCYL Spokesperson, “1330 ANCYL branches in good standing-ANCYL NWC,” *Press release*, March 24, 2011.

¹⁸. “ANCYL: small dog, big bite,” *Mail & Guardian*, September 6, 2008.

evaluate the number of branches in good standing, count paid-up memberships, as well as periods of greater mobilisation and recruiting. In terms of its relation to the ANC, it first has a symbolic power inherited from its glorious past and its reputation of king maker, which it proved when it successfully supported Thabo Mbeki against Cyril Ramaphosa in 1994 and 1997, or Zuma vs. Mbeki in 2007. It is usually considered an important base on which to build an electoral campaign in the ANC. Its power in the ANC is also ensured through the “deployment” of Youth Leaguers at all levels the “mother body” as elected officials or as ordinary members. It derives as well as from those among its members who have been elected or appointed to state positions, in Parliament or Government at national or provincial levels, or at local municipal level. Before elections, the ANCYL submits a list of its members it wishes to see integrated to ANC lists of candidates. Its influence is also ensured by its “graduates” or “alumni” who are no longer ANCYL members but who remains affectively and socially linked to it. A small quorum of delegates to the ANC National Conference is finally attributed to the youth and women’s leagues.

II – What political generations after apartheid?

It is one task assigned to this panel to trace the “subjectivities” and “engagements” of post-apartheid generations. Mbalula would hence be a potential hyphen since he started to be politically involved in the 1980s with most of his political career taking place post-1994. Yet he cannot fully be defined as a “post-apartheid politician,” if one considers through such a term those officials who were born in the late 1970s or early 1980s, and whose political consciousness was informed by the last days of apartheid, with a political involvement and

career starting at the turn of the 1990s or even post-1994¹⁹. I shall now introduce, based on secondary sources and interviews realised in 2005, the trajectories of seven “young leaders.” In doing so I will attempt to draw a series of “ideal-types” in the Weberian sense, that is essentially oversimplifications designed to help us understand and analyse a given social phenomenon: in this case the formation of distinct types of post-apartheid political involvements and careers, based partly on distinct political consciousness and engagements. I will refer to four types: the “last young lions,” the “young impulsive political entrepreneur,” the “young professional politician,” and the “young communist.”

The “last young lions”

They were those “hordes” of young people who defied the apartheid regime in the context of 1980s ungovernability. They became politically conscious under apartheid and got involved through youth congresses politics in the 1980s, or a bit before in the case of Peter Mokaba who also belongs to the “class of ’76.” In generational terms they embody a transition between the generation who matured politically and got involved in the 1980s, and that of “post-apartheid politicians,” whose political action was mainly framed in the new South Africa.

A quick search on *Google Images* with the entry “**Peter Mokaba**” returns pictures of the stadium that bears his name in his home town of Polokwane, in Limpopo. Born in 1959 in the city then known as Pietersburg, Mokaba was a leader in the 1976 school boycotts in the north of South Africa. Arrested a first time in 1977 he completed his Matric degree in 1978 and briefly taught maths and science at high school level. He registered in 1980 at the University

¹⁹. I will here distinguish between the formation of “political consciousness” (when one is touched by political events and starts to see the world through political lenses), “political involvement” (when one decides to become active in an organisation), and “political career” (when one’s main activity becomes politics).

of the North. “In 1982 he was arrested again and was tried for membership of the ANC, possession of weapons, undergoing military training in Angola and Mozambique, and recruiting for the ANC.” Sentenced to six years, he spent one on Robben Island. He was elected president of the Makweng Youth Congress in 1985 and became president of SAYCO when it was secretly launched in 1987 in Cape Town. An ANC National Executive Committee (NEC) member from 1991 on, he was elected as the first president of the newly (re)launched ANCYL. He became a Member of Parliament in 1994 and later served as the Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism²⁰. Married with three children, he died in 2002 after a long illness, presumably Aids-related, a disease whose existence he had consistently denied in support of Thabo Mbeki’s stance²¹.

Fikile Mbalula experienced, as one could then read on its online profile of the ANCYL home page, a “meteoric rise to the presidency of the ANC Youth League.” The latter and some segments of the ANC now want him to rise higher and take the top position at Luthuli House (the ANC headquarter in Johannesburg). Currently Sport and Recreation Minister, he was born in 1971 in the Free State, in a family of 10. His father was a farm worker. When asked about the event he remembered as a shock, Mbalula talked about the assassination of Chris Hanani because, he explained, Hanani would have been a leader for the country. As a child he was marked by the 1976 uprisings but the first political event he remembered having taken part in was when he addressed students at a 1986 parade when he was first confronted to the brutality and violence of apartheid. He was politically involved in SAYCO and led the local Botshabelo Youth Congress between 1985 and 1987. After having given up university he said he had undertaken a Master’s degree in development economics at the University of South

²⁰. “Peter Mokaba – An Autobiography,” City of Polokwane’s official portal, <http://www.polokwane.gov.za/userfiles/1/file/2010%20Host%20City/Peter%20Mokaba%20Stadium/Peter_Mokaba- An_autobiography.pdf>

²¹. Gerald Shaw, “Peter Mokaba,” Obituary, *The Guardian*, July 12, 2002.

Africa (UNISA, the country’s leading distance learning institution).²² He held the position of Minister of Police from 2009 to 2010 after leaving his ANCYL presidency (2004-2008)²³ in which he had offered Jacob Zuma a major support in his several trials and power struggle against Thabo Mbeki. There are allegations of close links involving Mbalula, the ANCYL and controversial mining magnate Brett Kebble, who was assassinated in 2005. If Mbalula denied that he had been “mentored” by Kebble, he acknowledged the close relationship between them and said he had a “direct line” to Kebble²⁴.

The “young impulsive political entrepreneur”

The idea of an “impulsive politician” is here meant to isolate the peculiarities of Julius Malema. But it also allows one to normalize him in relation to contemporary political practices. **Julius Malema** is indeed hard to portray, both because of his political versatility and because of his still short career: he is a “populist”²⁵ since he often calls to the people, pretending to be a freedom fighter, reinventing struggle traditions, or promising to redistribute South Africa’s mining wealth; he is also an “identity entrepreneur” who relies on race to discredit his opponents. He enjoys performing such ambiguities before the media as shown by the following quote taken from a TV show: “I’m a Marxist, I’m a Leninist, I subscribe to communism, I’m not a communist, I am a progressive nationalist (...). I’m not a communist, I’m still very young, I’m still trying to find myself (...). My background dictates my identity today, I’m a child of the working class. (...). If I stay in a suburb of white people I’m no longer a child of a black person? (...) My being, my loyalty, my existence is informed by my

²². Fikile Mbalula, personal interview with the author, Johannesburg, April 13, 2005.

²³. Minister of Sport and Recreation, official web site of the DSR, <<http://www.srsa.gov.za/pebble.asp?relid=34>>

²⁴. Mandy Rossouw, “Kebble 'mentored' Mbalula,” *Mail & Guardian*, April 8, 2011.

²⁵. Guy Hermet, Bertrand Badie, Pierre Birnbaum, Philippe Braud, *Dictionnaire de la science politique et des institutions politiques*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1998 (285p.).

background, my struggle is to liberate the working class.”²⁶ A charismatic leader, his vociferous public interventions can remind one of the late Peter Mokaba (from whom he quoted when he reused the “Kill the farmer, kill the Boer” song). Yet Malema is no exception in the world and he can also be seen as one expression of a type of political behaviour often based on impulsions, which is reminiscent of leaders of the likes of a Sarkozy in France, of a Berlusconi in Italy, or even of a Putin in Russia, who are always ready to throw an attack when politically in jeopardy. An impulsive behaviour that equates to a personification of power since it implies to speak out decisions first and to build up an argument in a second move. In 2005 he was the ANCYL Provincial Secretary in Limpopo and I had been given his mobile phone number by a Johannesburg contact who had described him to me as a “known communist”. We could not arrange a meeting but I recently discovered in my notebook that I had added, following on this phone call, next to his name, the mention “not very pleasant.”²⁷ Julius Malema was born in 1981 in Limpopo. Of all the young leaders mentioned in this paper he is probably the one with less political experience (he has no government or legislative background), the less formal education (he did not attend university and his Matric – *high school* – results have been controversially mocked on the Internet). The public knows little about his biography apart from the fact that he was raised by a single mother who was a domestic worker. When it comes to his political background, he says he joined the ANC’s young pioneers programme around the age of 10 and subsequently received military training²⁸. Later on, he was also elected as the Limpopo Chairperson of COSAS.

²⁶. See the TV report of *3rd Degree*, “Julius Malema Unplugged” <http://www.etv.co.za/extended/about/3rd_degree>

²⁷. At this time the ANCYL head or regional offices were very approachable since the organisation was in a growth phase and welcomed publicity. My impression is that it has become much more difficult to access since Malema has become its president, partly because of his ambiguous love and hate relationship with the media.

²⁸. Verashni Pillay, “One-on-One with Julius Malema,” *news24*, June 18, 2008.

The “young professional politicians”

They are typically less versed into political discourse and debate but politically skilful. Well connected in both political and economic terms, they tend to rise regularly in the apparatus of political organisations, starting from student politics up to the ANC. Their ascent in the party is concretised by their retribution through top positions in the State, positions they tend to secure rather than to put at risk in order to attain more ambitious but also more uncertain political goals.

Malusi Gigaba was born in 1971 in KwaZulu Natal. He is the son of an Anglican priest and a nurse. “His hobbies include soccer, gym, jogging, reading and writing.” He graduated in 1994 from the University of Durban-Westville with a Master’s degree in Social Policy. Gigaba’s political career started in the youth and students organisations (including COSAS, the South African Students Congress – SASCO, and the Young Christian Students). He served three terms as president of the ANCYL between 1996 and 2004. A Member of Parliament since 1999, he was Deputy Minister of Home Affairs between 2004 and 2010 before he became South Africa’s Minister of Public Enterprises. He is also an ANC NEC member²⁹. Widely considered to be Thabo Mbeki’s man and *protégé*, he made sure the ANCYL remained quiet and unchallenging through muzzling the organisation’s left just like Mbeki had done in the ANC³⁰. In terms of leadership and as opposed to Peter Mokaba, he was rather “shy” and, like Mbeki, favoured individual interactions to public meetings. He preferred to be called

²⁹. “Minister of the Department of Public Enterprises Mr Malusi Gigaba,” official web site of the DPE, <<http://www.dpe.gov.za/about-pg-14>> Malusi Gigaba published with his supervisor an article based on his M.A. dissertation: Malusi Gigaba, Brij Maharaj, “Land invasions during political transition: The Wiggins saga in Cato Manor,” *Development Southern Africa*, vol.13, no.2, 1996, pp. 217-235.

³⁰. Yet Gigaba was repeatedly and growingly challenged by the left of the Youth League assimilated to the students’ movement and he was forced to renounce cumulating the ANCYL presidency and the position of MP to which he had been elected. On a comparable and contemporary process in the ANC see William Mervin Gumede, *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC*, Cape Town, Zebra Press, 2005. (xv et 352p.).

“president” rather than “comrade.”³¹ Gigaba was responsible for the “modernisation” of the ANCYL and for rebuilding it in a mass-based organisation that claimed half a million members in 2004³². He was also instrumental in developing the Youth League’s financial autonomy through the controversial Lembede Investments vehicle, which Malema promised to close down³³.

Let’s now turn to **Lebogang Maile** who had been announced as Julius Malema’s future contender in the next ANCYL National Congress with the backing of President Zuma³⁴. He is described on the web site of the Gauteng Province, of which he is the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation, as a representative “of the younger generation of liberation fighters.” Born in 1979 in Kempton Park near Johannesburg, he served as deputy chairperson of the COSAS branch in Alexandra where he still lives, an organisation of which he became president in 1995 before he matriculated from a private school in Johannesburg. He then became Provincial Secretary of Gauteng ANCYL before he was elected its Chairperson (2010). “His hobbies include reading, watching and playing soccer pool, play station, debating and watching movies. He is an avid soccer player and sponsors a mature league.” He is married and has four children³⁵. When I met him in 2005 at the Johannesburg office of the ANCYL in Gauteng, he generally gave me the impression of being fluent in the “politically correct” language. He told me that he had been raised in a “very political background,” with a trade-unionist mother, a brother in COSAS and the ANC, as well as another one in exile. He also insisted that he was a member of the SACP. His first “political memories” were several, including the police looking for his brother and breaking

³¹. Oscar van Heerden, personal interview with the author, April 8, 2005.

³². ANC Youth League 22nd National Congress, *2004 Organisational Report*.

³³. “ANCYL to close controversial investment arm,” *Mail & Guardian*, August 6, 2009.

³⁴. Matuma Letsoalo, “Zuma wants Maile to challenge Malema,” *Mail&Guardian*, February 18, 2011.

³⁵. Profile of MEC Lebogang Maile, Gauteng Province official portal, <<http://www.gautengonline.gov.za/Pages/SRACMECLEbogangMaile.aspx>>

in his family’s home, but he told me that he had been politically marked by the 1994 elections. In terms of generation he also said that he did not belong to that of Fikile Mbalula whom he considered the last representative of the previous one³⁶. Maile is seen by his supporters as an antithesis of Malema: “like Malema Maile grew up in the ANC and started with menial party work, including putting up posters and doing door-to-door campaigning. But while Malema rose to popularity through ill-considered and immature statements Maile presents a more sophisticated image.” He was backed by powerful leaders such as ANC provincial chairperson Paul Mashatile who, along with ANC deputy president Kgalema Motlanthe, he considers his mentors. His links with Mashatile and other provincial leaders, who make up the so called “Alex Mafia” are sometimes quoted against him³⁷. However, in a move that seemed to stick to his motto: “must always strive to be the best, if not must at least be counted amongst the best,”³⁸ Maile finally withdrew from the race to ANCYL presidency after he proved unable to secure the support of its own province in the nomination process³⁹. Yet in an ANCYL congress, one can always be nominated “from the floor” and a semblance of suspense will remain until the event takes place.

The “young communists”

The “young communists” put forward their SACP or YCL political identities as a primary reference (as opposed to others who may also be members of the ANC’s left but prefer to mark their belonging to the latter organisation). They are more “educated” politically insofar as they often know their Marxist-Leninist classics and regularly quote from them. But political education shall also be understood here in the more literal sense of the word: a training to ideas and contradictory debate that is generally more widespread among the left of

³⁶. Lebogang Maile, personal interview with the author, Johannesburg, April 12, 2005.

³⁷. Mandy Rossouw, “Meet Malema's new rival,” *Mail & Guardian*, January 21, 2011.

³⁸. Profile of MEC Lebogang Maile, *op.cit.*

³⁹. “ANCYL in Gauteng throws weight behind Malema,” *Mail & Guardian*, June 6, 2011.

the ANC. This communist “tradition” is not exempt of “Stalinist” tendencies as shown by Buti Manamela’s recent “purge” of the YCL, an organisation he has been heading since it was created in 2003. Interestingly and as opposed to what may prevail for instance in post-communist Europe, socialism is not necessarily perceived as old-fashioned in nowadays South Africa. Communists don’t have direct experience of power and have the advantage of accessing it through the Tripartite Alliance, without seemingly “dirtying their hands” in the politico-economic business.

David Masondo is the MEC for Provincial Treasury in Limpopo. He is described on the Provincial Government’s portal as the founding Chairperson of the YCL. He has also been a provincial chairperson of the Limpopo ANCYL. He now serves on the SACP Central Committee. Born in 1974 he started to get politically involved in late 1980s youth congresses politics⁴⁰, before he became Deputy President of SASCO in 1998. Masondo is also a scholar who holds a Master’s degree from Wits University, where he lectured in the Department of Political Science; he is finishing a Ph.D. at New York University. “He is a good soccer player,” as well as a writer and a reader. He is married with two children. Masondo likes consensus for “he believes that through discussion, however divergent the opinions may be a very strong and implementable position accepted by the constituency is always possible.” “It is the experiences that he, his family and members of the community in the areas that he resided in that dictated his involvement in the struggle to liberate all South Africans. The release of political prisoners in 1989 and 1990 further sharpened his tenacity to fight for liberation.⁴¹” In 2008 he was arrested by the police while jogging and subsequently assaulted by the officers, allegedly on xenophobic grounds after they took him for a Zimbabwean when

⁴⁰. David Masondo, personal interview with the author, Johannesburg, May 4, 2005.

⁴¹. Profile of MEC David Masondo, Limpopo Provincial Government official portal, <http://www.limtreasury.gov.za/index.php?page=mec_profile>

he answered to them in his home language – Shangaan – which is spoken on both sides of the border⁴². Last year he denounced the failures of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) which he rephrased as “ZEE” for “Zuma Economic Empowerment.”⁴³ He was subsequently denounced publically by his own organisation, the YCL, for having publically attacked a Tripartite Alliance leader⁴⁴. At the last YCL congress, Masondo supported Manamela’s contender for the top YCL position.

Buti Manamela, born in 1979 in the Limpopo Province, is the National Secretary of the YCL. The organisation was launched in 2003 following on a decision taken at the SACP’s 11th National Congress (2002). Its ancestor, banned in 1950, counted among its members prominent South African communists like Joe Slovo or Govan Mbeki. Blade Nzimande, General Secretary of the SACP, is said to be Manamela’s mentor. Buti Manamela’s “political education began early in life when he joined the African National Congress Youth League in 1992, although he was under-aged and only qualified for membership two years later. He was also the coordinator of the Congress of South African Students at his high school and was elected branch secretary of the Youth League in 1994, at the age of 15.” He studied Electronic Engineering and was elected a Branch Chairperson of SASCO. He was then elected President of the South African College Students Association in 2001, before he became a union organiser in the South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Worker Union (SACCAWU)⁴⁵. Manamela was raised by a single mother, a book keeper who also worked for Spar chain store and was a local secretary in the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). His aunt was active in the civic movement. Manamela told me he would have

⁴². “COSATU on arrest of David Masondo,” *Statement issued by union federation*, July 17, 2008.

⁴³. David Masondo, “Black economic empowerment becomes Zuma economic empowerment,” *City Press*, September 5, 2010.

⁴⁴. YCLSA, *Statement by YCL national office bearers, on an article written by national chairperson David Masondo*, September 6, 2010.

⁴⁵. “Buti Manamela - YCL National Secretary,” YCL official web site, <<http://www.ycl.org.za/main.php?include=about/staff/manamela.html>>

liked to study journalism and embarked on political science classes at UNISA. The first political event that struck him was when his home town’s city hall building was burnt down along with the new police station in the aftermath of Chris Hani’s assassination. When I asked what “political involvement” meant for him, he answered that it concretely refers to his current involvement in the YCL to make the country move forward and he added: “I think that part of our role as the YCL is to demystify political involvement.”⁴⁶ He was re-elected unopposed for a third term as the YCL’s National Secretary at the contested Mafikeng Congress (2010), marked by fraud allegations, which ended up with delegates fighting until the police intervened and shot teargas⁴⁷. After the congress, many of Manamela’s opponents were excluded from the YCL without disciplinary procedure⁴⁸.

This attempt at classifying post-apartheid youth leadership based on their trajectories obviously proves unsatisfactory. It is so because society and politics are more complex than simplified categories but also since the individual trajectories presented all share common features. Another limitation of the exercise is in the fact that they are all politically active and at least relatively successful in their careers, which they decided to pursue rather than giving up political involvement as many others probably did. They all became politically conscious under apartheid and got involved during white minority rule or at the very end of it. They all pursued a political career in the 1990s and ever since. Before that time it was indeed virtually impossible to build one’s political career from the anti-apartheid movement, if one here views “career” as the fact of capitalising on a previous rational investment. Political organisations were banned and one was more likely to end up in jail than in a Sandton villa. They all started in youth and students’ politics, which implies a relatively early involvement in political

⁴⁶. Buti Manamela, personal interview with the author, Johannesburg, April 14, 2005.

⁴⁷. Mmanaledi Mataboge, “Manamela re-elected at violent YCL congress,” *Mail & Guardian*, December 12, 2010.

⁴⁸. Mmanaledi Mataboge, “Purge of league's lumpen,” *Mail & Guardian*, March 4, 2010.

organisations. Interestingly, the youngest among them who put forward a militant identity, namely Julius Malema and Buti Manamela, both insist particularly on their precocious involvement, hence producing the effect of a connection to the young lions’ generation. One can finally mention a possible mimicry between youth politics and “adult” organisations when it comes to mixing up and confusing political and economic interests even though the leaders presented cannot all be seen as “tenderpreneurs.”⁴⁹

III – Between depoliticisation and repoliticisation: what ideas for the post-apartheid Youth League?

After its relaunch, the ANCYL slowly left aside the socialist creed and democratic fervour that had also characterised UDF-affiliated organisations in the 1980s. Under the presidency of Malusi Gigaba, the debate was reduced to a strict minimum⁵⁰ and “democratic centralism” prevailed over cooperation in decision-making. In structures like the ANCYL and the ANC where local branches are often weak or dysfunctional, there is a strong tendency, except in pre-congresses periods where the local regains power, to concentrate decision at and inform debate from the top (at NEC and NWC levels)⁵¹. Under Gigaba and then Mbalula, Youth League leadership also strongly opposed communism in the organisation, which was assimilated to internal dissent from the left, especially after the creation of the YCL, which was perceived as a political threat. Under Malema – and it is a point observers tend to miss – if internal debate does not seem more vibrant, there is nonetheless an apparent effort to bring strong issues back on the front stage. A quick visit to the league’s web site allows one to

⁴⁹. A tenderpreneur can be defined as “someone politically well-connected who has got rich through the government tendering system.” Buddy Naidu, Simpiwe Piliso, “How Malema made his millions,” *The Sunday Times*, 21 février 2010.

⁵⁰. Nandi Khumalo, personal interview with the author, May 4, 2005.

⁵¹. On this question in the ANC, see Vincent Darracq, « Dans le parti, dans le quartier : les branches locales de l’African National Congress (ANC) », *Revue Tiers Monde*, no.196, 2008, pp.779-796.

access many recent discussion documents and reports. ANCYL congress resolutions generally address issues of all types, ranging from health to politics, from the economy to sport. Yet between congresses, the emphasis is generally put on a couple of issues. Under Gigaba it was more on matters such as gender, health, sports. Under Mbalula the focus was on the succession battle. Under Malema it is on economic transformation.

If one looks at ANCYL National Congress resolutions in 2001 (21st congress), 2004 (22nd congress) and 2008 (23rd congress), one notices a clear change of tone. In 2001 the “economic resolutions” came after a long list of points regarding campaigns on HIV/ Aids, on women and children abuse, on crime or on the organisation’s functioning. Economic resolutions were of general reach, rather consensual and fitting in existing ANC policies, though they also insisted that the youth should be specifically considered⁵². In 2004, a series of resolutions on “economic participation” were generally close to those of the previous congress⁵³. When one takes a look at the last congress’ resolutions, the change is sharp. After a first special resolution in support of Jacob Zuma, come the resolutions on “economic transformation.” Starting as usual by recalling the support to programmes of economic transformations operated by the ANC-led government, it states, that “with balance of forces shifting in favour of forces of change, the ANC should re-assert itself in the programme to realise Freedom Charter aspirations.” A third point further adds that “the ANC Youth League’s assessment of all Economic Transformation programmes and activities will be measured in relation to the aims, objectives and aspirations of the Freedom Charter.” In the 2001 resolutions, the word “freedom” did not even appear. In 2004, “freedom” was mentioned three times but there was not a single reference to the Freedom Charter. The 2008 resolutions then address the issue of “monopoly capital,” stating that “we must continue to change patterns of ownership of the means of production” and that “the means to regulate monopoly capital and monopolistic

⁵². ANC Youth League, *21st National Congress – Resolutions*, Mangaung, Free State, April 5-8, 2001.

⁵³. ANC Youth League, *22nd National Congress Resolutions*, Nasrec, Gauteng, August 18-22, 2004.

behaviour by huge corporations should include nationalisation, strengthening of competition law enforcement, and expropriation without compensation.” It further resolves that “the State should control and be in ownership of strategic sectors of the South African economy, including the extraction, production and trade of petroleum and mineral resources, metals, iron ore, steel, coal, water, marine resources and land.”⁵⁴

The attention was concentrated on the ANC’s internal power struggle at the time and virtually nobody noticed that the call for nationalisations, which later came as a blow in South Africa’s public debate, had just been put on the ANCYL’s agenda at its 2008 congress. Another interesting element that is visible from 2008 on in ANCYL documents is that political education has become an important objective⁵⁵. Malema is often portrayed as an ignorant demagogue and he was “sentenced” by the ANC to attend at least 20 days of ANC political school, as well as anger management classes – although disciplinary charges against him were dropped, in relation to his singing of the “Kill the farmer” song and because of his controversial trip to Zimbabwe⁵⁶.

The call for nationalising the mines became an item in South Africa’s public debate since 2009. Its main advocates are Julius Malema and the ANCYL National Spokesperson Floyd Shivambu. The call was quickly turned down by the Minister of Mineral Resources, Susan Shabangu, who reminded along with President Zuma that such was not the policy of the South African government. So did Gwede Mantashe who recalled it was no more ANC policy. The ANCYL, however, states the contrary. It bases its argument on the Freedom Charter and on the need to put it back at the centre of political agenda ahead of the 2012 ANC conference of

⁵⁴. ANC Youth League, *23rd National Congress – Resolutions*, Nasrec, Gauteng, June 27-29, 2008.

⁵⁵. See for instance the following ANCYL documents: “Marxism. Frequently Asked Questions,” ANCYL Cadre Development Notes, August 11, 2009; *ANC Youth League Train the Trainers Workshop and Winter School*, June 2009; ANCYL, *ANC Youth League Induction Manual*, 2011.

⁵⁶. Nkululeko Ncana, “Anger-management classes for Malema,” *Times Live*, May 11, 2010.

the century⁵⁷. It also relies on historical figures, especially Nelson Mandela, who are extensively quoted in its nationalisation document⁵⁸. Politically the league also bases itself on the ANC’s resolutions adopted at the movement’s last National Conference, in 2007. Interestingly the ANCYL 2008 resolutions on economic transformation quote directly from those of the ANC but they bring them much farther⁵⁹. The ANC finally decided to appoint an independent research team “to investigate successful models that could be considered on the role of the state in mining.” The Youth League answered that it would “support all research on nationalisation of Mines which is not depoliticised and taken out of its original political context and strategic vision of the ANC, the Freedom Charter.” It argues that the question should not be addressed in “technocratic” or “academic” terms but as a “transformation programme” part of the “national democratic revolutionary agenda.”⁶⁰

The ANCYL’s claim is therefore that it’s been trying to repoliticise the debate. A claim that should also be read against allegations of depoliticisation among post-apartheid youth, which I have regularly heard in statements from the previous generation of 1980s activists. Such allegations are also linked to lower voters’ registration figures. In 2002, 48% of South Africans between the ages of 18 and 20 were registered to vote, against 77% for the 20-30 years old age group⁶¹. A more in depth inquiry in political participation among the youth could say whether young people vote more or less, but their potential electoral impact is

⁵⁷. I am to make a more detailed insight in this debate in a second presentation, entitled “From the Freedom Charter to the Mining Charter: transforming the gold industry for the benefit of ‘the people as a whole’ in post-apartheid South Africa?,” in Panel 72 of the ECAS 4 Conference: *Gold Mining in Africa; distribution of benefits and burdens*, organized by Sabine Luning and Cristiana Panella on June 18.

⁵⁸. ANC Youth League, “Towards the transfer of mineral wealth to the ownership of the people as a whole: a perspective on nationalization of Mines,” *Discussion document*, August 2010.

⁵⁹. Where ANC resolution on economic transformation 1.6 poses for example “A developmental state must ensure that our national resource endowments, including land, water, minerals and marine resources are exploited to effectively maximise the growth, development and employment potential embedded in such national assets, and not purely for profit maximization;” the ANCYL states as already quoted earlier in this paper: “The State should control and be in ownership of strategic sectors of the South African economy, including the extraction, production and trade of petroleum and mineral resources, metals, iron ore, steel, coal, water, marine resources and land.” ANC, *52nd National Conference: Resolutions*, Polokwane, December 20, 2007; ANCYL, *23rd National Congress – Resolutions*, op.cit.

⁶⁰. “ANC sets record straight on mine research,” *Sapa*, November 17, 2010.

⁶¹. National Youth Commission, *Status of the Youth report*, Johannesburg, NYC, 2002.

growing. Registered South Africans aged between 18 and 29 years old represented 6 million voters out of a total of 23 million in 2009, against 4 millions for 20 million voters in 2004⁶². The conditions of politicisation have changed since 1994 due to the radical transformation of political environment. A change that is often reduced, when considering younger generations, to stronger “individualism,” the use of new information technologies⁶³ or a deeper attachment to material culture. Yet in terms of post-apartheid economic enrichment through BEE deals and tender attribution, the example has in fact been set by the previous generations of ANC leaders. When attacked on his “lavish lifestyle,” allegations of contentious tender attribution or tax fraud, Malema is used to racialise the question of wealth, stressing for instance that Blacks have the right to drink champagne and drive fancy cars, just like white people do, without being called corrupt⁶⁴. He also plays on the “positive” part of “tenderpreneur” imagery, that of the self-made man who started from scratches out of a regular township youth. To that extent, the likes of Julius Malema can embody a “new figure of success.”⁶⁵ Moreover, when he states that the nationalisation of the mines could pay for university fees⁶⁶, he is probably well understood by many of his fellow contemporaries for whom the slow pace of change has become a vital issue marked by the fear of being skipped, as a generation, from socioeconomic change: the resolution of unequal access to wealth can no longer be left for later at the end of the second decade of liberation. Yet what characterises Malema among other things is his capacity, like populist leaders, to raise relevant questions without accepting the debate that should logically follow. Instead he prefers to delegitimize his opponents and one of his favourite ammunition is the “race card.”

⁶². Vincent Darracq, *La question raciale à l'African National Congress (ANC) post-apartheid : production de discours, régulation et changement dans un parti politique*, *op.cit.*, p.249.

⁶³. Enoch Godongwana, Joel Netshitenzhe, Mandla Nkomfe, “Contextual considerations in addressing challenges of leadership,” *Umrabulo*, no.30, Johannesburg, 2007; quoted in Vincent Darracq, *ibid.*, p.227-228.

⁶⁴. See the TV report of *3rd Degree*, “Julius Malema Unplugged,” *op.cit.*

⁶⁵. Richard Banégas, Jean-Pierre Warnier, « Nouvelles figures de la réussite et du pouvoir », *Politique Africaine*, no.82, juin 2001, pp.5-21.

⁶⁶. Mines could pay for fees at university, says Malema,” *Business Day*, October 7, 2010.

His resort to the semiology of the struggle goes further than the usual “Amandla,” as shown by his repopularising of Peter Mokaba’s “Kill the farmer, kill the Boer” song, which dates back to the assassination of Chris Hani in 1993. As a result Malema was sued by an Afrikaner lobby called Afriforum. The judge of the South Gauteng High Court ruled that it was, from now on, unconstitutional to use the phrase “dubul’ibhunu” (“shoot the Boer”) in South Africa for it amounted to “hate speech.”⁶⁷ Malema’s use of the struggle is seen as historically irrelevant and politically costly by many ANC leaders since a “freedom song” such as “Kill the farmer” was connected to the specific context of the early 1990s that no longer is. Recasting it in nowadays South Africa is populist precisely because it appeals to a time in which the youth was facing armed government forces in the townships on a daily basis in order to achieve political freedom. Malema himself acknowledges this when he explains that political freedom is useless without economic freedom: “We’re now economic freedom fighters. The revolution started to get food. We don’t have to apologise, or be shy about this struggle.”⁶⁸ In other words when ANC leaders argue, against the interdiction of the controversial song, that at the time when it was sung “Kill the Boer” equated to “fight the power,” Malema says that it now equates to “fight capital.” But when a South African judge bans an ex-freedom song, it also forces Malema’s opponents within his own camp to come in his defence⁶⁹. The second phase of his Johannesburg trial was cleverly staged in the fall of 2011, with scores of supporters bussed to demonstrate in front of the Court, a group of bodyguards armed to the teeth and historic figures such as Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. Malema addressed his supporters and started to sing the now famous song, changing “Kill the farmer...” in “Kiss the Boer, kiss the famer.”⁷⁰ To the extent that he revives the argument of race without making any clear reference to the history of the anti-apartheid movement (be it to

⁶⁷. Kevin Bloom, “‘Kill the Boer’: a brief history,” *The Daily Maverick*, March 29, 2010.

⁶⁸. Malema: “We’re economic freedom fighters,” *Mail & Guardian*, March 6, 2011.

⁶⁹. Lesiba Seshoka, NUM National Spokesman, “NUM calls on Afriforum to abandon its case,” April 14, 2011.

⁷⁰. “Malema sings ‘kiss the boer, kiss the farmer,’” *Sapa*, April 13, 2011.

the Africanist stream of Lembede, the Pan Africanist Congress of Robert Sobukwe, the Black Consciousness Movement of Steve Biko or even to the Non European Unity Movement), he sounds more like an “identity entrepreneur” hence sharing similarities with, for example, a Charles Blé Goudé, the leader of the Young Patriots in Ivory Coast⁷¹. In the non-racialist tradition of the ANC, Nelson Mandela had distanced race from politics since apartheid had fused the two. He tried to make race an irrelevant category. In reference to another tradition of the ANC, Thabo Mbeki insisted on the African identity of South Africa in an attempt to break-up with the persisting forces of colonialism. As opposed to these two approaches, Julius Malema reintroduces race as a relevant category. Of course he insists on the fact that race is a socio-economic construct since the social gap was racialised by apartheid, and he refuses to be called a White just because he is wealthy, recalling that he is the son of a black domestic worker. Yet instead of deconstructing identity⁷², he participates in its reconstruction. When Gwede Mantashe defends the controversial song as “an ANC song,” he does it as an ex-anti-apartheid activist and in defence of a historical heritage. Malema makes it a political tool and there clearly is a “generation gap” between the two if one thinks of Malema’s race-based attacks on someone like Jeremy Cronin, the SACP Deputy General Secretary, whom he called a “white messiah” after Cronin had criticised the ANCYL’s position on nationalisation, or when he refused to talk to young Democratic Alliance National Spokesperson Lindiwe Mazibuko. In this last case, Malema justified his move saying that he was “never asked to debate Lindiwe... She's a nobody, she's a tea girl of the madam [Helen Zille the DA’s head]. I'm not debating with the service of the madam (...).”⁷³ Following on the May 2011 local

⁷¹. See Richard Banégas, Alain Toh, Yao Kouman Adingra, “Côte d’Ivoire: The Political Economy of a Citizenship Crisis,” in Fransisco Gutiérrez, Gerd Schönwälder (Ed.), *Economic Liberalization and Political Violence. Utopia or Dystopia*, New York, Pluto Press, 2010, pp.126-172.

⁷². On this dimension applied to gender, see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York, London, Routledge, 1990 (xii&172p.).

⁷³. Yadhana Jadoo, “Malema dubs DA’s Mazibuko a ‘tea girl’,” *Cape Times*, May 20, 2011.

elections, the ANC admitted through the voice of its Secretary General that Malema’s declarations on race had lost it votes in minorities⁷⁴.

Conclusion

As opposed to other young leaders who may embody a generational rupture as far as their politicisation and political culture are concerned, Malema seems to embody, at least to some extent, a rupture in ANC ideology since he hardens the discourse of transformation and brings it on racial ground. If race was never a taboo in the movement, it was generally considered with caution by its leaders. It is all the more sensitive if one considers tensions between nationals and non-nationals that were brought to a climax in the May 2008 wave of violence.

As a political entrepreneur, Malema is running a flourishing business and the ANCYL’s focus on socioeconomic transformation is probably what South Africa’s youth is expecting, independently of what young people may think of the nationalisation issue or of the young leader and his colleagues. Julius Malema is likely to remain in control of the Youth League for the next three years, influence the next ANC election, and ultimately the future of South Africa. Yet the ANYCL is also an instrument in the hands of the ANC and its more radical character is welcome by the “mother body” insofar as it allows it to retain its militant identity. It is also the political school of the ANC and most of the cadres that go through it become loyal ANC cadres when they “graduate” from the Youth League.

⁷⁴. Mandy Rossouw, “Malema lost us votes, ANC admits,” *Mail & Guardian*, May 24, 2011.