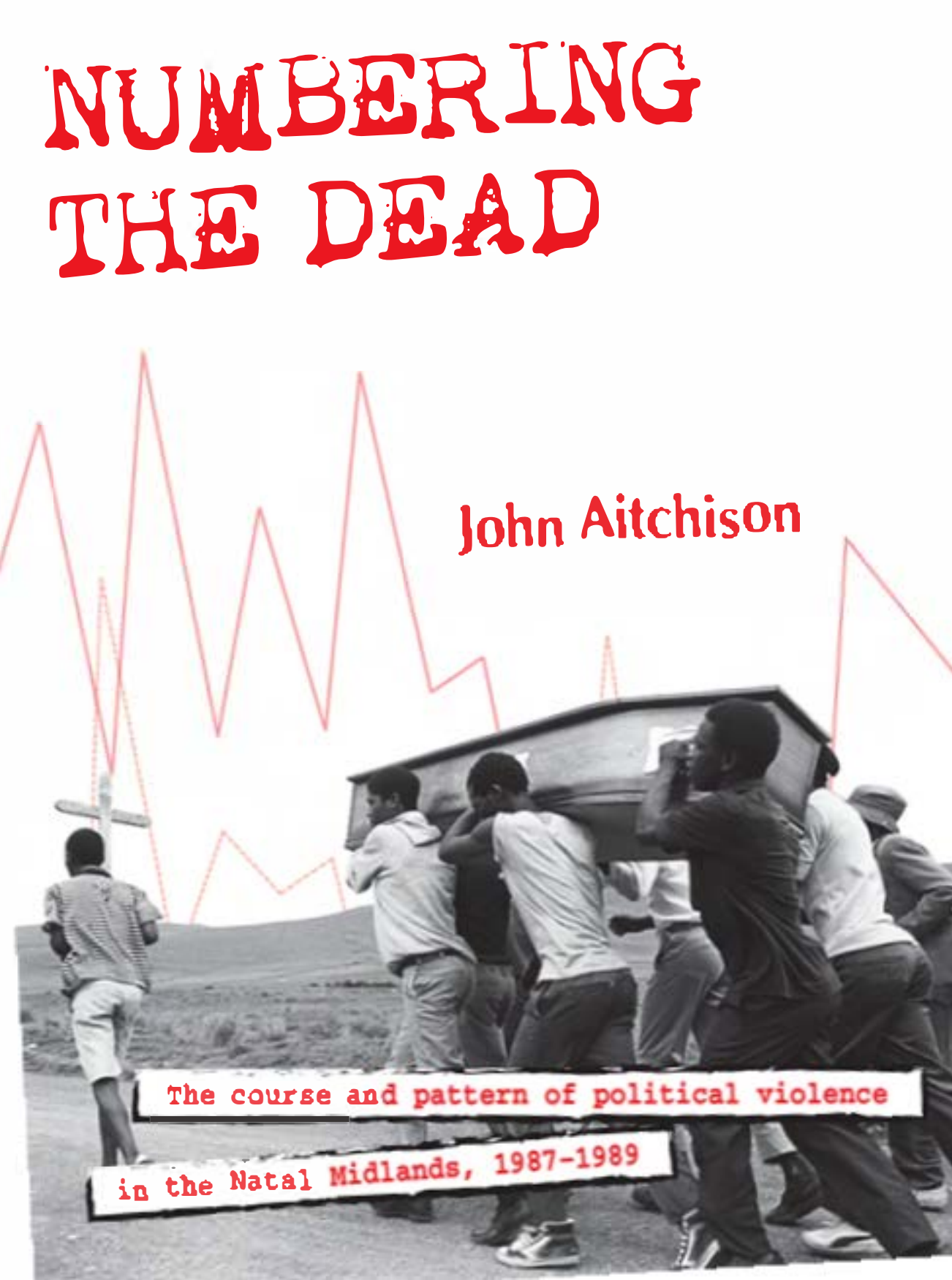


NUMBERING THE DEAD

John Aitchison



The course and pattern of political violence

in the Natal Midlands, 1987-1989

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in the Natal Midlands, 1987–1989**

by

John Aitchison



Natal Society Foundation Trust
PIETERMARITZBURG
2015

Numbering The Dead.
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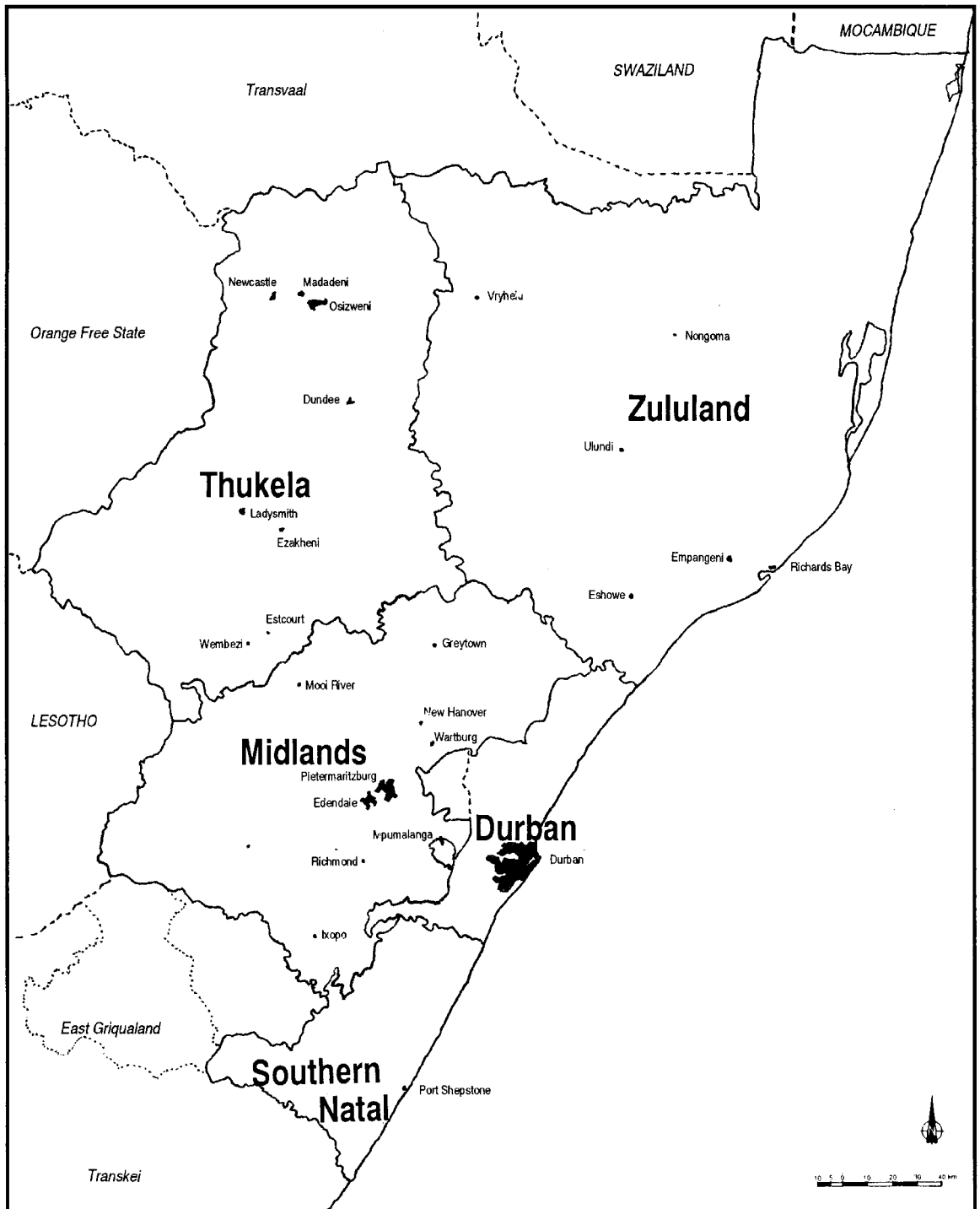
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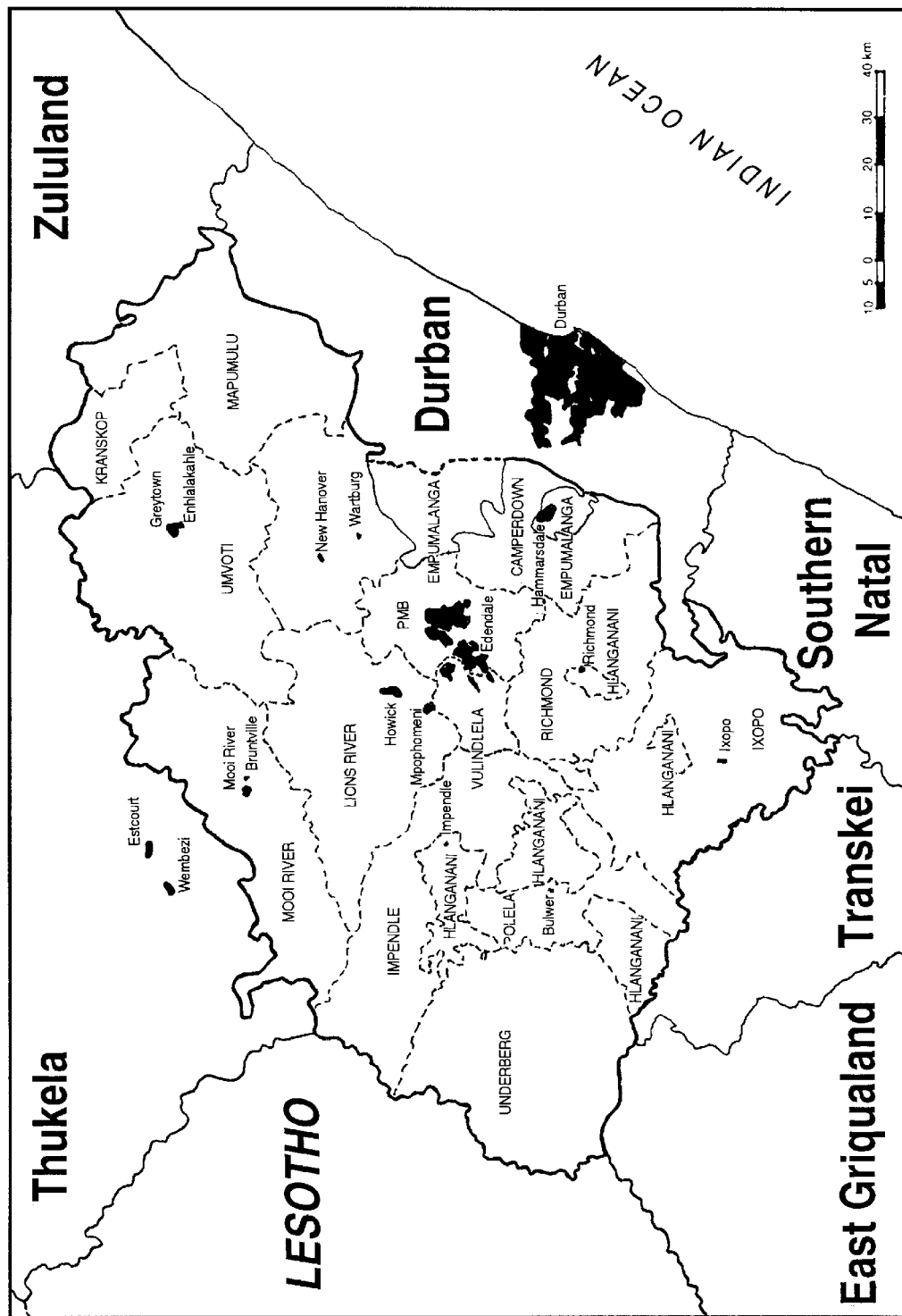
ABBREVIATIONS

ADJ	Association of Democratic Journalists
ANC	African National Congress
ANC(EM)	African National Congress (External Mission)
ANCYL	African National Congress Youth League
AYO	Ashdown Youth Organisation
AZANYU	Azanian National Youth Unity
AZAPO	Azanian Peoples Organisation
AZASM	Azanian Students Movement
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
CAB	Complaints Adjudication Board
CAE	Centre for Adult Education
CASE	Community Agency for Social Enquiry
CCB	Civil Co-operation Bureau
CODESA	Conference for Democracy in South Africa
CONTRALESA	Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DACOM	Detainees Aid Committee
DESCOM	Detainees Support Committee
DET	Department of Education and Training
DP	Democratic Party
DTA	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
ECC	Edendale Crisis Committee
EDEYO	Edendale Youth Organisation
EMPSA	Ecumenical Monitoring Programme in South Africa
FOSATU	Federation of South African Trade Unions
HAYCO	Hammarisdale Youth Organisation
HRC	Human Rights Commission
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
HURIDOCs	Human Rights Information and Documentation Systems International
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDASA	Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
ILEFO	Independent Law Enforcement Facilitation Office
IMSAA	Independent Mediation Services of South Africa
ISG	Imbali Support Group
ISU	Internal Stability Unit
IYB	Inkatha Youth Brigade
IYO	Imbali Youth Organisation
KZP	KwaZulu Police
LHR	Lawyers for Human Rights

LIC	low-intensity conflict
LRC	Legal Resources Centre
MAWU	Metal and Allied Workers Union
MDM	Mass Democratic Movement
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe
NACTU	National Council of Trade Unions
NDM	National Democratic Movement
NECC	National Education Crisis/Co-ordinating Committee
NEHAWU	National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union
NIC	Natal Indian Congress
NIM	Network of Independent Monitors
NP	National Party
NPA	National Peace Accord
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NUMSA	National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PCC	Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Commerce
PFP	Progressive Federal Party
PWV	Pretoria/Witwatersrand/Vereeniging
RENAMO	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (National Mozambique Resistance)
SACBC	Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SAP	South African Police
SAPA	South African Press Association
SASRIA	South African Special Risks Insurance Association
SJ	Society of Jesus
SOYO	Sobantu Youth Organisation
SPASEC	Students of Pietermaritzburg Social and Educational Club
SWAPO	South West African Peoples Organisation
TGWU	Transport and General Workers Union
UDF	United Democratic Front
UMAG	Unrest Monitoring Group
UMP	Unrest Monitoring Project
UWUSA	United Workers Union of South Africa
WCC	World Council of Churches

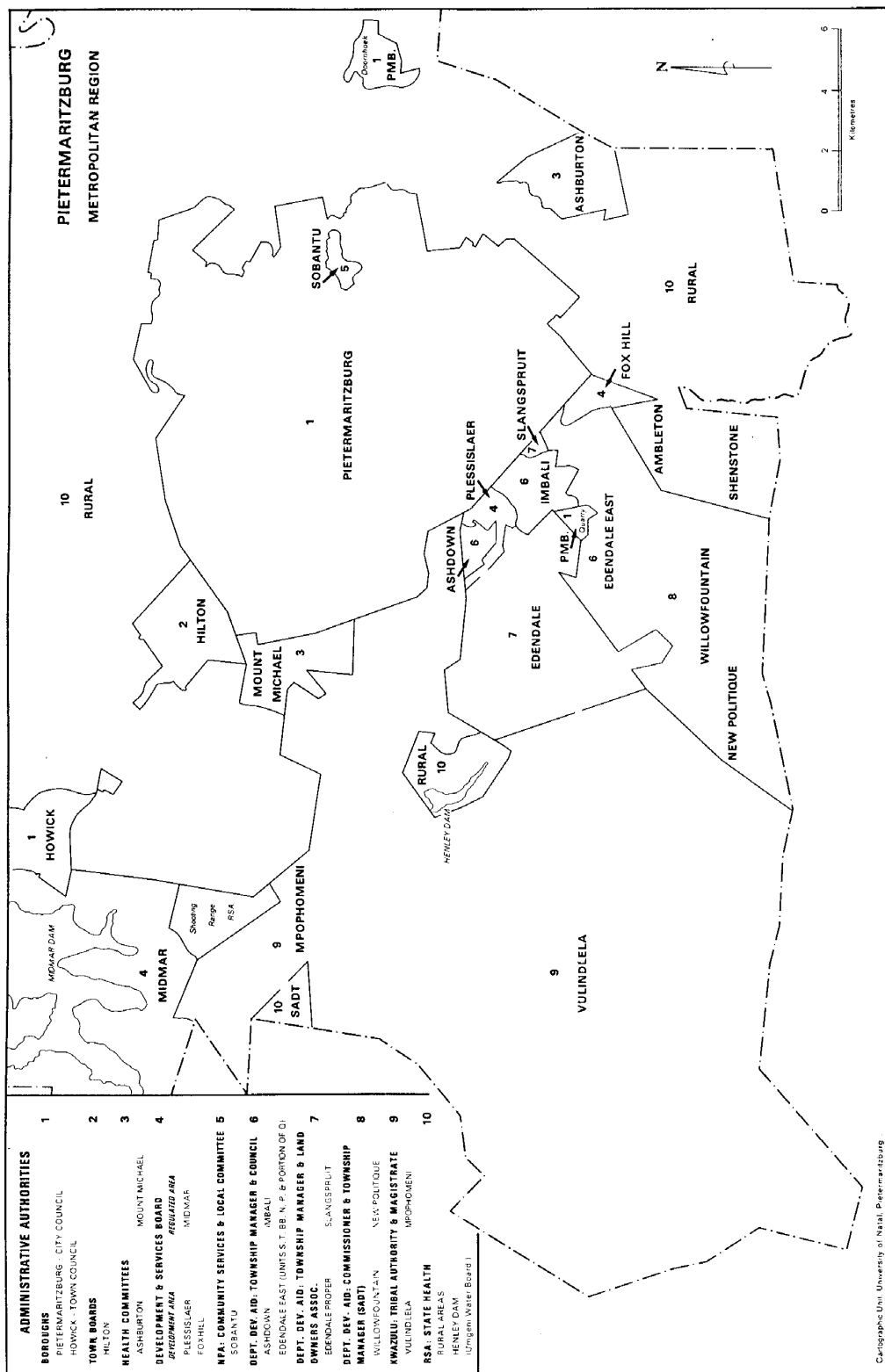


Map 1 Natal

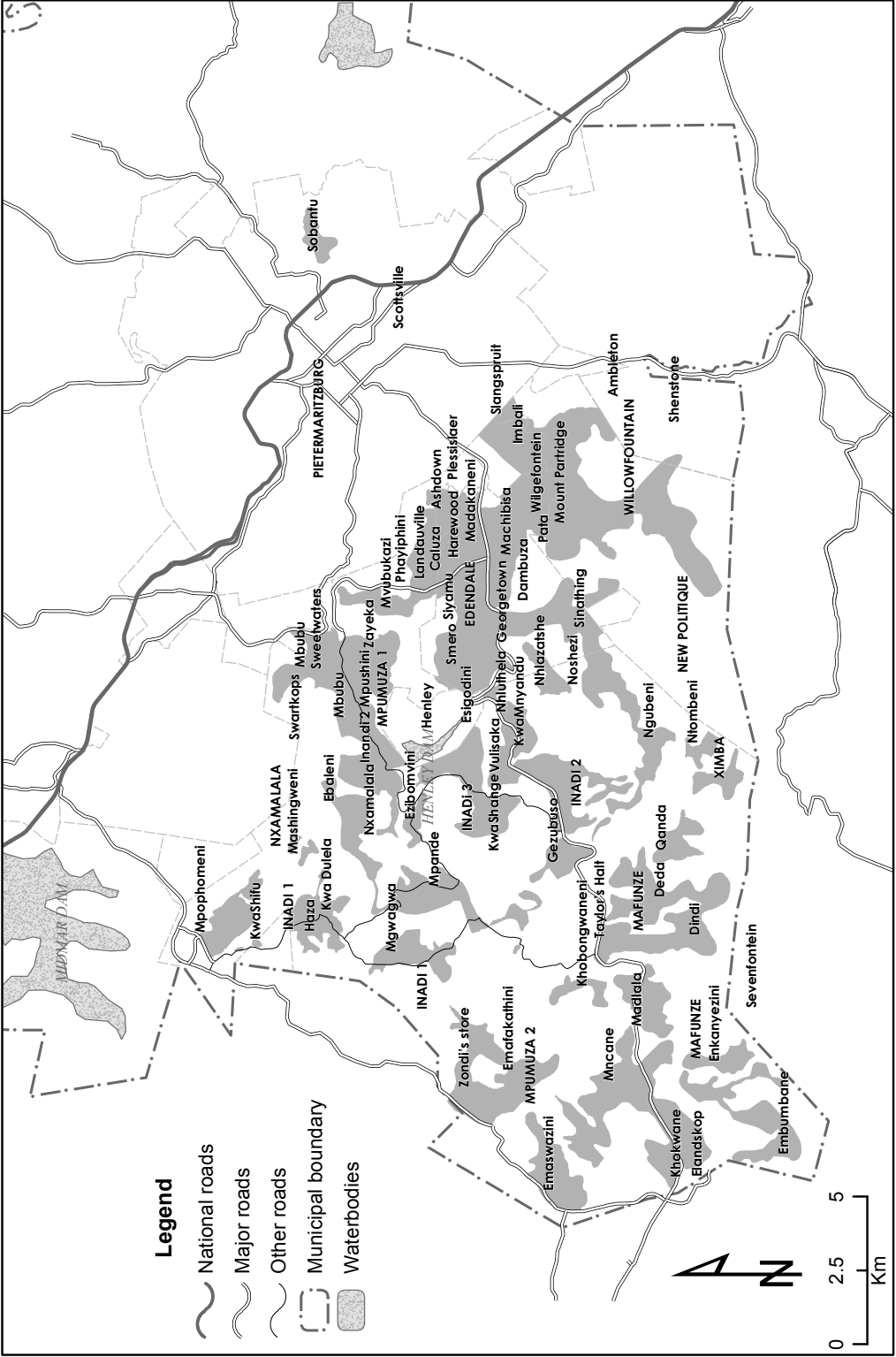


Map 2 The Natal Midlands

Map 3 The Pietermaritzburg and Durban regions



Map 4 The Pietermaritzburg Metropolitan region



SELECTED LIST OF INDIVIDUALS

Arenstein, Rowley	Inkatha lawyer
Awetha, Abdul	Inkatha leader, Imbali
Barayi, Elijah	COSATU president
Bhengu, Siegfried	Inkatha
Booyesen, Peter	University of Natal vice-chancellor
Breytenbach, Wynand	Deputy Minister of Defence
Büchner, Jac	SAP brigadier and head of the security police in Pietermaritzburg; later head of the KwaZulu Police
Buthlezi, Mangosuthu	Inkatha and KwaZulu government leader
Chetty, A.S.	UDF Natal Midlands chairperson
Cornell, Mark	Pietermaritzburg mayor
Cronje, Pierre	NDM member of parliament for Greytown
De Witt, H.G.	SAP general and commissioner of police
Dhlomo, Oscar	Inkatha secretary-general
Duma, Robert	Imbali Civic Association
Erwin, Alec	COSATU
Gabela, Jerome	Inkatha chairman, Trust Feed
Gastrow, Peter	Lawyer and PFP member of parliament for Durban Central
Gumede, Archie	UDF co-president
Haswell, Rob	PFP member of parliament for Pietermaritzburg South
Hurley, Denis	Roman Catholic archbishop
Jele, Ben	Inkatha leader, Imbali
Kerchhoff, Peter	Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness co-ordinator
Koornhof, Piet	Minister of Co-operation and Development
Kweyama, Austin	Community councillor, Imbali
Mabaso, Joseph	Inkatha warlord
Mafole, Ntwe	Inkatha Youth Brigade national organiser
Malunga, Penwell	UWUSA
Maphumulo, Hlabunzima	Chief of the Table Mountain area
Mbanjwa, Dumisani	COSATU
Mdluli, Bangukhosi	Chief of the amaNyavu
Mellet, Leon	SAP brigadier and spokesperson
Mgojo, Khoza	Federal Theological Seminary president
Mitchell, Brian	SAP station commander, New Hanover
Mkhize, Vusi	COSATU
Mlaba, Msinga	Chief of the Ximba, Hlanzeni, Umgeni Valley
Mncwabe, Jerome	Inkatha warlord
Mogoba, Stanley	Methodist bishop
Mtolo, S.S.	Inkatha vice-chairman, Imbali
Mvelase, Vitus	KwaZulu urban representative

Naidoo, Jay	COSATU general secretary
Ndlovu, Alfred	COSATU leader
Ndlovu, Jabu	COSATU
Ndlovu, Psychology	Inkatha member of the KwaZulu parliament
Ndlovu, Velaphi B.	KwaZulu Legislative Assembly member
Ngidi, Bheki	COSATU
Ngwenya Mbatha, Skumbuzo	UDF Natal Midlands co-secretary
Nkehli, Zakhele	Inkatha leader, Hammarsdale
Ntombela, David	Inkatha warlord and member of the KwaZulu legislature
Nuttall, Michael	Anglican bishop of Natal
Pakkies, Patrick	Inkatha leader, Imbali
Saunders, Chris	Chairman of Tongaat Hulett
Schutte, Danie	Deputy Minister of Justice
Sishi, Roger	Mayor of Hammarsdale
Terblanche, Deon	SAP captain, head of the Pietermaritzburg riot police
Van der Merwe, Johan	SAP lieutenant-general, later national police commissioner
Van Uytrecht, Paul	Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Commerce
Vlok, Adriaan	Minister of Law and Order
Warber, Rolf	SAP security branch
Wittenberg, Martin	UDF Natal Midlands co-secretary
Woods, Gavin	Inkatha Institute for Southern Africa director
Zondi, Musa	Inkatha Youth Brigade national chairman
Zondi, Shayabantu	Inkatha warlord
Zuma, Lawrence	Inkatha warlord
Zuma, Sichizo	Inkatha warlord
Zwelithini, Goodwill	Zulu king

FOREWORD

John Aitchison's *Numbering the Dead* is a remarkable document. Now published by the Natal Society Foundation Trust a quarter of a century after the violent unrest in the Pietermaritzburg region of 1987–1989 it records, it sets out evidence collected at the time and clarifies the origins of the conflict. Its history ran counter to the national trend. Elsewhere in South Africa the government had some success in suppressing unrest by augmenting its considerable state security powers with a State of Emergency. In the Natal Midlands the story was very different. In spite of persistent problems in the first half of the eighties, especially in schools and over rents and bus fares that resulted in the protests and casualties chronicled in this book, the region was quiet by national standards. But from 1987 until the unbanning of the liberation movements in early 1990 it was the locus of some of the most destructive intra-communal conflict in modern South Africa. In March 1990, the short Seven Day War (not covered in this book) broke out in the Edendale Valley, after which the violence abruptly subsided into low-key although often fatal political conflict that is occasionally discernible today. In 1990, intense conflict erupted in Gauteng, particularly in townships with migrant labour hostels; and on the transport network, especially trains. There was a very strong sense that the Midlands war had been if not a rehearsal, then a prelude to the violence on the Reef.

The significance of *Numbering the Dead* is threefold. First, it is based on a massive and daunting exercise in data collection and verification. Those were confusing and dangerous times even in the relative peace and security of a university campus. People were dying violently in large numbers and the perpetrators had good reason to be antagonistic to anyone involved in recording human rights abuses. Extracting the probable truth out of a tangled web of reports from police, press, political organisations, monitoring groups, eyewitnesses and local informants required intellectual nimbleness and a shrewd sense of local history and community dynamics. To assist them in their task John Aitchison, Wendy Leeb and Vaughn John made telling use of a computer database at a time when such applications were still in their relative infancy.

Second, important as this was, it was not simply a data collection exercise and a record for posterity. John Aitchison subjected his facts and figures to rigorous analysis, came to conclusions, and bravely presented them to the public at a time when the conflict was still ongoing. His basic finding was

that although the roots of the conflict were multi-dimensional, the trigger was indisputably political: a violent struggle for power symbolised by space and people at a time when the nation's post-apartheid future was first being mapped out under pre-negotiation conditions. The specific cause was the willingness of the state to abandon any pretence of adherence to the rule of law and through acts of omission and commission back its conservative and traditionalist ally Inkatha as it desperately strove to control the numbers and territory required to show that it was a serious actor on the national political stage. For this reason hundreds died, thousands were injured and displaced, and enormous damage was done to property and the local economy. The strength of Aitchison's contemporary conclusions is that they are as valid today as they were then. No one has come up with sufficient contradictory data or alternative plausible interpretation. Attempts have been made to paint the conflict at least in part in the colours of ANC insurrectionary tactics directed from the external mission, if not from Moscow. There is no evidence to support such a case; for example, linking militant broadcasts from Radio Freedom to events on the ground in Edendale, Imbali and Ashdown and the wider region. This is speculation and wishful thinking that suited (and still suits) some oddly disparate bedfellows such as the old apartheid government, the ANC, Inkatha and the conservative liberals of the Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg. Aitchison's argument about the Midlands conflict presents a logical narrative of cause and effect and his analysis has robustly stood the test of time.

Third, the involvement of the Centre for Adult Education (CAE) on the Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of Natal in data collection and analysis of the conflict raging nearby (the Unrest Monitoring Project) was a wonderful example of the academic praxis of the time. Superficially, it was entirely unremarkable. After all, from the second floor offices of the CAE in the New Arts Block it was possible to see the entire length of the Edendale Valley from the outskirts of the city to the upper reaches near Elandskop, much of it then administered by KwaZulu. Indeed this geography explained a major part of the conflict, as *Numbering the Dead* relates. But prior to the radicalisation of the Humanities and Social Sciences from the late 1960s onwards, university departments had shown scant interest in their immediate environs. By the mid-1980s, mainly under the influence of Marxist and radical liberal critical analysis, many academics were posing research questions with local relevance that related to human rights issues and the struggle for a just and democratic South Africa. The work of the CAE was a stellar example, fitting perhaps into that distinctive development in historical studies called

social history that recorded the experiences of ordinary people. Academic enquiry had become part of the liberation struggle in the broadest of senses. This, incidentally, gives the lie to recent ahistoric claims that all South Africa's universities under apartheid were simply factories of conformism that collaborated with the system.

Numbering the Dead earned John Aitchison a Master's degree in 1993. Its publication as a monograph, with eventual public domain online access in accordance with the policy of the Natal Society Foundation Trust, makes available to the general public a document that is key to an understanding of the recent history of Pietermaritzburg and the Natal Midlands region.

Christopher Merrett
Pietermaritzburg, June 2014

PREFACE

This volume started life as a database, provided the raw material for a series of reports and papers, and was finally converted into a thesis. It is now, nearly a quarter of a century later, published as a book. Given its importance as an historical document in its own right, editorial intervention has been minimal. The only major change has been to place the chapter on human rights monitoring methodology as chapter 10, in effect an appendix. This leaves the body of the book as a narrative and analysis of a crucial three-year period in the history of the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands at the end of the 1980s. The methodology section was in any case written with a backward look at political violence and unrest.

The book's origins mean that the text contains a certain level of repetition – speeches by Minister of Law and Order Adriaan Vlok are a case in point – that might normally have fallen victim to an editor's delete button. This has not happened because such passages are essential to the coherence of the book and integral to its developing argument.

Twenty-five years ago it was common practice for authors of books published in South Africa to provide a disclaimer about the use of colonial and apartheid racial terminology, justifying it on the grounds that this was a reflection of the current South African discourse and everyday reality. Where this book employs racial terminology for those same historical reasons there is no longer a need to acknowledge the fact since the post-apartheid government continues to use and entrench such categorisation without apology or shame.

Acknowledgements and thanks are due to

- colleagues at the Centre for Adult Education of the University of Natal and particularly to Wendy Leeb and Vaughn John who worked on the Unrest Monitoring Project of the Centre;
- staff of the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness, and particularly the late Peter Kerchhoff, who were major sources of information on the situation in the Natal Midlands at that time;
- the Community Agency for Social Enquiry who funded the database development; and
- the trustees of the Natal Society Foundation for funding the publication of *Numbering the Dead*.

This book is dedicated to those who lost their lives in the conflict. Their loss will affect the political life of the Midlands for generations to come.

John Aitchison

Durban, November 2014

INTRODUCTION

This study is built upon a foundation of figures: a numbering of the dead, the wounded, the burnt and the terrified in the political conflict that from 1987 devastated the valley of the Msunduzi River in which the city of Pietermaritzburg lies.¹

There is a purpose in this statistical, census-like approach. The public and academics, both informed and uninformed, even after more than five years of unofficial low-intensity war, mainly heard stories about Pietermaritzburg and the Natal Midlands.² Some of these stories were at the level of anecdote, graphic accounts of individual events in the battle for political control of Edendale, Vulindlela, Ashdown and Imbali. Other stories were more sustained narratives; and so there is a United Democratic Front (UDF) story, an Inkatha story and, indeed, a police and State one. These stories, enhanced with various degrees of theory and analysis to the extent that intellectuals were drafted into the story making, try to make sense of the anecdotes and the press reports and fit them into a more general understanding of how people think the world works. At the time of the events analysed the world was not working very well in Pietermaritzburg, nor indeed in South Africa as a whole, and the stories about why this was so could not all be true. I have my own beliefs about which story and which version of that story is closest to the truth and also believe that ultimately a good story is far more meaningful than any statistical table or argued thesis. But the numbers presented in this book are useful raw material for a critique of the Inkatha, State, UDF and African National Congress (ANC) stories about the valley of death that the Pietermaritzburg region became.

Making a quantitative census of death and injury may therefore be a laudable endeavour. But numbers are not human beings. Stories and poems eventually voiced the meaning of the Pietermaritzburg crisis. These words from a poem by B.M. Tenza of Imbali express perfectly the horror of life for many black township dwellers in the region:

Blessed are the dead
For they will:
Never be suspected,
Never be chased,
Never be unmanageable
Never be transformed into firewood
Never be killed

For they are now:
 Protected from adversaries
 Saved from opponents
 Secured from the persecution of this world
 Blessed are those who are dead.³

This study updated the report on the monitoring of the conflict given in the author's *Numbering the Dead: Patterns in the Midlands Violence* released in May 1988⁴ and continued the account until the end of 1989, or more precisely to 2 February 1990 when, with the unbanning of the major anti-apartheid political movements, a new era in South African political history can be said to have begun, though it did not bring an end to political violence.⁵ The devastating horror of murder, assault and intimidation continued and so did the necessity to record as truthfully and objectively as possible what happened. The Unrest Monitoring Project (UMP) of the Centre for Adult Education (CAE) of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg from September 1987 tried to perform this duty. This study, using the evidence and statistics produced by the UMP, seeks to understand the course and pattern of the violent conflict in the region. It is divided into nine chapters.

The first chapter provides a brief narrative history of the regional conflict from first signs at the dawn of the eighties until 2 February 1990. The text on the period from 1980 to 1986 examines the beginnings of the violence and factors that may have precipitated it such as housing costs and shortages, transport costs, the excision of Imbali and Ashdown townships from the Pietermaritzburg municipality, the role of town councillors in black local authorities, conflict between Inkatha and the UDF, school unrest and boycotts, the rise of vigilante groups, conflict between the UDF and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and between Inkatha and trade union movements, and the intolerance of opposition by the KwaZulu/Inkatha authorities. The period from 1987 to 1989 is treated as a straightforward chronological narrative.

Chapter 2 describes the general patterns of events and incidents of political violence and unrest recorded in the UMP database in a series of tables and graphs. Limited interpretive commentary is provided as this is done in more analytical detail in chapter 5. Chapter 3 on damage and destruction provides an inventory of the human and material costs of the violence in the region. This is largely descriptive, though where estimates are provided they are justified.

Chapter 4 presents the death statistics, analyses them and assesses their reliability.

The fifth chapter analyses the conflict in more detail. Four main patterns or areas examined are Inkatha and UDF casualties; the geographical progress of the conflict; the role of the State's security services, particularly in relation to Emergency detention; and the relationship of the violence to critical events.

Chapter 6 describes interpretations of the conflict with particular attention devoted to Inkatha and Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's positions. Various hypotheses on the causes of the violence and unrest are explored in chapter 7. Four common interpretations of the origins of the violence in the Midlands – conspiracy theory, black-on-black violence (racial/ethnic causation), socio-economic deprivation, and political conflict – are examined and the evidence for them assessed.

Chapter 8 outlines key features of the Midlands conflict and presents the author's conclusion that among multiple causes of the conflict a political dynamic predominated. Chapter 9 – headed 'Senzani na? In whose interests?' – is a short epilogue looking at whose interests continued to be served by the conflict.

Finally, chapter 10 explores issues relating to monitoring and its methodology. The methods used by the UMP are explained and their use in attempts to deal with intractable methodological problems discussed. Some attention is also paid to subsequent developments in the monitoring of political violence by non-governmental organisations.

The parties involved

With a suitable degree of caution, this study attempts to provide information about who was responsible for events of political violence and unrest. This is a difficult task as the police unrest reports give no indication of the affiliations of aggressors or their victims, nor their names for that matter. Where information was obtained on the initiators of violence and those affected by it, the parties were categorised as follows.

- *Inkatha*: this included Inkatha members, supporters, vigilantes and United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA) members and supporters whether such groups or persons were within the official structures of Inkatha or not. A popular derogatory name for the vigilantes was the new Zulu appellation *othelweni*, a term loosely translated as 'those who pour you over a cliff' that harked back to one of the execution methods used by the Zulu kings Shaka and Dingane. The press sources in the period up to late 1987 tended to use the term vigilantes as a libel-avoiding euphemism for Inkatha. When the

extent of the conflict became known at the end of 1987, and the inescapable conclusion was drawn that Inkatha supporters had killed a lot of people, the press became less coy. The exact relationship between vigilantes and Inkatha members remained problematic.⁶

- *United Democratic Front*: UDF supporters, including members of UDF affiliated organisations, members and supporters of its ally the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and young comrades whether actual members of UDF affiliates or not. Basically this category represented the anti- or non-Inkatha forces that were Charterist in tendency and not Africanists or adherents of the BCM. Strictly speaking, organisations alone were actual members of the UDF and only in a loose sense can one talk of members of such organisations being members of the UDF in the way that one can talk of Inkatha members.⁷ But there were large numbers of young comrades (*amaqabane*) who were supporters of the UDF, though not actual members of UDF affiliates. This was quite understandable given the extremely loose nature of the UDF, exacerbated by the virtually underground existence it led after the State of Emergency was declared on 12 June 1986. After the unbanning of the ANC on 2 February 1990 the UDF went into a rapid decline and was officially disbanded in August 1991, although certain factions in townships such as Mpophomeni continued to identify themselves as UDF rather than ANC.
- *African National Congress*: prior to the unbanning of the ANC and other political organisations on 2 February 1990, references to it were restricted either to political comment about the role of the ANC in exile or to actions by combatants in its military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). Internally, supporters of the ANC would have been present in the UDF and COSATU in large numbers. After its unbanning the ANC became a major actor and it was increasingly difficult to distinguish between supporters of the UDF and the ANC, although the ANC had a much more clearly defined individual membership structure.
- *Black Consciousness Movement and Africanist organisations*: BCM organisations included the Azanian Peoples Organisation (AZAPO) and Azanian Students Movement (AZASM). Azanian National Youth Unity (AZANYU) was pro-Africanist while Forward Youth, though ostensibly non-partisan, was in practice linked to the Unity Movement tradition.
- *Police*: this included the South African Police (SAP) and their riot unit, in 1992 renamed the Internal Stability Unit (ISU), SAP special constables

popularly known as kitskonstabels (instant constables), and the KwaZulu Police (KZP, with jurisdiction in areas officially incorporated into KwaZulu) and their special constables.

- *Radical youth*: applied in cases where it was impossible to determine whether the persons involved were UDF comrades or BCM youth, or both.
- *South African Defence Force*: soldiers of the South African Defence Force (SADF).
- *Radical*: occasionally used as a collective term for the non-Inkatha groups: namely UDF, COSATU and the BCM, without of course accepting the bizarre misinterpretations placed on the word by people such as Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok.⁸
- *Comrades*: in the Natal context largely a self-appellation of the Charterist Left (namely, the ANC, UDF and COSATU) though also used by the BCM. In the township and rural context the term *amaqabane* tended to be applied in a generational way to groups of radical youth, the young lions. The word is thought to originate from a Xhosa term for a youth's companion or buddy in an initiation school.

It must be stressed that allocating responsibility and determining the affiliation of victims was a difficult task, particularly because in many cases people were killed because of the affiliation of their children, and children because of the affiliation of their parents.⁹

ENDNOTES

- 1 It is named a political conflict not from any desire to pre-empt discussion on its nature or origins. Throughout this book 'the political conflict', 'political violence' or simply 'the violence' is used as convenient shorthand. This avoids having constantly to describe it with a mouthful such as 'violence or unrest that was commonly described in the media and police unrest reports as, and generally considered by the majority of the population of the region to be, political or ideological in nature.' When ordinary domestic or criminal violence is referred to, this is always pointed out or is clear from the context.
- 2 The events in the Midlands from the beginning of the eighties onwards occurred in the context of wider developments in South Africa's political history. The assumption is made that the reader will situate the subject of this study in the eighties context. At the beginning of the decade there was a slight liberalisation after the post-Soweto 1976 crackdown on black opposition that was soon followed by a vehement revival of the anti-apartheid struggle, partly in response to the imposition of the tricameral parliament in 1983. Black revolt, particularly in the Transvaal associated with rent boycotts and nationally in black schools that had become a major site of political struggle, led to the imposition of a series of States of Emergency in 1985 and from 12 June 1986 to the end of the decade.
- 3 *Echo* 28 February 1988.
- 4 The first report was originally presented at the Seminar on Political Violence in

Pietermaritzburg held on 18 April 1988 at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

- 5 In analysing the causes of the violence, sections of this book inevitably take into account events in the period from 2 February 1990 onwards.
- 6 The Inkatha newspaper *Ilanga* complained that 'For several months since the outbreak of violence in Natal, Inkatha has been the victim of vindictive advocacy journalism whereby groups of stick-wielding people shouting slogans like "uSuthu" were immediately baptised by certain journalists as "Inkatha members", without a shred of substantiating evidence' (*Natal Witness* 14 December 1988).
- 7 For example, the Joint Academic Staff Association of the University of Natal affiliated to the UDF in 1984, an act confirmed at an extremely well-attended meeting of the association, but there would be many university staff members who could not conceivably be described as being members or supporters of the UDF.
- 8 The interpretation placed by Vlok and some of his subordinates such as Leon Mellet was that radicalism is a terrorist assault on the very foundations of society and civilisation. In this sense it was not political and could not claim the protection of being one amongst other political viewpoints: see *Natal Witness* 27 February 1988 (on Vlok's 'we will fight the radicals' speech to the police) and *Natal Witness* 30 March 1988 (letter by Leon Mellet).
- 9 Take the murder of Skhebe Ngcobo, aged 55, on 29 October 1988 in Imbali. He was a COSATU member and when a group of *amaqabane* came to kill his son, an active Inkatha supporter, they tried to separate the father from his son Sibusiso, aged 27, because they did not want to harm a COSATU member (he was also an Inkatha member). The father refused and insisted on being killed with his son.

1

A STORY OF WHAT HAPPENED IN THE NATAL MIDLANDS

THE ORIGINATOR OF the first shot is a great preoccupation of historians of war. In the case of the Natal Midlands violence it could involve a process of endless regression. Was it the murder of four Congress of South African Trade Union (COSATU) members in Mpophomeni by Inkatha in December 1986? Was it coercion by consumer boycott supporters prior to that? Was it Inkatha supporters in Imbali who chased out radical youth? Was it some youth who threw a petrol bomb at a town councillor's house? The following narrative attempts to provide a condensed version, more or less chronological, of the political violence and conflict in the Midlands and certain other areas of Natal from the beginning to the end of the eighties.

The sources of information, unless otherwise referenced, are the printed registers on political violence and unrest in the Midlands for the years 1980 to 1991 compiled from the Unrest Monitoring Project (UMP) database, details of which are given in chapter 10. A particularly useful source for the period 1980–1986 is Paul Forsyth's chronology.¹

Prior to 1987

Until 1987 the Midlands region had a reputation for being peaceful.² Even if one accepts the thesis of Anthony Minnaar that from the 1880s faction fighting provides a rural causal forerunner for the violence of the late eighties, faction fighting was not a significant feature of Vulindlela, the rural area adjacent to Pietermaritzburg that was to experience an enormous number of fatalities.³

The Soweto uprising of 1976 and its spread to other areas had little local impact and Inkatha (the Inkatha National Cultural Liberation Movement, *Inkatha Yenkululeko Yesizwe*, established in 1975 and renamed the Inkatha Freedom Party in 1990) had a relatively low-key, though stabilising presence in the Midlands. Inkatha's impact was somewhat reduced with the movement of many KwaZulu administration employees previously based in Pietermaritzburg to Ulundi, the newly built capital of KwaZulu, an apartheid determined homeland. Inkatha, which initially enjoyed a tacit concordat with

the African National Congress (ANC), parted ways with the exiled movement after a meeting in 1979 in London.⁴ This further distanced Inkatha from young radicals who had a great reverence for the exiled liberation movements and the leaders on Robben Island. In 1980 Inkatha vigilantes broke up a school boycott in KwaMashu near Durban and more radically minded people became decidedly negative towards it. The alienation of a significant section of the population, and particularly the youth, from Inkatha had begun and the rise of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in the region in late 1983 and 1984 completed this process.⁵

While the Vaal revolt of 1984 against rent increases and government-imposed black local authorities also had relatively limited parallels, there undoubtedly was a rise in political tension in the Midlands during the early eighties as the anti-apartheid struggle intensified throughout South Africa.

Much of the local stress in the eighties related to the following factors: housing costs and shortages; transport costs; the excision of Imbali and Ashdown from the Pietermaritzburg municipality; the role of town councillors in black local authorities; conflict between Inkatha and the UDF; school unrest and boycotts; the rise of vigilante groups; conflict between the UDF and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM); conflict between Inkatha and trade unions; and intolerance of opposition by the KwaZulu/Inkatha authorities.

Housing costs and shortages

In September 1982 protests about a rent increase in Sobantu Village led to the death of Graham Radebe (aged 17) in a police shooting that provoked months of unrest and considerable damage to property in Sobantu. In November 1982 a group of Hammarsdale women demonstrated against the way town councillors were showing favouritism in house allocations. This latter allegation became a constant theme in Imbali. In January 1984 disquiet was expressed by Imbali Inkatha leader Ben Jele over councillor Abdul Awetha's enticement of people with false promises of access to houses to join Inkatha. In January 1985 a rent crisis started in Mpophomeni with residents refusing to pay large amounts arising from a 1983 rent increase backdated to 1979. The rising cost of rented accommodation coincided with a housing shortage in the region. Population growth in Vulindlela was estimated as twice the national average, a 40% increase in eight years.⁶

Transport costs

In the early eighties bus fare increases were a common cause of unrest. Poor people, legally obliged to live far away from white areas, had to pay more for the privilege of travelling to work in the areas from which they had been excluded. Bus boycotts and stonings were a common concomitant of a fare increase followed by more uproar at heavy-handed police attempts to subdue protesters. Bus transport also increasingly became the target for anti-apartheid youth trying to enforce stayaways. The stoning of buses from 1987 onwards was to become a source of, and justification for, violence in the region, though the ultimate agent to blame for the transport crises that led to stonings was apartheid and the uncaring attitude of central and local government officials. By the nineties the latter's incompetence had led to the collapse of the bus system within Pietermaritzburg and in many of the areas adjacent to it, a process aided by the rise of the kombi taxi and the stresses caused by this new means of transport.

As early as October 1979 a group at KwaShange⁷ in Vulindlela was arrested for trying to enforce a bus boycott and in January 1983 bus fare increases led to tension and unrest in Edendale, Imbali, Ashdown and Sobantu. In December 1984 buses were stoned in Imbali after a fare increase. The murder in January 1985 of Gibson Msomi, a well-known Imbali Taxi Association official, is believed by many commentators in Pietermaritzburg to have been one of the more significant markers of the worsening of the Inkatha/UDF conflict.

Buses were again stoned in Pietermaritzburg's townships in July, August and September 1985. In February 1986 two bus drivers were injured and two buses burned in Edendale after a fare increase. When bus services came to a halt because of unrest in Edendale, commuters barricaded parts of Pietermaritzburg near the bus terminus in an effort to force drivers to take them home. The drivers refused to drive on the Edendale Road since they feared attacks by Edendale youths. Pietermaritzburg Municipal Director of Transport, George Hitchens, said that the unrest was the work of illegal taxi operators who were organising the youth. At times the bus service was suspended. A series of meetings was called in Edendale to address the bus fare increase and the unrest it spawned, attended by organisations from a number of areas including Edendale, Vulindlela, Imbali and Ashdown. Inkatha participated at first, but eventually withdrew. The service was resumed on 19 February. In March 1986 supporters of Inkatha and COSATU clashed in Ashdown and a bus carrying Inkatha members and a police van were stoned. This incident was related to the bus fare increase.

Excision of Imbali and Ashdown from Pietermaritzburg municipality

In 1980, the townships of Imbali and Ashdown, and the freehold area of Slangspruit, were excised from the Pietermaritzburg municipality and put under the control of the South African Development Trust.⁸ Government planned to hand over these townships, together with the large freehold area of Edendale, to KwaZulu.⁹ In March 1982, an Inkatha leader uttered warnings to the Imbali churches not to refuse venues to Inkatha since Imbali was soon to be incorporated into KwaZulu.

The role of town councillors in black local authorities

Following on from the excision, government attempted to impose local black town councils on Imbali, Ashdown and the Pietermaritzburg township of Sobantu in terms of the Black Local Authorities Act (192 of 1982), which came into effect on 1 August 1983. The situation became more tense: Inkatha tried to gain control of the town councils amidst growing national resistance to the role of black town councillors during the early and mid-eighties. Nationally, such councillors were increasingly seen as puppets, and often corrupt ones at that, of the apartheid state. From the Inkatha side, there was indignation that their movement, which they saw as a legitimate part of the liberation movement, could be so despised.

In August 1983 two prominent Imbali councillors resigned, to be followed by the entire Ashdown council. In the run up to new elections in Ashdown only two, and new, candidates presented themselves and the elections had to be cancelled.¹⁰ In Imbali only two new candidates stood. In Sobantu, where the community council had disbanded in 1982, only four candidates stood for re-election.¹¹ Imbali Township Council elections took place in October 1983 with derisory polls: only 248 votes were cast in the three seats contested while three were uncontested. In ward 1, Patrick Pakkies gained 76 votes against Ben Jele's 65. In ward 4, Abdul Awetha secured 40 votes against his opponent's 18.¹² These three men played prominent roles in the later escalation of conflict in both Imbali and the region.

However, unlike the Vaal revolt of 1984 against rent increases and government-imposed black local authorities, though there was unhappiness there was very limited violence in the Pietermaritzburg region. A factor in this stability was that civic associations as a focus of opposition had not developed in black townships in the Midlands, and this was still so until 1989. The one attempt in Imbali in 1985 was quickly subdued by Inkatha vigilante intimidation.

In August 1984 there were large-scale demonstrations in Imbali and Sobantu against the visit of the Minister of Co-operation and Development, Piet Koornhof, to inaugurate the new Sobantu and Imbali town councils. More than a thousand youths went on the rampage in Imbali and barricaded the streets, police used teargas and sjamboks, and schools were boycotted. In Sobantu, a youth was shot by the police and at his funeral police fired teargas into the church. During the unrest linked to the Koornhof visit, town councillors' homes were stoned in Imbali, and a youth was killed and two injured when they attacked a security policeman's house.

In April 1985 there was an abortive petrol bomb attack on the house of councillor Patrick Pakkies in Imbali. In the same month a civic association was started, led by Robert Duma, but in August his house was stoned and then burnt and he fled to the Federal Theological Seminary for safety. In October 1985 the homes of two civic association members were petrol bombed.

In March 1986 two Inkatha schoolgirls were assaulted in Sobantu, leading to incidents of intimidation by Inkatha. An armed march, strengthened by bus loads of Inkatha supporters from Edendale and Imbali, took place with magisterial permission through Sobantu to recruit and express opposition to the Committee of Twelve, the unofficial body representing Sobantu residents, and a number of confrontations took place. Thereafter Inkatha gained very little sympathy in Sobantu and peace talks proved abortive as Inkatha would not deal with the Committee of Twelve. In August 1986 in Imbali a hand grenade attack killed one daughter and wounded another of Imbali community councillor, Austin Kweyama.

Conflict between Inkatha and the UDF

In August 1983 the UDF was formed in opposition to government proposals for a new tricameral parliament that would constitutionally enshrine the exclusion of Africans from the government of South Africa. At the local opening rally of the UDF in Edendale in October a wounded and bandaged student from the Ngoye campus of the University of Zululand told the angry audience that Inkatha supporters had attacked students at the university's hostels, killing five and assaulting and wounding many others.

Conflict blossomed and Inkatha and non-Inkatha tendencies polarised in the Durban region from 1983 to 1985 as a result of the violence and intimidation resulting from attempts to incorporate Hambanathi, Lamontville, KwaMashu and Umlazi into KwaZulu; as well as from resistance to rent and transport fare increases, and school boycotts. In the same period prominent squatter

settlement leaders in the areas to the north of Durban, particularly in Lindelani and Inanda, became overtly pro-Inkatha and involved in violent attacks against UDF supporters both in the squatter areas and the more established townships.

In the Midlands, 1983 and 1984 saw the formation or growth of youth organisations affiliated to the UDF: EDEYO, IYO, AYO, SOYO and HAYCO were key, the Edendale, Imbali, Ashdown and Sobantu Youth Organisations, and the Hammarsdale Youth Congress respectively.

In November 1983 there was a major clash in Imbali involving nearly one thousand people and in Mpumalanga Inkatha Youth Brigade (IYB) members clashed with UDF supporters holding a commemorative meeting and set a bus ablaze. In September 1984 an Inkatha official and town councillor's house in Sobantu was petrol bombed and several UDF families fled the township after the arrival of car loads of Inkatha supporters and threats of violence.

In mid-1985 the initiation of a pro-UDF civic association in Imbali was halted by severe intimidation with its leader, Robert Duma, having his house petrol bombed. Many of the events related to the May 1985 BTR-Sarmcol strike in Howick and to school boycotts in the Pietermaritzburg region also became part of the Inkatha/UDF conflict. In September 1985 death threats were made against UDF Natal Midlands co-secretary Skumbuzo Ngwenya Mbatha, an Imbali resident.

The extent of growing Inkatha antagonism towards the UDF can be seen in Inkatha and KwaZulu leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi's announcement in December 1985 that the UDF was a front for the banned ANC and that any UDF members in the KwaZulu civil service would be fired. On Christmas Eve 1986 a large percentage of black township dwellers around Pietermaritzburg turned off all lights as a symbolic protest against the State of Emergency in response to a UDF call communicated by word of mouth and leaflets. This protest was a clear sign that Inkatha did not have the popular dominance in the townships that was assumed. A number of houses were stoned by Inkatha supporters.

In February 1986 Mbatha was abducted from his home at gunpoint and beaten up by an Inkatha group who eventually took him to a police station where they laid a false charge of public violence against him, claiming they had apprehended him throwing stones. He was then admitted to Edendale Hospital under police guard. The case against him was eventually dropped. In March an Imbali man was detained by police and eyewitnesses claimed that he was then assaulted by Inkatha members at his home while in police custody. In May 1986 an Inkatha group murdered a youth in Imbali and houses were

petrol bombed in Imbali and Edendale. A person was killed in Edendale and there was an attack on five KwaZulu policemen in Mpumalanga.

On 12 June 1986 a national State of Emergency was declared. A number of university and theological college students were detained after a protest march in Pietermaritzburg. In October at Mpumuza in Vulindlela a house was burned and the occupants fled to Table Mountain where they were killed in December 1987 by Inkatha vigilantes. Inkatha claimed that during 1986 there were 28 attacks reported to the KwaZulu Urban Representative.

School unrest and boycotts

During the eighties black schools were seen as a site of struggle against apartheid and there were many school boycotts. The Inkatha movement acted heavily and repressively against such school-based activism in the Durban region in 1980 and this turned many young pupils away from the movement. In 1983 a number of school-based demonstrations and boycotts took place in March, April, September and October about various school issues in Edendale, Sobantu, Imbali and Mpumalanga and were generally met with police teargas and sjamboks.

In January and February 1985 there was considerable school-related unrest, with boycotts and tear gassing, over student calls for elected student representative councils, free books, qualified teachers, a moratorium on increased fees and an end to corporal punishment. In May 1985 there was a week-long sit in at four Imbali and Edendale high schools by students demanding the release of six students held in security police detention. A security police car was stoned. There were also widespread school boycotts in Pietermaritzburg's townships in August 1985. Some of these lasted at least two weeks and there was stoning at an Imbali school. In October 1985 some parents tried to form a vigilante group to protect their children writing exams at three schools.

In March 1986 incidents of arson and stoning in Mpumalanga relating to student protest took place and there was unrest involving the Azanian Students Movement (AZASM). In Imbali there was an Inkatha attack on scholars at a school, related to the assault of two schoolgirls in Sobantu, while in Edendale there was a hand grenade attack at Amakholwa High School. By mid-March seven schools in Sobantu and Imbali were closed because of vigilante harassment and the closure of schools later spread to Edendale. At the end of March the education boycott was officially ended by the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC).

In June 1986 a school was damaged by fire in Imbali and in August the Department of Education and Training (DET) closed Sobantu High School after students burned their DET identity cards.

The rise of vigilante groups

Not unrelated to the transfer of township control and the unpopularity of town councillors, were attempts to set up vigilante groups in Imbali, Ashdown and Slangspruit. In December 1980 came the first reports of a 31-man vigilante group being set up, with police blessing, in Ashdown, ostensibly to halt crime and gangsterism. By late 1981 they had come to be known pejoratively as Oqondo (straighteners) and attempts were made to impose a levy on the township to pay for them. In January 1982, a 13-member vigilante group also known as Qondo or oQondo established itself, supposedly to restore peace in Imbali and Slangspruit. All its members were from Stage 2, and it had the support of an Imbali town councillor and was known to the police. There were reports in March 1982 of an Imbali Stage 3 vigilante group called Imbokod Ebomvu founded by Councillor Lucas 'Amin' Ngcobo.

Certainly by 1985 Inkatha leaders in Imbali had gathered around them a group of Inkatha youths and unemployed men who acted as a paramilitary group, or impi, and formed an enhanced version of the vigilante groups that had existed in both Imbali and Ashdown during the early eighties. Objects of their attention often included radical youth and school boycotters. In 1985 a number of radical student leaders in Sobantu and Imbali were harassed, assaulted and in a few cases murdered by vigilantes. But there were also isolated attacks on vigilantes themselves.

In August 1985 the church grounds of the local Lutheran congregation in Sobantu were invaded by an armed group who threatened to kill Reverend Leonard Kwela and his son, as well as burn down his church, if he failed to leave the township immediately. They also warned all pupils to return to school or else Kwela would be killed. The homes of many radical student leaders in Sobantu were raided by an armed mob and numerous assaults took place. In Imbali, a Congress of South African Students (COSAS) supporter was murdered by vigilantes and another person was also killed.

On Sunday 24 August 1985 one hundred armed vigilantes, fresh from a meeting at which KwaZulu Legislative Assembly member V.B. Ndlovu urged the community to get rid of the Federal Theological Seminary, which he said had fomented unrest and harboured criminals. He made specific mention

of Robert Duma, chairman of the Imbali Civic Association who had sought refuge there, and the group marched to the seminary. They were led by Patrick C. Pakkies (an Inkatha leader and mayor of Imbali) and Ben Jele (chairman of the Inkatha branch at Imbali). They told Khoza Mgojo, president of the seminary, that if it was not empty by the following Friday, 30 August, it would be burnt to the ground. On 30 August a court interdict was granted restraining Pakkies, Abdul Awetha and seven others from attacking the seminary and evicting its residents.

In September 1985 an Imbali vigilante group was reported to be going from house to house demanding that all UDF, Azanian Peoples Organisation (AZAPO) and Imbali Civic Association members be handed over to them. A number of attacks, assaults and intimidatory events took place. At one house vigilantes shot and wounded four people and burnt the building.

A number of radical youth (and in many cases, their families as well), both UDF and Black Consciousness supporters, were forced out of Imbali and later from Ashdown in 1985 and 1986. Some fled to Sobantu and Mpophomeni, while others retreated into Edendale and Vulindlela. This vigilante-induced exodus undoubtedly had a politicising effect on many youths, particularly in Vulindlela where UDF youth organisation was largely absent: a number of new affiliates formed in mid-1987. The impact of the State of Emergency after 12 June 1986 undoubtedly also had the effect of dispersing radical youths more widely within the region. In December 1986 about twenty members of the black consciousness AZASM and AZAYO were given an ultimatum to leave Imbali. They fled to Sobantu.

However, the extent of the violence between councillor-linked Inkatha supporting vigilantes and radicals was moderate in the South African context. For Natal as a whole unrest deaths per head of population were about 50% lower than the rest of the country in 1985.¹³ Also worth noting was growing evidence that the state's security services were increasingly partisan in their approach to vigilante groups.¹⁴

Conflict between the UDF and BCM

In 1985 there was some conflict between UDF and BCM youth from AZASM and AZAYO in Imbali, but it was initially defused by successful negotiations. The influx of Black Consciousness refugees into Sobantu in late 1986 was one of the precipitating factors that led to the renewal of conflict between the two groups there in 1987.

Conflict between Inkatha and trade unions

The constitution of COSATU in November 1985 was of immense significance for the labour world in South Africa, but inspired considerable anxiety amongst the security sector and white business interests. Amongst the latter it led to an overlong blindness in the late eighties to Inkatha's capacity for violence and by the former to state funding via the security police of a counter union linked to Inkatha, the United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA, formed in May 1986), which attempted, largely unsuccessfully, to draw Inkatha supporters out of COSATU. Because COSATU inherited a successful track record of union organisation that delivered real gains to its members, it was able to retain even Inkatha adherents, in spite of COSATU's far more explicit UDF, and later ANC, linkages than its predecessor, the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU).

The local spark for enormous regional conflict between the two union groups was the strike at the BTR-Sarmcol factory in Howick that started on 30 April 1985 after an earlier stoppage in March over management's prolonged delays regarding recognition of the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU). By contrast, after its formation in May 1986, UWUSA was recognised at the factory. The entire African work force was dismissed.

Factory management started to recruit scab labour soon after the strike started. The strikers went to Pietermaritzburg's neighbouring townships, Sweetwaters and Mpumalanga, and to chiefs in nearby KwaZulu rural areas to canvass support and dissuade potential scab labour. On 9 May 1985 a consumer boycott was started in Howick. Allegations began about intimidation of scab labour by the strikers and some were arrested. In June 1985 Sarmcol strikers attacked the homes of six scabs in Vulindlela and in Mpophomeni a large MAWU gathering was tear gassed by police: stones were thrown and four policemen hurt. Allegations of police provocation were made by eyewitnesses. Several houses belonging to scab workers were set alight. On 24 June a crowd stopped a bus carrying workers home to Impendhle, stoned it and killed two workers, one of them working for Sarmcol. June also saw large demonstrations and rallies in Pietermaritzburg, Edendale and Imbali by Sarmcol strikers bussed in from Mpophomeni.

In July the father of two scabs was killed at Mevana near Howick. Howick was itself the scene of a protest march, tear gassing and arrests. A successful Pietermaritzburg stayaway on 18 July 1985, endorsed by COSATU's predecessor FOSATU and the UDF, was called for on behalf of the strikers.

Thirty municipal buses were stoned at Imbali and Sobantu on the eve of the stayaway and on the day itself there was considerable unrest in the region. In Ashdown the township administration offices were burned, as was a beerhall, and in Edendale a store and beerhall were attacked and streets barricaded; while in Imbali there was the petrol bombing of Abdul Awetha's house and a KwaZulu controlled clinic, and the stoning of two other clinics. Police fired rubber bullets and teargas. In Mpophomeni there were arson attacks on the homes of scabs, barricades, and teargas from the police. In Sobantu a large crowd of youths gathered to demand the release of four members of SOYO. Few black schools in the region functioned.

From 15 August until 26 September there was a consumer boycott of white-owned shops in Pietermaritzburg in support of the Sarmcol strikers and by the end of August a Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Commerce (PCC) survey showed an average fall-off in turnover of black trade of between 60 and 70%, some of it enforced through coercion by young comrades. The boycott was denounced by the Inkatha supporting Inyanda Chamber of Commerce. In September 1985 a police guard protecting the home of a scab worker at Sarmcol was killed by a crowd that attacked the house.

On 12 January 1986 Mangosuthu Buthelezi instructed all Inkatha members and supporters to be prepared to mobilise workers against COSATU. In February there were Inkatha attacks on COSATU members in Newcastle and Vryheid and COSATU pledged to counter these attacks through a national and international campaign against Inkatha. In June 1986 at Madadeni near Newcastle there was unrest; and at Vryheid's Coronation Colliery a strike led to an attack on COSATU supporters in the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) by UWUSA that left eleven dead. In October there was a hand grenade attack on a trade unionist's house in Sobantu that wounded one child. Inter-union rivalry may have been the cause. In Edendale there was a shooting incident in which an UWUSA member was wounded. Another UWUSA member was stabbed in Sobantu.

The finale to the BTR-Sarmcol strike was the bussing into Mpophomeni, the home of the Sarmcol strikers, of a 200-strong Inkatha group on the evening of 5 December 1986. They abducted four COSATU officials and members in Mpophomeni, assaulted them and then executed three of them, one captive managing to escape. The next day the Inkatha group killed another person in Mpophomeni and injured and assaulted a number of others before being disarmed and escorted out of the township by the police. Within a day or two at least three of the perpetrators were arrested after a professional investigation

by the Howick police, but they were ordered by a high-ranking police officer to release the three accused. The inquest findings delivered in March 1988 found that nine named Inkatha members were responsible for the murders. There were no subsequent prosecutions.¹⁵

Intolerance of opposition by the KwaZulu/Inkatha authorities

Another stressful factor in the region was the inability of the KwaZulu government to tolerate opposition or any attempt to resist Inkatha hegemony in tribal areas. This is seen clearly in action taken against Chief Hlabunzima Maphumulo of Table Mountain who had a history of disagreement with Mangosuthu Buthelezi, partly over Maphumulo's dealings with King Goodwill Zwelithini, and who attempted, unsuccessfully at first, to stop Inkatha meetings at Table Mountain in 1980. Oscar Dhlomo, secretary-general of Inkatha, declared that the 'full might of Inkatha would be unleashed' against Maphumulo.¹⁶ Maphumulo was then sacked on Buthelezi's instructions as chairman of the Mpumalanga Regional Authority and replaced by his hostile neighbour, Chief Bangukhosi Mdluli of the amaNyavu, who in early 1990 was involved in attacks on Table Mountain that forced Maphumulo to flee with many of his people to Pietermaritzburg where he was assassinated in 1991.

In August 1983 there were skirmishes between Inkatha supporters at a meeting at Table Mountain and in October 1983 Chief Maphumulo was savagely beaten outside the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly by IYB members, allegedly as punishment for his refusal to allow Inkatha members to address his people during previous Inkatha elections. In January 1984 there was a fight at Table Mountain when Inkatha members at a meeting clashed with supporters of Chief Maphumulo, injuring five.

The years 1987 to 1989

A detailed account of these years would take volumes. The UMP database has been used to provide a bare outline of the ebb and flow of the conflict that escalated into what was described by many as a war in September 1987 and was still continuing at the end of the eighties.

1987

The year started with a death in Imbali, which also saw incidents involving Jerome Mncwabe and Sichizo Zuma in confrontation with the IYO. These two men would over the next few years become well known as Inkatha warlords

allegedly involved in a number of killings. There were also confrontations between the UDF and Inkatha in Ashdown. In Vulindlela a man was killed by a hand grenade. In February there was more IYO-related conflict and two deaths in Edendale. In Hammarsdale three members of HAYCO were abducted and killed.

In March killings of young UDF supporters continued in Hammarsdale. A number of them fled the area after these and the previous month's attacks. In Imbali two people were killed by vigilantes and an attempt was made, presumably by young comrades, to set the mayor, Patrick Pakkies, on fire. In Sobantu there were bus stonings and two killings in Ashdown. A house was burned in Vulindlela. From March to August 1987 the number of deaths began to rise, with an average of 14 per month. The UDF and COSATU argued that these deaths were largely the result of Inkatha attacks meant to intimidate individuals and communities.

In April violent events increased. In Imbali a policeman was killed and in Sobantu a security policeman's house was petrol bombed. In Edendale there was a large UDF/Inkatha clash in which the police were stoned and they opened fire. Vigilantes occupied the Amakholwa and Georgetown High Schools. Ashdown also saw more UDF/Inkatha clashes and killings. Vigilantes were active in Vulindlela and two people were killed. Hammarsdale experienced a riot of about a thousand scholars after a sports meeting.

In May comrades in Mpumuza reportedly tried to encourage adherence to a stayaway on 5 and 6 May. The UDF and COSATU claimed that 90% of Pietermaritzburg workers responded to the call for this stayaway in protest at the whites-only general election. That seemed to be a considerable defeat for Inkatha and Buthelezi because the latter had urged his supporters to campaign against a stayaway. Inkatha placed a lot of the blame for the success of the stayaway on the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) whose striking bus drivers effectively made it impossible for many employees to get to work even if they had wanted to. It is possible that a direct consequence of this were the deaths of twelve TGWU members in the following months and bus stonings by Inkatha youths. Two of these COSATU affiliated bus drivers were killed in Vulindlela in May. Whether the call for the stayaway had been planned as a test of Inkatha strength or not (and there is no clear evidence that it was so seen by the UDF and COSATU), it certainly showed that Inkatha did not have clear dominance in the Pietermaritzburg region.

At Taylor's Halt a school was stoned by pupils. In Edendale there were stoning incidents during the stayaway and barricades were erected in some

streets. In Imbali Inkatha vigilantes killed and wounded a number of youths. Prominent vigilantes allegedly involved included Abdul Awetha, Joseph Mabaso and Sichizo Zuma. In Mpophomeni there was an AZAPO/UDF clash and a number of AZAPO supporters fled to Sobantu.

In May and June there were reports of Inkatha recruitment drives in the region. Often these were facilitated by heavily armed groups bussed into an area. In June there were AZAPO/UDF clashes in Sobantu and a young UDF leader, France Ngcamu, was attacked and murdered by Thulani Ndlovu and others. This murder soured UDF attitudes towards AZAPO for a long time afterwards. There were eight deaths in Imbali and attacks by vigilantes started in Slangspruit. In Greytown a youth was shot dead by security police.

The return in July of young UDF supporters who fled Mpumalanga earlier provided new targets for vigilante groups trying to eliminate supporters of the UDF and its affiliate HAYCO, and the death toll for the year rose to sixteen. Authority in the township appeared to have been seized by the vigilantes whose only answer to dissent was violence and intimidation. Local residents claimed that though numerous perpetrators of the violence had been positively identified and information passed on to the police, no action had been taken. The police responded by claiming that they had absolutely no co-operation from residents.

Both HAYCO and Inkatha had started talking about peace, but UDF hardliners put pressure on the organisation not to talk to Inkatha. Later on, HAYCO gave UDF co-president Archie Gumede a mandate to talk to Inkatha on their behalf. Gumede agreed and announced that while the majority in the UDF were against peace talks, he would negotiate on behalf of individual affiliates who wanted peace. Two meetings were held between Inkatha and the UDF represented by Gumede and some HAYCO youths and community leaders including Gcina Mfeka of the Edendale Crisis Committee (ECC) at the Methodist Church in Redhill, Durban. Two subsequent meetings were held at Botha's Hill. These resulted in a statement pledging the support of both organisations for peace, and freedom of association, speech and action. But the talks did not have any lasting effect.

The first peace talks in Pietermaritzburg were also held in July over Slangspruit whose residents made a very short-lived peace agreement never to fight one another again. In Sobantu there were more UDF/AZASM clashes and six people died in Ashdown. Two more youths were killed by police in Greytown. August saw a rise in incidents of unrest, particularly in Edendale, Vulindlela and Hammarsdale. A COSATU leader, Alfred Ndlovu, borrowed an

AK47 from an Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) member and attacked an Inkatha group in Vulindlela wounding several people. He was later arrested, tried and convicted.

Early September saw devastating floods that destroyed hundreds of houses in Edendale and Vulindlela. The relationship of these floods to the violence that followed is a matter of considerable conjecture.¹⁷ In a pamphlet issued by the Inkatha regional council for the Midlands, denials were made that Inkatha was responsible for violence and unrest in black schools; and claims made that encouragement was given to Inkatha and UDF peace talks, but that the UDF had not responded because it wanted violence. There were stories of a heavy Inkatha recruiting drive backed by threats and coercion. Numerous reports indicate that in many Vulindlela areas a final date of 4 October was proclaimed by which time everyone had to have joined Inkatha. According to the UDF this recruiting drive and associated violence was met with growing resistance. A possibly idealised picture is drawn of community defence groups being formed assisted by young, UDF-supporting comrades.

Conventionally, it is here that the Midlands war can be said to have begun. The heaviest casualties were experienced in Edendale (27 deaths), Vulindlela (16), Hammarsdale (4) and Greytown (3). At this stage it largely involved a battle for control of Edendale. Horrifying levels of violence were reached in the months from September to January 1988, rising from 59 dead in September to 161 in January.

Both parties separately invited the PCC to mediate. KwaZulu urban representative Vitus Mvelase approached the Chamber in September 1987, while COSATU sent them a telex requesting a meeting to discuss the situation. Attempts at peace talks under the aegis of the PCC in the last quarter of the year foundered under the combined effects of security police detention and the restriction of key UDF negotiators, unreasonable Inkatha demands, and heavy escalation in the fighting. In October it reached 83 dead involving heavy casualties in Edendale (36) and Vulindlela (30). By the end of the month the UDF was beginning to gain control of much of Edendale and the centre of conflict would move towards Vulindlela where comrades were making increasing gains. In October an open letter from Mvelase, also an Inkatha Central Committee member, appealing to all to stop the violence while continuing to deny Inkatha's role, was published.¹⁸

November saw the first round of the much-publicised talks. On 24 November they were attended by delegates from the Independent Mediation Services of South Africa (IMSSA), UWUSA represented by Penwell Malunga, COSATU

by Alec Erwin, Dumisani Mbanjwa, Vusi Mkhize and Bheki Ngidi, the UDF by A.S. Chetty, Skhumbuzo Ngwenya Mbatha and Martin Wittenberg, and Inkatha by Mvelase, Velaphi Ndlovu and others. The talks almost failed at the outset. Shortly before they started, a total of 38 UDF/COSATU activists including the joint secretaries of the UDF, Ngwenya Mbatha and Wittenberg, were detained by police. They were released after pressure from the PCC, the press and the international community. A joint statement released at the peace talks called for the release of all detainees party to the talks and for freedom to consult and report to their members. All involved endorsed the freedoms of association and speech and pledged to discipline members who violated them.

December was another month of heavy escalation of fighting (114 deaths) particularly in Edendale (31) and Vulindlela (45). There were large numbers of detentions of UDF youth (nearly 400) and a growing number of reports about Inkatha leaders, dubbed warlords by their critics, alleged to have engaged in acts of violence on a large scale without fear of arrest and prosecution. The only publicly visible attempts to halt their activities were interdicts brought against them by lawyers acting for COSATU.

As a follow up to the peace talks of November there were attempts by organisations to report back to their constituencies. The State of Emergency forbade open-air gatherings but Inkatha normally had no problem holding such meetings. By contrast the UDF did have a problem and the PCC pushed for permission to be granted for a UDF meeting to be held in Edendale. Magisterial permission was received and the UDF/COSATU meeting held in December was a huge success with an attendance of ten thousand people. The Inkatha rally that followed was attended by less than a thousand people and Inkatha claimed this was the result of intimidation.

The talks foundered after deadlock at the second meeting. Inkatha brought in three national leaders, Siegfried Bhengu, national IYB chairman Musa Zondi and former South African Communist Party (SACP) activist Rowley Arenstein. It was apparent to many observers that Inkatha was trying to 'nationalise' the talks as a way of getting official recognition from the UDF and COSATU. The group demanded that they repudiate an article published in *Inqaba Yabasebenzi* of October 1987 that had slammed the talks. The publication was produced by the Marxist Workers Tendency, expelled from the ANC at the Kabwe Conference in 1985. UDF/COSATU refused to repudiate it, saying they had nothing to do with the article and thus no cause to repudiate it. They said it had not been distributed in Pietermaritzburg at all and did not reflect the policy of the UDF/COSATU. Inkatha was also enraged by an article

published in the *New York Times* quoting the PCC chairman of the peace talks, Paul van Uytrecht, as blaming Inkatha for the attacks in the region. Inkatha's Mvelase condemned van Uytrecht and demanded an explanation.

At the end of 1987 many young UDF supporters felt a flush of victory at having beaten off Inkatha. The next year was to disabuse them. There was no way they could take on both Inkatha and the State.

1988

At the beginning of 1988 the Vulindlela tribal authorities were in disarray with chiefs and indunas no longer performing their official functions and agricultural work seriously affected. Seventy-nine people were killed in the area in January. In Imbali nineteen died and Hammarsdale also had heavy casualties, possibly as many as 24 deaths. The extent of the disruption and fear in the region can be seen in the fact that at one stage there were no patients in the paediatric section of Edendale Hospital: parents were too scared to leave their children there. Large numbers of refugees sought refuge in safer areas or were accommodated in servants' quarters in white areas.

The end of 1987 and the New Year were characterised by growing violence, attributed by the UDF and COSATU to an Inkatha counter-attack named Operation Doom or Operation Cleanup. Slangspruit came under heavy Inkatha pressure in January and the month ended with an Inkatha invasion of Ashdown, allegedly facilitated by the security forces who allowed an enormous meeting of fifteen thousand Inkatha supporters to take place in Mpumuza at which the crowd was allegedly incited to attack the UDF and COSATU. The security forces did very little to stop the attack on Ashdown township that followed and indeed are alleged to have escorted and helped transport armed Inkatha members.

The police had begun to establish strong point camps and bases in the Edendale and Vulindlela areas. They complained that the terrain was difficult to control, particularly at night, but that they believed they were now on top of the unrest. Heavy police reinforcements (including KwaZulu police in Vulindlela and 150 special constables or kitskonstabels) had been poured into the area at the end of 1987 and 289 kitskonstabels were deployed at the beginning of March. This created new controversy as several appeared to be Inkatha supporters with records of engagement in previous acts of violence; and some were eventually discharged.

The police, stiffened by a message of 3 February 1988 from Brigadier Leon Mellet, spokesman for the Minister of Law and Order, that 'the violence has to

stop at all costs', seemed largely to act against UDF forces.¹⁹ Indeed, growing evidence appeared in 1988 of security forces actively colluding with Inkatha, which was able to restore much of its control in the Vulindlela area with this support. There are some reports of police handing over captured comrades to Inkatha or tribal authorities who then killed them as in the well-documented case of Makithiza Ndlovu (aged 13) killed on 1 January 1988. Large Inkatha meetings of armed men and youths took place without any police interference.

In the early part of 1988 a number of interdicts brought by applicants asking the courts for protection from Inkatha warlords received extensive publicity and even led to judicial enquiries to the attorney-general's representative about the delay in bringing cases to court. These applications were hampered by the assassination of a number of key applicants and witnesses, including two Mthembu brothers (Simon on 24 January and Ernest on 4 July) and Johannes Nkomo (70) and Phillipina Nkomo (65) on 13 February 1988. Most of the alleged killers, named in a number of affidavits placed before courts, were not brought to trial. Chief Mhlabunzima Maphumulo tried to convene another peace meeting at Table Mountain early in the year, but attendance was poor and only one Inkatha leader, Ben Jele, turned up. Mvelase and the chiefs did not.

In February church leaders claimed that sixty thousand people had been displaced by the violence. Some were living with employers and sympathetic white, coloured and Indian friends in Pietermaritzburg. Other refugees were squatting with relatives in and outside the Edendale valley. However, in February the deaths declined in number to 62. Schooling was considerably disrupted both by the resignation of many teachers and by scholars refused entry into schools, or being too scared to attend after a card system was instituted at a number of DET schools. Many KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture schools refused to accept non-Inkatha pupils. There were reports of a large drop in enrolment of at least four thousand pupils in schools near Pietermaritzburg. In Hammarsdale estimates were made that only 25% of male pupils remained in the senior classes.²⁰ Intermittent interruptions continued at schools in the first six months of 1988.

In Pietermaritzburg itself, on 3 February 1988 about fifty weapon-wielding Inkatha youths, all from Harewood in Edendale, swarmed off a bus in the city centre and attacked black shoppers and pedestrians in the lower Berg Street area. Ten people were injured, three of them seriously. Although 43 people were tried and convicted, it was on a relatively minor charge and the light sentences occasioned public comment. The trial of the six killers of Ester

Molevu, a 61-year-old UDF supporter, occasioned further consternation when those responsible received partly suspended sentences, the heaviest effective sentence being three and a half years.²¹

February also saw collusion between the police and Inkatha blessed officially when the Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, said as he presented a trophy to the Town Hill police station, judged the neatest station in South Africa during 1987, that police would face the future with moderates and fight against radical groups: 'Radicals, who are trying to destroy South Africa, will not be tolerated. We will fight them. We have put a foothold in that direction, and we will eventually win the Pietermaritzburg area.'²²

All peace initiatives in the first half of 1988, including calls from the ANC in exile, church and other community leaders, achieved little, particularly after key UDF negotiators were detained again in February and key witnesses in a number of interdict applications were assassinated. The UDF, COSATU and sixteen other organisations were restricted on 22 February. Various Inkatha spokesmen indicated that the peace talks were unproductive and generally blamed anti-Inkatha forces and the ANC. Police spokesmen were similarly dismissive. The UDF even compromised to the extent of agreeing to involve its national leadership in peace talks, thus implicitly allowing Inkatha's claim to be a national rather than simply a regional movement.

At the beginning of March, Mellet claimed that unrest in the townships around the city was dropping off, adding that this might only be temporary unless good government was re-established. He would not release statistics about the unrest because they might create the wrong impression. The death toll for March was a low 19.

On 21 March 1988 police engaged in a mass round up of youths in Ashdown (259) and Sobantu (218), during which many people were assaulted. On a number of occasions delegations of women from Ashdown and Imbali appealed for police and kitskonstabels to be withdrawn from the area. The media and white Pietermaritzburg were willing to believe that the worst was over when deaths fell significantly in March, but it was a short reprieve and they soon began to rise again.

In April intermittent violence continued between BCM and UDF supporting youth in Sobantu. In Hammarsdale the violence also continued. On 13 April 1988 there was a confrontation between two ANC guerrillas and the police, in which the two ANC men and two policemen were killed and a policeman and three members of the public wounded.

From April to November the death toll again rose to an average of 44 a month. In mid-May there was a hopeful move when Inkatha set up a special watchdog group under the leadership of Oscar Dhlomo to investigate allegations of corruption and violence made against senior members of the organisation. This seemed to be the first sign of possible action within Inkatha against some of the infamous warlords after months of violence in Natal.

In June there were two huge stayaways in the region. The first, from 6 to 8 June was called by COSATU and the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU) as a three-day national peaceful protest against the Labour Relations Amendment Bill and restrictions on seventeen organisations by the government. The second was on Soweto Day, 16 June. During the first stayaway as much as 65% of the black workforce of Pietermaritzburg was absent.²³ The Soweto Day stayaway was even more effective.

By mid-year it was clear that Mpumalanga and nearby areas such as Shongweni to the south had become the worst areas for violence in Natal. Violence also began in Fredville with five deaths. In the Pietermaritzburg area there were continuing attacks in the township of Imbali, in the outlying areas of Vulindlela and on the township of Mpophomeni. There were also growing signs of strife within the comrade refugee groups with the debilitation of two years of war beginning to show. This was a factor that had its impact on Inkatha warlords as well. In the second half of the year there were indications that the conflict was spreading into rural tribal areas with the politicisation of what may originally have been tribal factionalism.

In July there were attacks in Vulindlela at Gezubuso, especially after a meeting called by Chief Shayabantu Zondi on 23 July, and hundreds of refugees fled. Twenty-three died in Vulindlela that month. August saw Brigadier Jac Büchner, head of the Security Police in Pietermaritzburg, claiming that there were 20 to 30 murder cases pending and that 'Our intentions are honourable.'²⁴ In Inchanga violence started with five deaths and there were further fatalities in Vulindlela (28).

The peace breakthrough of the year was the setting up on 2 September of a Complaints Adjudication Board (CAB) jointly agreed to and financed by COSATU and Inkatha. A number of pending interdict hearings against Inkatha members were dropped and a simple code of conduct agreed upon to end violence. It forbade forced recruitment and intimidation and promised free association and participation in political activities. Both parties agreed to discipline offenders against the code, oppose bail for those charged with political violence, and condemn forced removals. The UDF, as a restricted

organisation was not a signatory to the agreement, but was presumed to be behind it in spirit, though Inkatha's Dhlomo commented that 'The conflict in Pietermaritzburg and elsewhere is not that much between COSATU and Inkatha. It is mostly between Inkatha and the UDF.'²⁵ Dhlomo urged the lifting of restrictions on the UDF on 4 September.

The CAB's jurisdiction was limited to the Pietermaritzburg and Vulindlela region though it could be extended elsewhere by joint agreement of the two parties. The convener of the board was a retired judge and hearings would be chaired by an appointee of the convener sitting with assessors appointed by Inkatha and COSATU. However, this development was stillborn because of the refusal of Inkatha members against whom complaints were laid, such as Shayabantu Zondi, to appear before the board. Inkatha as a whole appeared unwilling to apply pressure on members to do so, or discipline them in any way. The first signs of resistance to the peace moves were when Zondi and two of his indunas, Ngcoya and Zuma, held rival meetings to Dhlomo's report back and seemed unrepentant when later reprimanded by Dhlomo. Another positive move was a peace agreement between UDF and BCM youth in Sobantu.

However, in spite of the peace agreement, violence continued in the region with deaths in Hammarsdale and Sweetwaters (6), where threats forced hundreds of people, especially teenagers, to flee the area and seek refuge in safe places between Durban and Howick. Imbali had six deaths and violence continued in Inchanga with ten deaths and two hundred refugees taking shelter at the Roman Catholic mission there. The growing violence in Imbali, in which Abdul Awetha featured, led to a sixteen-woman delegation approaching the Progressive Federal Party (PFP) to complain about the kitskonstabels and to request the redeployment of the army. There were stonings of some KwaZulu Transport buses and commuters from Vulindlela travelled to and from work in Pietermaritzburg with considerable apprehension.

The Shaka's Day rally held at Taylor's Halt on 25 September took place after considerable criticism about its potential for violence in a tense area and the exodus of hundreds of youths from Sweetwaters. Attended by about fifteen thousand people, most of them bussed in, the meeting was treated to a speech by Buthelezi that attacked white radicals in an overtly racist way.²⁶ A tithe boycott against churches affiliated to the South African Council of Churches (SACC) began in September in Mpumaza and KwaMncane in accordance with a resolution passed by the IYB conference in Ulundi.

It was estimated that four thousand children were out of school in Natal because of the violence and intimidation; and schools in Edendale were

alleged to have considerable numbers of Standard 9 and 10 pupils absent. On 9 October, at Table Mountain Chief Maphumulo had a successful and peaceful unity feast to which Inkatha and COSATU members and comrades were invited. Maphumulo said that he had taken in more than five hundred families and that there was now no spare land available.

At Hammarsdale, Inkatha leader Zakhele Nkehli claimed on 19 October that the UDF was trying to drive Inkatha out of Mpumalanga and that ten Inkatha supporters had been killed recently. Certainly there was an upsurge of violence with 27 people killed and many houses burned or stoned. In mid-October a new batch of kitskonstabels arrived and soon there were allegations of kitskonstabel terror gangs.

In November the CAB ground to a halt when Shayabantu Zondi and one of his indunas, Lawrence Zuma, refused to participate in a hearing relating to an incident that took place in March 1988. In Hammarsdale there were another 25 deaths and more protests against the kitskonstabels. On 2 November women protested, via mayor Roger Sishi, to the police and the next day five hundred signed a petition. On 12 November the police agreed to remove twelve kitskonstabels who were originally residents of Mpumalanga, but otherwise refused to accede to the demands. Police spokesman Mellet denied that there was a breakdown in law and order in Mpumalanga because of the kitskonstabels. It was then reported that there was a pattern of Inkatha houses being burnt by the UDF and UDF people being killed by Inkatha, although most of the dead were UDF supporters.²⁷ On 20 November a claim was made that four hundred refugees had fled from Mpumalanga. Sishi and Nkehli agreed on the need for a peace meeting. On 21 November the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) opened a base and from then until 28 May 1989 helped 438 families whose houses had been destroyed or breadwinners killed.

Musa Zondi claimed that criminals who claimed to be members both of the UDF and Inkatha made up a third force: 'A third force, the criminals who further their own ends, profit by this violence. These criminals, parading under the banners of political organisations, are often involved in looting and then burning down houses.'²⁸

In December there was tremendous unrest in Ashdown. In Hammarsdale, Inkatha held a meeting on 10 December pressing for the retention of the kitskonstabels in Mpumalanga. On 30 December they were withdrawn and many of the houses they vacated were torched. Also on 30 December Sishi called for peace talks in early January 1989, though these were cancelled after high-ranking Ulundi people refused Inkatha's support.

At Trust Feed there occurred the infamous massacre of eleven people after days of Inkatha and police collusion in attempts to drive UDF supporters out of the area. The local Inkatha chairman, Jerome Gabela, and New Hanover police station commander, Brian Mitchell, had earlier solicited the help of the riot police captain in Pietermaritzburg, Deon Terblanche, to eliminate the UDF in Trust Feed. On 3 December 1988, four kitskonstabels, together with Mitchell, attacked a house, in all probability not the one they had intended, and murdered a group of mourners at a funeral vigil. Subsequently, in 1991 and 1992, the conspiracy between a number of policemen and regional and local Inkatha leaders to kill UDF supporters in the area was proven in court and Mitchell and the kitskonstabels were convicted of murder.²⁹

December ended with reports of moves towards a meeting between Inkatha, ANC and UDF in January 1989 in Harare. On 30 December, Velaphi Ndlovu complained that Edendale leaders were not responding to a call from the leaders of Vulindlela to meet about the stoning of buses:

We know that the people who are stoning buses are the people of Edendale community and this thing has gone too far and we are getting tired of it. We ask the Edendale community to stop this at once. If they do not, they must tell us what to do before we do what we think is best for us ... Time is running out, that is, of talking and we need action on the Edendale community's side now before it is too late.³⁰

Educational researchers Michael Hart and John Gultig³¹ claimed in 1988 that over the previous two years 52 schools in Edendale and Vulindlela had experienced violent incidents, ranging from invasion by Inkatha, vigilantes or youths unable to find a place at school; to shootings and attacks on individuals and buildings.

1989

January 1989 began with what can only be described as nightmare conditions in Mpumalanga. Unpopular kitskonstabels had been removed on 30 December 1988, but the mayhem continued with murders and arson attacks. In the first nine days of January, 35 houses were destroyed. Sishi claimed, however, that the removal of the kitskonstabels did reduce the number of deaths. Nearby Fredville (Inchanga) appeared to be under the control of youthful comrades who broke into factions and generally intimidated the area.

In the Pietermaritzburg region Imbali and Ashdown were the main conflict areas. In Imbali an Inkatha group with which a gunman by the name of Skweqe Mveli, an 18-year-old, was associated, wreaked havoc particularly

on 2 January when a number of households were attacked and on 16 January when four people were gunned down. Subsequently Mwelile was arrested and detained for a time, before being charged and ultimately tried and convicted of murder in 1990. Many of these incidents were documented in a COSATU dossier released in March 1989, which made a number of claims about police assaults and collusion with Inkatha supporters. In Ashdown there were regular skirmishes between UDF supporters in the township and Inkatha supporters from neighbouring Mpumusa. Caluza in Edendale also experienced clashes with Inkatha dominated Mpumusa and stonings of buses took place at a rate of about three a day. There were some reports of extortion by comrades at Nhlazatshe in Edendale. With the opening of the schools, marred by boycotts by students and staff over registration problems, it became apparent that Edendale schools had received an influx of young people who had fled from Vulindlela.

In Vulindlela attempts by chiefs and Inkatha to regain effective control of the whole area continued. The areas with the most action were KwaMnyandu, with several invasions by impis that the police allowed unhindered, and Haza and Mgwagwa. Other areas with deaths were Dindi, Nxamalala, Vulisaka, Mpande, Taylor's Halt and Inadi.

Residents of central Pietermaritzburg were made aware that the conflict was coming closer with regular deaths and gang war type skirmishes in the Retief Street area that had traders in despair. Attempts to control the violence met a setback with the report by the CAB on 16 January that two Inkatha members, Chief Shayabantu Zondi and his induna Lawrence Zuma, had again refused to submit themselves to it.

In February the KwaZulu Police (KZP) took over control of Mpumalanga, but within five days ten people had died and there were several more deaths by the end of the month. Busloads of Inkatha supporters returning from the inauguration of the police station at Mpumalanga were involved in a major confrontation in Edendale that resulted in deaths and bus stonings. Bus stoning continued to feature in Edendale and at the end of the month led to clashes between comrades in Dambuza and bus drivers and workers travelling to and from the Vulindlela area of NoShezi. Several people were killed.

In Vulindlela, Inkatha action at Mgwagwa continued and people were killed there and in neighbouring Haza and KwaShifu leading to a refugee exodus of up to a thousand people to Mpophomeni, itself troubled by conflict between comrades and a pro-AZAPO group. A number of deaths also occurred in other Vulindlela areas. Imbali continued to be a major death spot.

Attempts by PFP representatives in parliament to expose Sichizo Zuma, an alleged Edendale gunman and multiple murderer, received a cold response from Minister Adriaan Vlok. In May the Inkatha region would disown Zuma, with Vitus Mvelase saying that he was no longer an official, though Zuma disputed this claiming that he was still a member and that Mvelase took the decision on his own. In a speech at Ulundi on 18 February Buthelezi gave indications that he might be becoming critical of Inkatha members involved in the violence. He suggested that the violence had spread from the Pietermaritzburg region because the Inkatha leadership was not sufficiently rooted in the people; and warned that unless certain local and regional Inkatha leaders behaved properly they would be left behind: they were behaving as though the struggle were a way of life.

In March Mpumalanga appeared to be more peaceful under KZP control, though there were deaths there, in Georgedale and in Shongweni, and Themba Sishi, son of the mayor of Mpumalanga, was assassinated. Inkatha pressure on Mgwagwa, Haza and KwaShifu in Vulindlela increased, particularly with a series of incidents that had started on 27 February that led to fighting reaching Mpophomeni. These events were documented in a series of affidavits forming part of a successful interdict application launched on 28 April 1989 against the Minister of Law and Order and the police.

Deaths were also recorded in other parts of Vulindlela, Ashdown, Edendale, Imbali and the Retief Street area in Pietermaritzburg. In Ashdown there were complaints about harassment, intimidation, housebreaking and even murder of older people whose children were enemies of the comrades. In Edendale attacks on buses by refugees from Vulindlela continued. Community leaders complained about the lack of action by police to stop it or by tribal authorities in Vulindlela to create a climate in which the refugees could return without being killed.

Complaints about assaults, collusion and torture by police were made by Imbali residents. This was highlighted by the release by COSATU on 22 March 1989 of a dossier detailing incidents where Inkatha vigilantes had allegedly helped police detain, interrogate and shoot residents of Imbali. It was reported that Büchner at a press briefing claimed that 261 unrest cases had come before the courts from April 1988 to date. Charges included murder, assault, rape and arson. Those charged included 252 Inkatha supporters and 156 UDF. Büchner also claimed that there had been a change from the spontaneous killing of people by large groups in a riot situation to premeditated murder. There had been a reduction from the 119 deaths in January 1988 to 10 in March 1988 and

now the average was 30 a month. There had also been a reduction in forced recruitment.³² It was later reported that Büchner had been appointed deputy commissioner of police;³³ and on 8 April it was announced that he was to be Commissioner of Police for KwaZulu from 1 May 1989.

Adriaan Vlok made statements in Parliament on kitskonstabels and detention. On 15 March he said that 137 of 336 kitskonstabels had had their employment terminated, three for misconduct, 32 because of criminal charges (fifteen of whom had been convicted and sentenced), and 102 who no longer wanted to remain. On 21 March he said there was no one in detention who wanted to implement a democratic system, but only people who had advocated violence.

April saw the continuation of fighting in the Mpophomeni area with the police riot unit apparently behaving extraordinarily badly: the interdict against them was made final on 23 May. There were some incidents in Edendale and deaths, including the massacre of a family, in the Taylor's Halt area. The KwaZulu Transport Company said it was withdrawing buses from areas where they had been attacked and would no longer hire buses to political organisations. In Mpumalanga what appeared to start as a relatively peaceful month disintegrated with the arrival of a special group of KwaZulu police on 22 April. They were removed by 12 May. There was trouble in Swayimane near Wartburg, one of the signs that the violence was spreading into more isolated rural areas. In Imbali the murder of Nicholas Kwilili Duma, a witness before the CAB, led to COSATU's withdrawal from this mechanism on 8 May.

On 7 April Buthelezi reported receipt of a letter from Nelson Mandela. Mandela, apart from praising Buthelezi for his calls for the unconditional release of political prisoners, commented on the violence thus:

In my entire political career few things have distressed me [so much] as to see our people killing one another as is now happening. As you know, the entire fabric of community life in some of the affected areas has been seriously disrupted, leaving behind a legacy of hatred and bitterness which may haunt us for years to come. It is a matter which requires the urgent attention of all people in this country.³⁴

Peace initiatives began to gather momentum in spite of numerous setbacks. On 13 April, Buthelezi and the Inkatha Central Committee released news of intervention by Archbishop Denis Hurley and a group of conveners (including Bishop Michael Nuttall, Professor Peter Booyesen, Bishop Stanley Mogoba and businessman Chris Saunders). However, the committee rejected the attempt and Velaphi Ndlovu denounced what he termed Hurley's dictatorship

in presenting a list of conveners. Buthelezi questioned who would represent COSATU, the UDF and the ANC and whether the latter supported the plan. He urged COSATU to withdraw a dossier alleging collusion between the police and Inkatha in Imbali. On 20 April it was reported that Inkatha also now demanded a high-level consultation with the ANC, but Hurley's initiative drew support from Elijah Barayi of COSATU and Archie Gumede of the UDF who said they had a mandate to do so. The ANC also gave full support.

On 23 April Inkatha held a number of prayer meetings all over Natal, including places in the Midlands such as Nxamalala, Mafunze, Inadi, Mpumuza and Imbali, where a speech from Buthelezi was read revealing his own peace proposals. In a letter to Hurley released on 20 April, Buthelezi said his proposals included collecting international funding, making use of high tech media to broadcast peace and a Marshall-like plan for development. There would be local peacekeeping field units and joint monitoring structures. He said he was willing to work out a compromise with the COSATU/UDF plan, but demanded an end to mudslinging.

On 26 April COSATU and the UDF responded reasonably warmly, if not desperately, and agreed to work towards some kind of compromise peace conference. They also released a document, entitled 'An end to violence and peace in Natal: the position of COSATU and UDF affiliates', which provided a clear summary of all the peace proposals and efforts so far. Their plan was rejected by Inkatha on 29 April when Buthelezi gave a very negative response to both the Hurley and COSATU proposals, including a rejection of Hurley and his co-convenors as intermediaries, at a meeting of the Inkatha Central Committee. However, he promised that he would 'go to the ends of the earth' to bring about peace. He also called for a summit of the presidents of Inkatha, ANC, UDF and COSATU.

The renewal of peace moves received much publicity in the first half of 1989 as did unsuccessful attempts by, amongst others, the maverick chief Mhlabunzima Maphumulo to get the state to institute a judicial inquiry into the violence and the police role in it. On 7 April, Maphumulo petitioned the State President to set up a judicial inquiry. Buthelezi refused to comment to the press on the issue. Also on 7 April Buthelezi attacked Maphumulo in the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly for being part of attempts by the relatively recently formed Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA, a UDF ally), to infiltrate traditional leadership in Natal and 'prostitute the offices of chiefs'. He spoke of the so-called petition, of which he seemed to have had advance knowledge, and said that party politicisation of chiefs was a threat to

all members of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly and that CONTRALESA was out to 'clobber' him. The government turned down the idea of an inquiry. CONTRALESA claimed growing interest in its organisation from Natal chiefs. On 19 April Maphumulo claimed that a ten-man hit team based at Swayimane had been given instructions to kill him. He said that there were currently about ten thousand refugees from other areas at Table Mountain and that Inkatha was now trying to recruit at Maqongqo in the area.

On 24 April, Vlok in his budget speech promised 'to grab them with an iron fist', referring to the ANC/SACP/UDF/COSATU and clergymen alliance. Vlok said that underground structures in the Pietermaritzburg and Durban areas backed by the ANC/SACP alliance were clearly responsible for the violence. At least it was an admission that things were in a terrible state. However, he conceded that the power struggle between Inkatha and the UDF was the main cause of township violence in Natal. He also blamed socio-economic factors and tribal feuds. The iron fist announced by Vlok was to be an operation headed by a police general with extra manpower, including teams of detectives, and equipment to stop the violence, and the placement of semi-permanent police stations in trouble spots. The army would also assist if necessary. Vlok also made clear that the new move had been discussed with Buthelezi at a meeting the previous week:

We are going to grab [*vasvat*] them. They will again make a huge fuss. We know it already. But we cannot allow ourselves to be put off our stride. ... We will root them out ... we know they will make a big noise, but we are prepared for it ... we will grab them with an iron fist. ... we are going to use the iron fist regardless.

Vlok also claimed that the new peace negotiations were on instructions from the ANC to COSATU and the UDF that they should come to a new peace initiative under cover of the churches: 'Like innocent lambs to the slaughter, these good but naive clergymen are again being inspanned by the ANC/SACP to do their devilish work.'³⁵

In May death continued to flourish in Mpumalanga and Georgedale and women protested to the police about the special constables. Imbali murders continued as well and on 22 May a COSATU leader, Jabu Ndlovu, lost most of her family, she herself dying of wounds and burns on 2 June. An IYB organiser, Thulani Ngcobo, was later arrested for the crime. Edendale experienced some deaths and clashes between comrades and comtsotsis³⁶ in Dambuza, and the Sinathing cemetery was declared to be full. Vulindlela had a number of deaths, particularly in Elandskop, Nxamalala and Taylor's Halt. The lower end of

downtown Pietermaritzburg retained its reputation as a place of killing. At Emosomeni, near Richmond, there was unrest, which though probably tribal in origin was to lead to a number of deaths in the following months.

COSATU had suspended its use of the CAB, but appealed for a peace conference and its letter to this effect was circulated in the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly on 8 May. On the same date fifteen Pietermaritzburg church leaders joined an appeal for a judicial inquiry into the violence. Vlok rejected such requests on 16 May, saying on behalf of State President P.W. Botha that such an inquiry would not solve the problem and could become an additional cause for dispute. He laid the blame for the violence on 'revolutionary agents of the ANC/SACP alliance, namely the UDF and COSATU' who were engaged in a leadership struggle with Inkatha. He added that 'there is absolutely no question of a breakdown of law and order in the Greater Pietermaritzburg area' as had been alleged in Maphumulo's petition. He also said that the government had no intention of instituting an inquiry 'as the main causes of the ongoing violence have been ascertained through research and investigation'. Studies by various groups and investigations by the police showed the major cause of the conflict was 'the power struggle between Inkatha and the revolutionary agents of the ANC/SACP alliance, namely the UDF and COSATU'. Other causes were poor socio-economic circumstances caused by unemployment and the population explosion; internal struggles for leadership within the ranks of Inkatha and the UDF; family and tribal disputes; and criminal elements. The last consisted mainly of former comrades who, during the initial unrest, were responsible for intimidating and committing crimes against the population and who now 'continued to make a living from crime'. Inkatha and Buthelezi were being blamed by leftist radicals for having started the violence, but 'he and Inkatha are prepared to work for peace and maintenance of law and order ... they did not start the violence'.³⁷

On 10 May the ANC in exile offered to help play a direct role in the peace talks and peace moves finally seemed to be making progress when Buthelezi agreed to a meeting on 20 May with COSATU and the UDF in response to a request from COSATU to meet at a mutually acceptable venue. However, he was insistent on an Ulundi venue and after a series of interchanges the talks were cancelled in spite of numerous appeals from many parties.³⁸ At a rally billed as a prayer meeting held on the Natal South Coast on 28 May, Buthelezi called for calm and said that there would be other peace rallies.

June began with a COSATU-led, three-day stayaway in Pietermaritzburg from 5 to 7 June in protest at the assassination of Jabu Ndlovu. Some intimidation

accompanied it. The Anglican Church's provincial synod, meeting in Durban, called for the appointment of an independent commission of inquiry into the violence. A new approach by COSATU and the UDF was made to Buthelezi, but he replied that he was still supporting Ulundi as the venue for peace talks.

After much negotiating, and appeals from a delegation from the synod that visited him in Ulundi on 6 June, it appeared that Buthelezi would be willing to engage in talks at a neutral venue about high-level talks with the presidents of the UDF, COSATU and the ANC. Two initial meetings between COSATU/UDF and Inkatha delegations took place in Durban on 19 and 23 June that led to joint press statements. This seemed to be the breakthrough that had happened against all odds: one was the more severe restriction of UDF leader Archie Gumede on 12 June by Vlok a few days before the peace talks, but subsequently relaxed on 16 June. Reports emanating from an Inkatha rally led by Buthelezi in Edendale on 25 June indicated that high-level negotiations between the parties, including the ANC, at an overseas venue were now likely. Chief Maphumulo was elected leader of CONTRALESA on 11 June.

Deaths continued, particularly in Vulindlela and Hammarsdale, where a court official fled from his post on 11 June. But on the whole June showed a considerable downswing in the death toll, though it was also the first month in which Natal coastal deaths exceeded those in the Midlands. A letter published in *Echo*, claiming to be from TGWU KwaZulu Transport bus drivers, complained about comrades stoning and robbing buses travelling through a number of areas in Edendale and in KwaMnyandu, part of Vulindlela.

July started well with the Inkatha Central Committee on 3 July applauding COSATU and the UDF for their peace attempts and on 4 July another five-a-side meeting was held. On 7 July Buthelezi disclosed the existence of a peace accord document that included details of proposals for a meeting of the presidents of Inkatha, COSATU, UDF and the ANC, a peace conference and many joint peace rallies. He said he could see future historians attributing a whole new political era and the final collapse of apartheid to the document.

But what happened in July showed that optimism was premature. In Mpumalanga alone there were 21 deaths over the weekend 14 to 16 July. According to informants, heavy guns were used and vast quantities of ammunition expended. According to the same informants the KZP deployed in Mpumalanga in February 1989 were successful and non-partisan. Local KwaZulu Legislative Assembly members had then complained and a new special unit of KZP arrived and generally created havoc. The South African Police (SAP) then took over again and their riot police sided with Inkatha.

Prior to this things had been getting more peaceful, partly because in only two areas that were still controlled by Inkatha did much violence continue. Efforts to patch up a ceasefire by local COSATU and Inkatha leaders were short-lived.

Meanwhile significant violence re-emerged in the Mpophomeni/Howick area. Perhaps even more significant was the violence taking root in rural areas, in Swayimane (Wartburg), Ehlanzeni (Camperdown) and Emosomeni (Richmond). The Ehlanzeni conflict, which escalated in later months, was between two chiefdoms that now appeared to have, at least nominally, become Inkatha and UDF areas respectively. The Richmond conflict, though apparently more tribal in origin, led to at least twenty deaths and a similar politicisation.

In August many killings took place in Imbali, including the gunning down of two youths after an IYO peace rally. Allegations were also made that a special unit of police was engaged in the harassment and torture of youths: an interim interdict was granted against the police on 3 November. There were also some attacks on the lower end of Slangspruit and some intra-comrade killings in Ashdown, which was also attacked by Inkatha supporters from Mpumzuza leaving seventeen injured and one dead. In the Vulindlela region Mvundlweni became a site of conflict with several attacks and deaths. There were more deaths in Hammarsdale, Georgedale and Fredville. Violence also spread to the tribal area of Lalane near Greytown.

On 1 August Chief Maphumulo returned from a visit to Lusaka and stated that the ANC had agreed to broad unaffiliated community involvement in the peace talks. Oscar Dhlomo responded that the idea was impractical, but that the issue was already covered by the Inkatha/COSATU/UDF/ANC peace plan. On 6 August a pastoral letter from all the mainline churches urged support for the peace plan. But the hoped-for talks including the ANC did not take place, though there was talk of a meeting in Oslo in September.

On 17 August, MPs Pierre Cronje and Peter Gastrow met Adriaan Vlok who rejected an Inkatha and UDF supported peace plan that included the lifting of restrictions on eight UDF leaders. Vlok generally denigrated the UDF, stating that it was a tool of the ANC, that if it was a non-violent organisation it had no role in resolving the violent conflict, and that UDF leaders did not represent the community. On 24 August Chief Maphumulo convened a second round of a new initiative at a peace meeting.

An estimate was made that there were currently three thousand refugees in the Pietermaritzburg region. On 31 August General H.G. de Witt, the Commissioner of Police, confirmed the escalation of the Natal conflict since mid-August. Other commentators attributed this to an attempt by Inkatha to

regain lost territory, as at Nxamalala, accompanied by new recruitment drives. A sign of this was the meeting at which threats were made by Ben Jele to the Trust Feed community.

September saw more bloodletting in Mpumalanga, more deaths in Imbali and at least ten in Ehlanzeni. People from KwaShange marched in Pietermaritzburg to complain about attacks. Indeed, September was the month of marches both regionally and nationally, with the arrest of nearly four hundred university defiance campaign marchers in Pietermaritzburg the day after police shootings on the Durban campus³⁹; a march by Mpophomeni residents to complain about the police; and a seven thousand strong, but legal, march in Pietermaritzburg on 21 September, marred by some looting afterwards that may have involved a section of the crowd. The tricameral election took place on 5 September and it was accompanied by a stayaway, fairly well supported in Pietermaritzburg, on 5 and 6 September.

In Vulindlela a prominent Inkatha warlord, Lawrence Zuma, was wounded and three of his family died when he was allegedly attacked by his chief, fellow warlord, and companion in interdict allegations, Shayabantu Zondi, who, together with a KwaZulu policeman eventually appeared in court on murder charges but were soon released on bail.

On 7 September Chief Maphumulo cancelled a meeting with King Zwelithini and both the King and Buthelezi denounced him on 14 September with Inkatha-supporting chiefs resolving to act with power against CONTRALESA. Hopes of talks began to fade and no further announcements were made about the overseas peace meeting, although Buthelezi was reported to have written to the ANC suggesting an October or November meeting at the earliest. There were reports that the officials involved in the earlier talks about peace talks had not followed them up and that senior leaders were not making themselves available to meet communities on the ground.

On 23 September at a meeting of the Inkatha Central Committee in Ulundi, Buthelezi described various obstacles to the peace talks, announced a moratorium and made various demands about any future negotiations. The obstacles he listed were

- the composition of the delegations (he wanted UWUSA and the Natal Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC)-in-exile⁴⁰ to be represented);
- a speech in Copenhagen by Thabo Mbeki;
- a document entitled 'COSATU/UDF/Inkatha peace talks: guidelines to comrades'⁴¹;
- his need for a personal invitation from Oliver Tambo;

- continuing violence; and
- UDF and COSATU involvement in marches and other initiatives without consultation with Inkatha.

An example of the hardening Inkatha line were speeches made by Winnington Sabelo on 26 and 28–29 September urging Mlazi teachers to join Inkatha or face the consequences of being traitors and his denunciation of the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), the UDF, the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU), communists and Indians. Also in late September, at a meeting of chiefs King Zwelithini made a vitriolic attack on Chief Maphumulo, ‘let us bury Chief Maphumulo in yesterday’s problems ... Politically speaking, if he goes [overseas] all we can say is rest in peace, Maphumulo.’⁴²

In early October, twenty-two Midlands clergy stated that they would defy State of Emergency restrictions on church funerals.⁴³ October continued Mpumalanga’s agony with numerous people killed. On 3 October a number of people (Deputy Minister of Justice Danie Schutte, Rob Haswell MP, Pierre Cronje MP, Chief Maphumulo, Bishop Mgojo and Peter Kerchhoff of the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA) called for a commission of inquiry after violence at Mpumalanga. Inkatha’s Ben Jele rejected this on the grounds that calling for an inquiry into the violence was like pouring petrol onto a fire. There were various high-level meetings between parliamentarians and police and a visit there by an eminent persons group organised by the Joint Working Committee of COSATU and the UDF on 10 October. There was also a march accompanied by police activity. There were reports of a 600–800 strong war band in Summerfield near Mpumalanga, while a thousand strong gathering near Pietermaritzburg caused casualties. The precise nature of these groups was unclear. At Swayimane a 300-strong war band left nine Inkatha supporters dead. There were claims that Inkatha had been on a membership drive since July and that the attack, which was also related to a factional dispute, was in retaliation for forced recruitment.

In Ehlanzeni at least eight people died. Accusations were made by Alec Erwin of COSATU on 4 October that when COSATU and the UDF attempted to initiate talks in Camperdown about this conflict, Inkatha instructed Chief Mdluli of the amaNyavu not to become involved in the talks. Later, police announced that on 15 October a pact facilitated by them had been made between Chiefs Mlaba and Mdluli. In Vulindlela there were deaths and unrest in a number of areas, particularly Gezubuso. On 21 October there was a protest march of about two thousand people from Bruntville in Mooi River.

On 4 October COSATU and the UDF claimed that they would go it alone in efforts to make peace in spite of Inkatha's pull out from negotiations. They described the many stumbling blocks that Inkatha had put in the way and said that after two years of effort they had severe reservations whether Buthelezi and the Inkatha Central Committee wanted to use peace talks to end the violence or establish a national political position. In mid-October Buthelezi released a statement to the Natal Chamber of Industries responding to its concern at the COSATU/UDF allegations that Inkatha was responsible for the breakdown of the peace talks. Buthelezi claimed that as early as March 1989 the ANC/COSATU/UDF alliance was mounting a peace initiative to trap him politically. He said that at an ANC meeting in February 1989 a peace initiative was discussed as a means of consolidating the UDF/COSATU position. He further alleged that this peace initiative was designed to isolate him from his international friends.

In late October the PCC called for a judicial commission of inquiry into the violence, but then stalled after discussions with Schutte. On 10 November he said that after discussions with the police, he could say that 'there are clear indications that the situation in Pietermaritzburg is returning to normality ... I am satisfied with the actions taken by the police to stabilise the situation.'⁴⁴ Unrest in Natal was also said to be in decline.

In Pietermaritzburg the Imbali Support Group (ISG) was formed by concerned volunteers willing to stay with threatened families in that township. On 20 November, David Ntombela warned whites and Indians squatting in Imbali to get out or he would be forced to take the law into his own hands. A local Imbali Inkatha leader, Phikelela Ndlovu, added that black people must obey black rules, while whites must stick to white rules.

On 17 November Oscar Dhlomo said he did not hold out much hope for the resumption of peace talks unless the problem of the vilification of Inkatha and Buthelezi was resolved. On 19 November an imbizo (convention) was called by King Zwelithini in Durban. Speaking to a large crowd, the king said that the Zulu people had been excluded from welcome home celebrations for the recently released Rivonia trialists. His speech and that by Buthelezi contained some sharp references to the ANC, UDF and COSATU: 'I speak now as King of the Zulus and I say: let no party attack my people. I say to the leadership of the ANC, COSATU and the UDF: leave my people alone and let them do their Zulu thing.' Buthelezi said the king was always above party politics, then added: 'You know that the UDF and COSATU have come into your midst to turn you against Inkatha.' He said one of the reasons for calling the convention

was to urge an end to a campaign of vilification: 'The killing-talk, the hurling of insults, the singing of vile songs about the leader of the Zulu nation, all make up a recipe for killing.'⁴⁵

Some buses returning from the rally were stoned by comrades in the Pietermaritzburg area. Soon after the rally there began a series of attacks by Inkatha supporters and special constables that continued for more than a week on UDF areas in Mpumalanga in which several people were killed and many houses destroyed. In early December an interdict application relating to these attacks, and particularly the massive ones of 27 and 28 November, contained statements from highly reputable witnesses such as lawyers and social workers alleging police collusion they had seen. Some respite came on 30 November when the local leadership of Inkatha and the UDF signed a ceasefire agreement. This process was facilitated by local industrialists and it was welcomed by Dhlomo, the police and, on 4 December, the national leadership of both the UDF and Inkatha. On 29 November the township manager, Bheki Nzimande, claimed that one thousand houses had been damaged in Mpumalanga since the beginning of the year.

On 20 November, ANC leader Walter Sisulu had responded favourably to calls for peace issued at the imbizo by King Zwelithini and Buthelezi and on 24 November nine Natal community leaders went to see Mandela in prison about the violence in Natal. It was also reported on 24 November that a fake National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) anti-peace talks pamphlet had been sent to left-wing organisations in Britain.

There was also escalating violence at Ehlanzeni in the Msunduzi/Mgeni valley. Chief Maphumulo was ordered to appear before an inquiry to be held at the KwaZulu Chief Minister's office at Ulundi on 23 November into 'the dissatisfaction among tribes and/or matters relating to your carrying on the administration of your area and/or the maintenance of law and order and matters of import or real concern or conditions of unrest and dissatisfaction.' Chiefs were reported to be cross that he had allowed refugees, particularly from Vulindlela, to settle there. Maphumulo declined to go.

December began with a well-supported stayaway in Hammarsdale and Pinetown on 4 December in protest at the violence that had erupted after the 19 November imbizo and the alleged police collusion in it in Mpumalanga. There was a successful peace meeting in Hammarsdale on 9 December. Heavy violence continued in Ehlanzeni in early December and there were allegations by a COSATU leader that Buthelezi opposed the peace talks held at the end

of October between Mlaba and Mdluli because of the moratorium he had imposed.

In Swayimane, the local Inkatha MP, Psychology Ndlovu, promised an end to forced recruitment and there was normalisation for a brief period. With coercion reduced, people began to leave Inkatha and Ndlovu left the area. However, he later returned accompanied by KwaZulu police and the violence erupted again. December also saw a large offensive from Inkatha dominated areas in the Durban region that led to many deaths.

An independent commission of inquiry into the violence headed by advocate R.S. Douglas was set up by CONTRALESA leader Chief Maphumulo. On the State side, Deputy Minister of Defence Wynand Breytenbach told troops deployed in Durban townships that the violence was caused by an onslaught by ANC revolutionaries.

In Pietermaritzburg it was reported that the fire service did not respond to calls for assistance from townships unless a person was trapped in a burning building. Reports about this problem became a regular feature in the pages of the *Natal Witness*.

On 19 December Adriaan Vlok, accompanied by Lieutenant-General Johan van der Merwe, soon to become SAP Commissioner, met Buthelezi and they issued a joint statement promising impartial police action against the violence and underlying problems and urging community leaders to work for peace. The next day Buthelezi visited President F.W. de Klerk holidaying on the Natal South Coast and discussed unrest violence in KwaZulu and Natal, and ways and means of enhancing the process of negotiation and addressing obstacles impeding progress.

At the end of the year the Reverend Tim Smith SJ from Elandskop in Vulindlela released an account of Inkatha death squads there. The ISG reported that in December a number of people living in corner houses in Imbali were evicted for no reason. Razor wire would then be placed around the house and kitskonstabels move in. These houses were later used as shooting points during the so-called Seven Day War in March 1990.

1990

On 2 February 1990 the foundations of many South African verities were shaken with the announcement by de Klerk of the unbanning of a whole range of political organisations and the imminent release of Mandela. On 25 February a huge but mainly youthful crowd of over a hundred thousand people welcomed their released leader to Durban. In his speech he was conciliatory

towards Inkatha and Buthelezi and urged a cessation of all violence, calling on everyone to throw their pangas and other weapons into the sea.

The events of late March disabused all of the idea that the people of Natal, and particularly Inkatha, had taken Mandela's advice. On 25 March, exactly a month after Mandela's speech, and at the same but now rain-swept venue, Buthelezi could only muster a crowd of less than ten thousand people to yet another security police financed rally.⁴⁶ Two days later massive Inkatha attacks started on non-Inkatha areas in Vulindlela, Edendale, Ashdown and Imbali that led to over two hundred deaths over the next month. Political violence in South Africa over the next three years would show the Midlands war of 1987 to 1989 to have been but a prelude.

From story to statistics

The story presented in this chapter moves from a description of latent violence in the region, through accounts of early tussles between the Inkatha movement and the rising power of the UDF and COSATU, to a chronology of the open warfare that broke out between Inkatha and their more radical opponents from September 1987. Interwoven with the story are records of apparently collusive behaviour on the part of the State and of the failures of various peace brokers to halt the bloodletting.

The next four chapters use mainly numerical and statistical tools to interrogate the data that is available, richly so in the UMP database, to see whether the patterns in the conflict to some degree already apparent in the narrative presented in this chapter stand out more starkly when the flesh of the particular and accidental has been stripped away. The following four chapters then seek to interpret the structure, ancestry and family relationships of the skeletal forms thus revealed.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Paul Forsyth, *Pietermaritzburg Conflict Chronology: A Chronology of Political Developments in Pietermaritzburg, 1980–1986* (Pietermaritzburg: Department of Historical Studies, University of Natal, 1991).
- 2 Peace was always an ambiguous concept in apartheid South Africa. Whilst an analysis of reports of unrest and public violence in the Midlands in the eighties prior to September 1987 shows a fair number of disturbances of the peace, relative to the many other areas where conflict took place in South Africa during this period the Midlands were undoubtedly peaceful.
- 3 A. de V. Minnaar, *Conflict and Violence in Natal/KwaZulu: Historical Perspectives* (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1990); A. de V. Minnaar, *Squatters, Violence*

and the Future of the Informal Settlements in the Greater Durban Region (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1992). Generally Minnaar's argument is not convincing, even after consideration of John Argyle's paper, 'Faction fights, feuds, ethnicity and political conflict in Natal: a comparative view', presented to the Project on Contemporary Political Conflict in Natal Conference: Ethnicity, Society and Conflict in Natal (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, 14–16 September 1992). The one clear example of faction fighting in the Vulindlela district took place in the Inadi area between Dlamini and Zondi in 1982 over the accession of Shayabantu Zondi to the chieftainship. Inadi remained solidly Inkatha and chief-dominated throughout the post-1987 unrest and was not itself the scene of any significant political violence, though attacks were launched from it as in late March 1990. In May 1981 there were faction fights between clans at both Thornville and Richmond, but neither of these areas was an early site of the post-September 1987 violence.

- 4 Thereafter the Inkatha and KwaZulu leadership became increasingly condemnatory in its comments about the ANC. In July 1980 Mangosuthu Buthelezi complained about ANC statements about him and said that the ANC had even made threats in broadcasts from Lusaka to have him killed. In March 1983 Buthelezi stated that he would reconsider his contacts with the ANC following attacks on him in ANC and SACP publications. He said he believed the ANC/SACP was planning to assassinate him. In June 1984 King Goodwill Zwelithini told the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly that Zulus were more divided than ever and that this was the work of whites who operated through the ANC. In December 1985 Buthelezi claimed that the UDF was a front for the banned ANC and announced that any UDF members in the KwaZulu civil service would be fired.
- 5 J.J.W. Aitchison, 'The extruded student'. Unpublished survey report (Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal, 1989); J.J.W. Aitchison, 'Interpreting violence: the struggle to understand the Natal conflict'. Paper presented at the Conference of the Association for Sociology in Southern Africa, University of Stellenbosch, 1–4 July 1990, 8–11; J.J.W. Aitchison, *The Opinion Polls: How Do the Parties Fare?* (Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Adult Education: University of Natal, 2nd ed., 1991).
- 6 *Natal Witness* 27 November 1985.
- 7 KwaShange, though part of the KwaZulu-controlled Vulindlela district, retained a generally radical allegiance.
- 8 Previously the South African Native Trust, which controlled state-owned land in white South Africa occupied by blacks.
- 9 Edendale is a large and populous freehold area, which for most of the twentieth century was continually thwarted in its struggle to gain true municipal powers by the intransigence of white officialdom. Historically a Christian community of amaKholwa, in the Anglo-Zulu war this community, out of its own resources, equipped a mounted and armed regiment that fought effectively at the battle of Isandlwana against Cetshwayo's forces.
- 10 Another attempt to hold elections was made in May 1987, but the council subsequently disbanded.
- 11 In the 1984 and 1988 elections no candidates were forthcoming and during this period, until its disbanding in 1989, an unofficial Committee of Twelve led Sobantu.
- 12 In the September 1989 election only three out of seven wards were contested in Imbali. Four councillors subsequently resigned. A new council in a section of Imbali that was given separate township status as Edendale East in October 1989 disbanded in April 1990 when five of its six councillors resigned.
- 13 *Natal Witness* 15 January 1986.

- 14 The role of the state security forces during the early eighties was to defend apartheid in its new semi-reformist mode and destroy perceived radicalism. This they did with a blind enthusiasm that continued the erosion of all respect for law, human rights and ethics that became characteristics of apartheid's corruption of South African society. The security and riot police became notorious for heavy-handed behaviour in the streets, intolerant of criticism, prone to assault and torture of detainees, as well as for over-friendly relationships with the Inkatha vigilantes who by 1986 were beginning to exercise considerable muscle in the region. Last but not least, they protected vigilantes who had committed crimes against the perceived enemies of the apartheid state, namely UDF and COSATU supporters. This collusion gradually became more and more apparent as the eighties progressed.
- 15 One of those named was Vela Mchunu who, together with about two hundred other Inkatha/KwaZulu men, had recently been a beneficiary of SADF special forces military training in the Caprivi.
- 16 *Natal Witness* 29 March 1980.
- 17 These conjectures take two main forms. One suggests that people in the Msunduzi Valley were so fed up after the damage and inconvenience of the floods that the Inkatha recruiting drive was the last straw and they fought back against coercion. The other argues that corruption in the distribution of flood relief aid led to anger at Inkatha and KwaZulu structures and in turn led to resistance to recruitment.
- 18 *Natal Witness* 23 October 1987.
- 19 Mellet had earlier been a security policeman working undercover as a journalist. According to Dirk Coetzee, one of his exploits was to shoot holes in his own car then claim he had been attacked by ANC terrorists.
- 20 *Sunday Tribune* 12 February 1988.
- 21 Local legal academics drew invidious comparisons with the treatment of the Sharpeville Six, who were sentenced to death for a murder committed by a mob on the grounds of common purpose, although they had not directly participated in the killing (*Natal Witness* 7 and 9 May 1988).
- 22 *Natal Witness* 27 February 1988.
- 23 According to a survey conducted by the Development Studies Research Group of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, reported in the *Natal Witness* 8 June 1988.
- 24 *The Independent* 23 August 1988.
- 25 *Weekly Mail* 9 September 1988.
- 26 *Natal Witness* 26 September 1988; *Echo* 29 September 1988; *Weekly Mail* 30 September 1988.
- 27 *Sunday Tribune* 13 November 1988.
- 28 *Sunday Tribune* 27 November 1988.
- 29 There was voluminous press coverage of both the original massacre and the subsequent trial. A useful summary is by Mary de Haas, 'The ghosts of Trust Feed' *Indicator South Africa* 9(3) 1992: 65–68.
- 30 *Natal Witness* 31 December 1988.
- 31 M. Hart and J. Gultig, 'The effects of the violence on black schooling in Edendale and Vulindlela' in *Education in the Eighties: Proceedings of the Kenton Conference, 1988* edited by S. Abrahams ([Bellville]: Kenton Organising Committee, 1988).
- 32 *Natal Witness* 3 March 1989.
- 33 *Natal Witness* 6 March 1989.

- 34 *Natal Witness* 8 April 1989; *Sunday Tribune* 9 April 1989.
- 35 *Natal Witness* 25 April 1989; *Weekly Mail* 28 April 1989.
- 36 Comtsotsis, that is comrade tsotis, were comrades turned into criminal gang members or criminal elements who had a nominal allegiance to the radical side.
- 37 *Natal Witness* 17 May 1989; *Weekly Mail* 19 May 1989.
- 38 On 12 May COSATU agreed to the meeting on 20 May, but said that the first meeting should be at a symbolically neutral venue. On 15 May Buthelezi insisted on Ulundi; and on 18 May the plans collapsed over the venue issue. On 19 May COSATU and the UDF appealed again to Buthelezi, but he was unrelenting about the venue claiming that the refusal to accept Ulundi was part of continued political propaganda against him and KwaZulu. On 23 May Buthelezi attacked newspaper editorials complaining about his intransigence and confirmed his refusal to budge on Ulundi.
- 39 *Natal Witness* 6 September 1989.
- 40 A totally unrepresentative splinter group.
- 41 It is highly probable that this was a dirty tricks forgery.
- 42 *Weekly Mail* 6 October 1989.
- 43 Letter to *Natal Witness* 2 October 1989.
- 44 *Natal Witness* 11 November 1989.
- 45 *Weekly Mail* 10 November 1989; *Natal Witness* 20 November 1989; M.G. Buthelezi, 'Vote of thanks to his majesty King Goodwill Zwelithini ka Bhekuzulu king of the Zulus following his address to the nation by Mangosuthu Buthelezi, chief minister KwaZulu and president of Inkatha', 1989.
- 46 *Sunday Times* 21 July 1991.

2

EVENTS AND INCIDENTS

THE CENTRE FOR ADULT EDUCATION (CAE) computerised database contains over four thousand records for the years 1987 (1 061), 1988 (1 566), and 1989 (1 479). Some of them are statistical in nature or contain comments on the situation or its background, but most are descriptive of, and more or less synonymous with, what the press and the police unrest reports described as events or incidents.

However, in this study for statistical purposes a distinction is made between events, incidents and the actual numbers of casualties. An event record describes, say, the attack on a house.¹ But the event usually comprises a number of incidents: for instance, the throwing of a petrol bomb that burned part of the house, the murder of the household head, the stabbing and wounding of two of the occupants as they fled the flames, and the fatal shooting of one of the attackers when the police arrived at the scene. In this example there was one event (the attack on the house), four incidents (petrol bombing, murder, stabbing and police shooting) and the number of casualties involved was five (two deaths, two wounded and one house damaged).

Some events, because of their nature, contain one or more or, indeed, a series of incidents; or may lump together what must have been several incidents, say the burning of five houses at different sites on a long street. Hence more discrete incidents are recorded in the tables and graphs in this book than there are records of events. Thus in 1987 there were 938 events and 1 202 incidents; in 1988, 1 286 events and 1 804 incidents; and in 1989, 1 044 events and 1 452 incidents.

A rigorous effort was made to weed out duplicate reports and identify events that may not be unrest related. It is extremely unlikely that many such remain or that they would form more than 5–10% of the total. The few records of events that took place outside the Natal Midlands (as defined in chapter 10) have been omitted from the statistics.

Miles and Huberman note that such data processing is inextricably bound up with the very process of analysis. Data reduction is not something separate

from analysis, but part of it. The researcher's choices about which data chunks to code, which to pull out, which patterns summarise a number of chunks, and the nature of the evolving story are all analytic choices. Data reduction is a form of analysis that sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards and organises data in such a way that conclusions can be drawn and verified. Miles and Huberman also contend that 'Narrative text ... overloads humans' information processing capabilities and preys on their tendencies to find simplifying patterns ... the creation and use of displays is not something separate from analysis, it is *part* of analysis ... You know what you display.'² Tables and graphs are accordingly used as a key analytical tool.

1987 to 1989

During these years there were at least 3 268 events comprising 4 458 incidents of politically linked violence leading to the deaths of 1 810 people, thousands of injuries and immense damage to property. Table 1 indicates the number of events of political violence and unrest and the affiliation of the initiators and victims in these incidents in so far as this can be determined.

Year	Events	Incidents	Initiator/ Affected	Affiliation								
				Inkatha	UDF	BCM	Rad	ANC	SADF	Pol	Other	Unknown
1987	938	1 202	Initiator	379	132	20	7	–	2	49	3	610
			Affected	109	360	5	–	–	1	21	38	668
1988	1286	1 804	Initiator	539	152	11	–	5	5	156	9	927
			Affected	143	502	7	–	3	2	46	55	1046
1989	1044	1 452	Initiator	343	219	3	–	–	2	158	4	723
			Affected	120	405	1	–	–	1	66	64	795
Totals	3268	4 458	Initiator	1 261	503	34	7	5	9	363	16	2 260
			Affected	372	1267	13	–	3	4	133	157	2 509

NOTES (these apply to all the tables in this chapter):

UDF – United Democratic Front, COSATU and supporters

BCM – Black Consciousness Movement organisations such as AZAPO and AZASM

Rad – Radical youth, either UDF or BCM supporters or both

Pol – Police, whether SAP, KZP or their respective special constables (kitskonstabels)

Other – mainly commerce, public transport and schools

Unknown – affiliation unknown, including cases such as illegal gatherings where there were no known victims

Police have only been categorised as initiators in what seem to be illegal or unwarranted acts. Violence, including homicides, carried out in performance of their legal duties has not been so categorised.

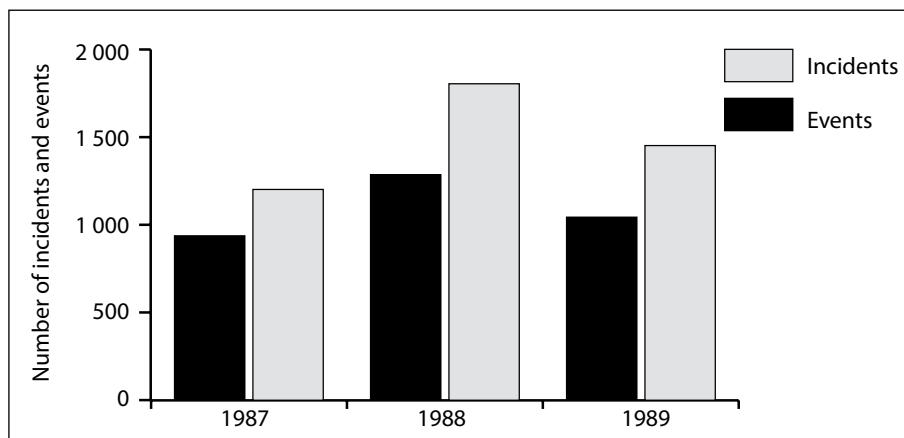
Table 1 Events and incidents of political violence and unrest, 1987–1989

Table 1 can be portrayed graphically (graph 1) showing, for each party, the ratio between incidents in which it was aggressor and those in which it was victim. The immediate observations are that the affiliations of more than half of the initiators and affected are unknown; the main known protagonists are Inkatha and the United Democratic Front (UDF) with Inkatha more often the aggressor and the UDF more often the victim; the police are more often aggressor than victim; and Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) related incidents form a minute percentage of the whole and in those few the BCM is more often than not the initiator. The year 1988 appears to have been the most active for unrest.

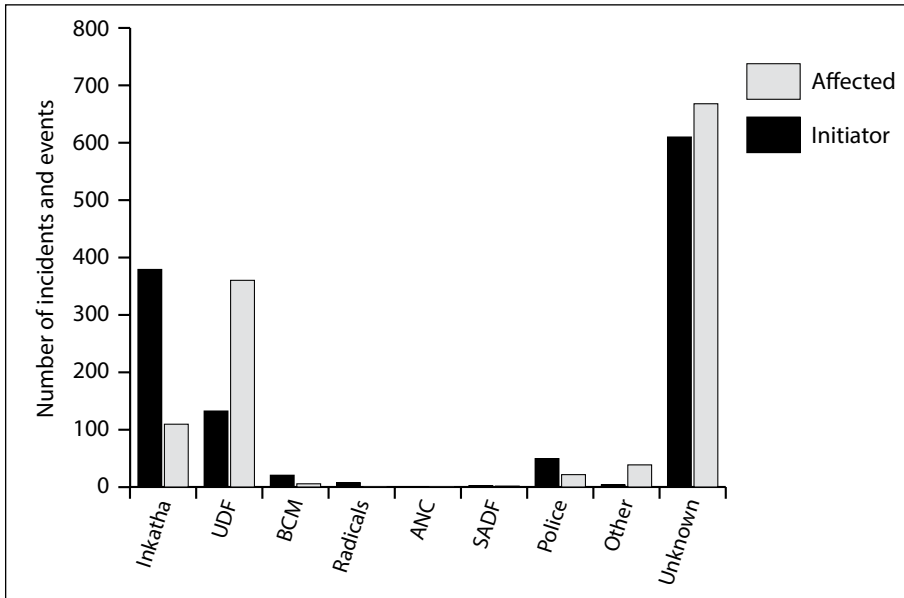
By way of more detailed documentation, the following pages display tables and graphs for each year on

- events and incidents by month by affiliation; and
- events by area by month.

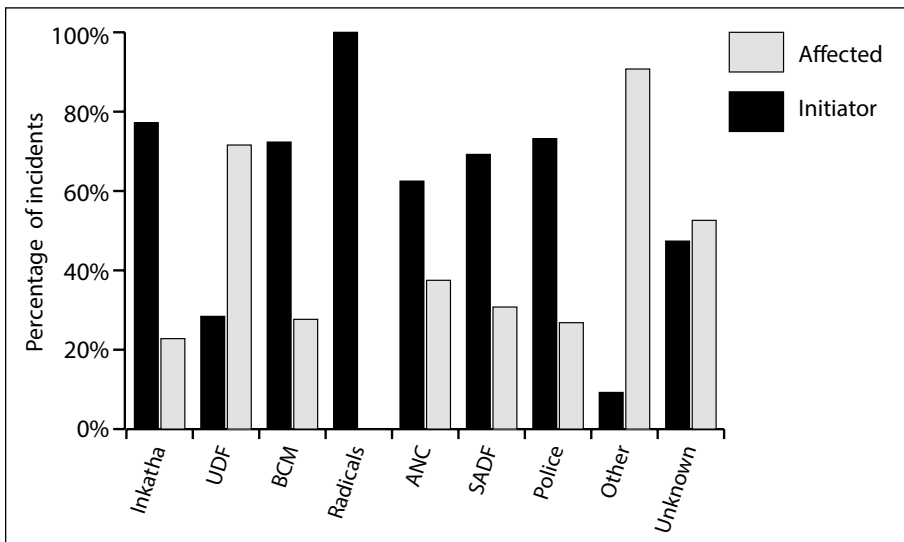
Chapter 3 examines the content of these unrest events.



Graph 1 Events and incidents of political violence, 1987–1989 (see Table 1)



Graph 2 Incidents of political violence by affiliation, 1987–1989 (see Table 1)



Graph 3 Incidents of political violence by affiliation, 1987–1989 (see Table 1)

1987

There were 938 recorded events of political violence and unrest incorporating 1 202 discrete incidents. Table 2 and graphs 4 and 5 give a detailed breakdown.

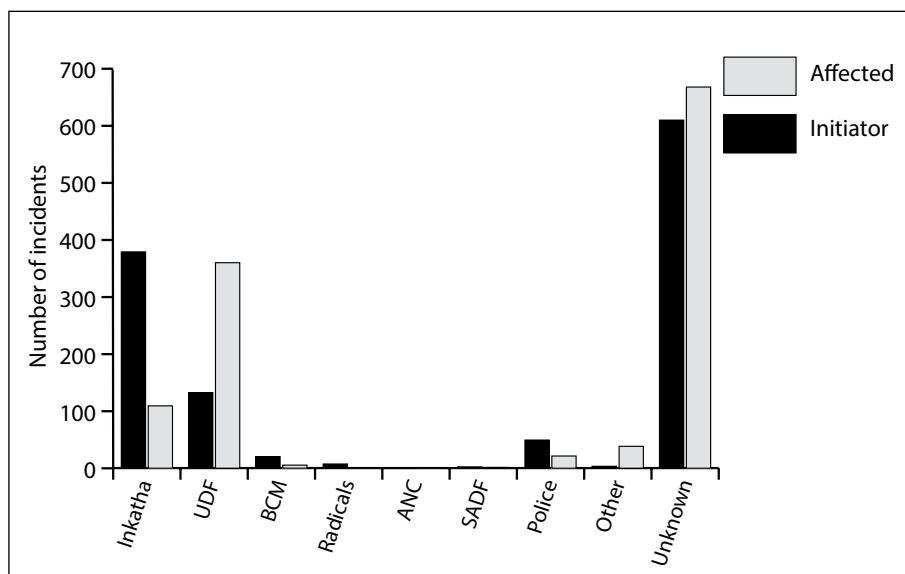
The initiators of the violence and the affiliations of their victims in the majority of incidents remain unknown (610 incidents had unknown initiators and 668 had unknown victims).³ Where a judgement could be made about affiliation, the following picture emerges.

Year	Events	Incidents	Initiator/ Affected	Affiliation								
				Inkatha	UDF	BCM	Rad	ANC	SADF	Pol	Other	Unknown
1987	938	1202	Initiator	379	132	20	7	-	2	49	3	610
			Affected	109	360	5	-	-	1	21	38	668

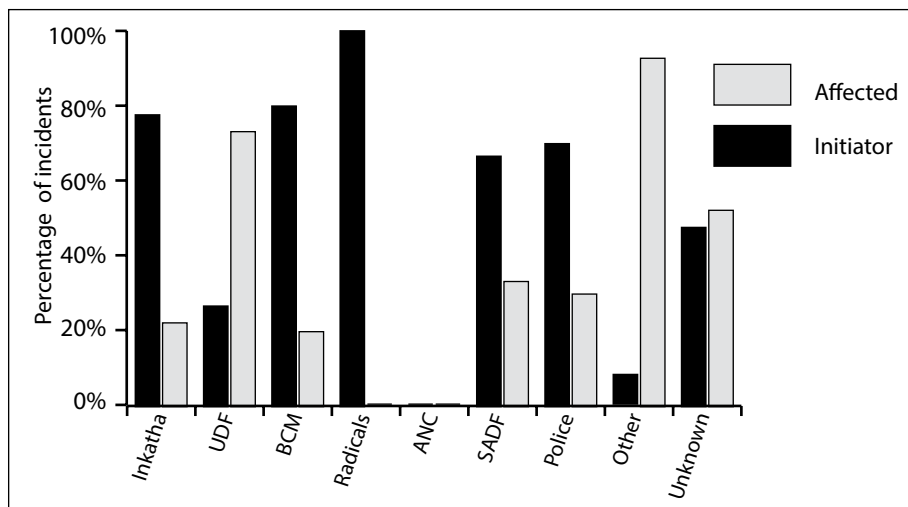
Notes: see table 1.

Table 2 Events and incidents of political violence and unrest, 1987

Table 2 can be portrayed in graphic form showing for each party the ratio between incidents in which it was aggressor and those in which it was victim. Observations that can be made relate to the number of unknowns; the large number of Inkatha initiated incidents and the similarly sized number of UDF supporters affected; and the relatively few BCM and police-related incidents. The rapid escalation of the conflict clearly started in September, though it had begun to rise in intensity from the beginning of the year. The areas most heavily affected are urban townships (Imbali, Ashdown, Edendale and Hammarsdale) and the semi-rural area of Vulindlela.



Graph 4 Incidents of political violence by affiliation, 1987 (see Table 2)

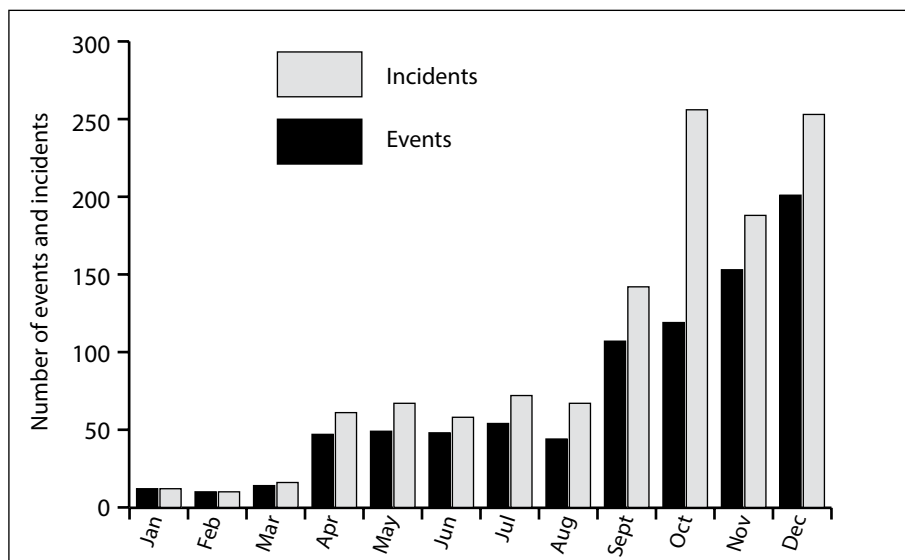


Graph 5 Incidents of political violence by affiliation, 1987 (see Table 2)

Month	Events	Areas	Incidents	Affiliation Initiator/Affected							
				Inkatha	UDF	BCM	Rad	Pol	SADF	Other	Unknown
Jan	12	6	12	4 4	2 3	–	–	–	–	–	6 5
Feb	10	3	10	7 1	– 6	–	–	–	–	–	3 3
Mar	14	7	16	8 1	– 7	–	3 –	– 1	–	– 1	5 6
Apr	47	7	61	31 13	10 21	3	1 –	– 3	–	1 9	15 15
May	49	6	67	15 4	5 16	1 –	2 –	– 5	–	1 7	43 35
Jun	48	8	58	27 6	6 31	2 –	– –	1 –	–	– 2	22 19
Jul	54	8	72	32 13	17 32	4 –	– –	2 –	–	– 3	17 24
Aug	44	8	67	43 4	5 45	1 1	1 –	1 1	–	– –	16 16
Sep	107	10	142	43 9	10 36	3 –	– –	4 2	–	1 7	82 89
Oct	119	9	256	93 20	28 32	4 2	– –	6 1	–	– 7	125 144
Nov	153	15	188	31 12	18 29	1 2	– –	19 2	1 1	– 1	118 141
Dec	201	12	253	45 22	31 52	1 –	– –	16 6	1 –	– 1	158 171
Year	858	16	1 202	379 109	132 310	20 5	7 –	49 21	2 1	3 38	610 668

Notes: see table 1.

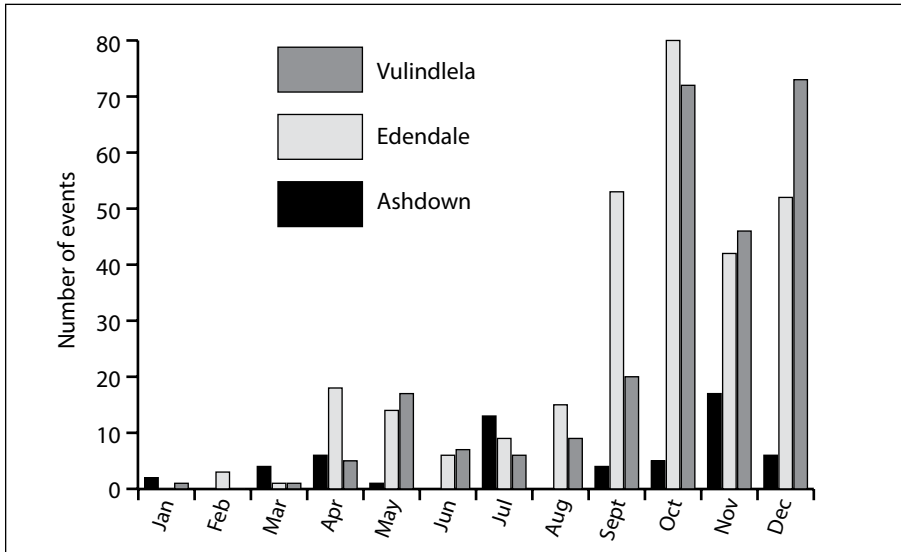
Table 3 Events and incidents of political violence and unrest by month, 1987



Graph 6 Events and incidents of political violence and unrest by month, 1987 (see Table 3)

Area	Events	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Imbali	94	6	4	2	9	10	19	4	6	8	2	7	16
Ashdown	58	2	–	4	6	1	–	13	–	4	5	17	6
Sobantu	39	1	–	2	5	5	3	7	2	5	5	1	3
Edendale	293	–	3	1	18	14	6	9	15	53	80	42	52
Vulindlela	257	1	–	1	5	17	7	6	9	20	72	46	73
Slangspruit	30	–	–	–	–	–	8	–	–	1	–	4	17
Pietermaritzburg	19	–	–	–	2	–	–	2	1	1	4	3	6
Mpophomeni	10	2	–	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	2	2	2
Mooi River	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	2	1
Hammarisdale	77	–	3	3	1	–	2	9	7	10	12	13	17
Sankotshe	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–
Woody Glen	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Hopewell	2	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Greytown	12	–	–	–	–	–	1	2	–	2	3	3	1
Mpolweni	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	–	1	2	–
Table Mountain	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1	1
Impendhle	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–
Midlands	31	–	–	–	1	1	–	2	–	2	11	9	5
Totals	938	12	10	14	47	49	48	54	44	107	198	153	201

Table 4 Events of political violence by area, 1987



Graph 7 Events of political violence by area, 1987 (see Table 4)

1988

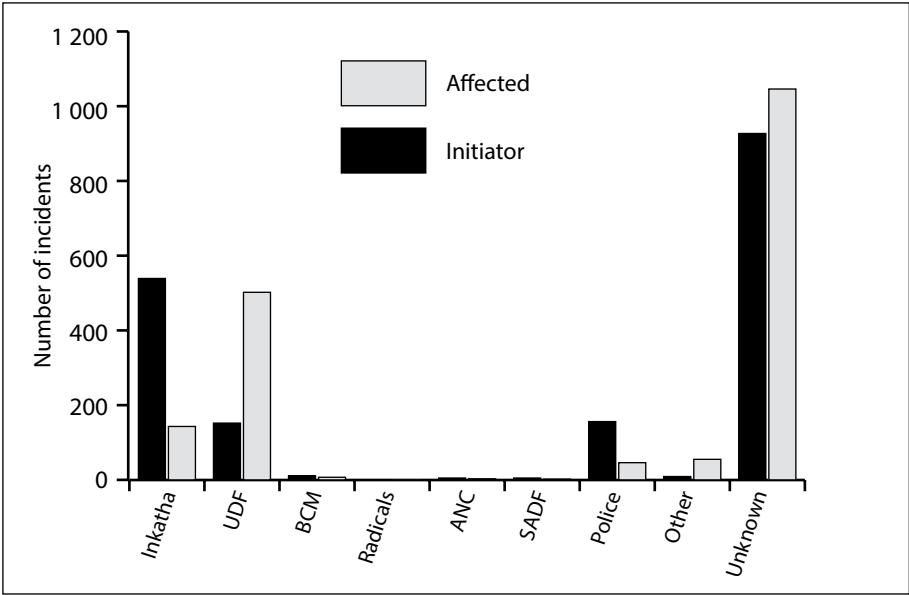
There were 1 563 records with 1 286 events of political violence and unrest incorporating 1 804 discrete incidents. The initiators of the violence and the affiliations of their victims in the majority of the incidents remain unknown (927 incidents had unknown initiators and 1 046 unknown victims).⁴ Where a judgement could be made about affiliation the following picture emerges.

Year	Events	Incidents	Initiator/ Affected	Affiliation								
				Inkatha	UDF	BCM	Rad	ANC	SADF	Pol	Other	Unknown
1988	1 286	1 804	Initiator	539	152	11	–	5	5	156	9	927
			Affected	143	502	7	–	3	2	46	55	1 046
Notes: see table 1.												

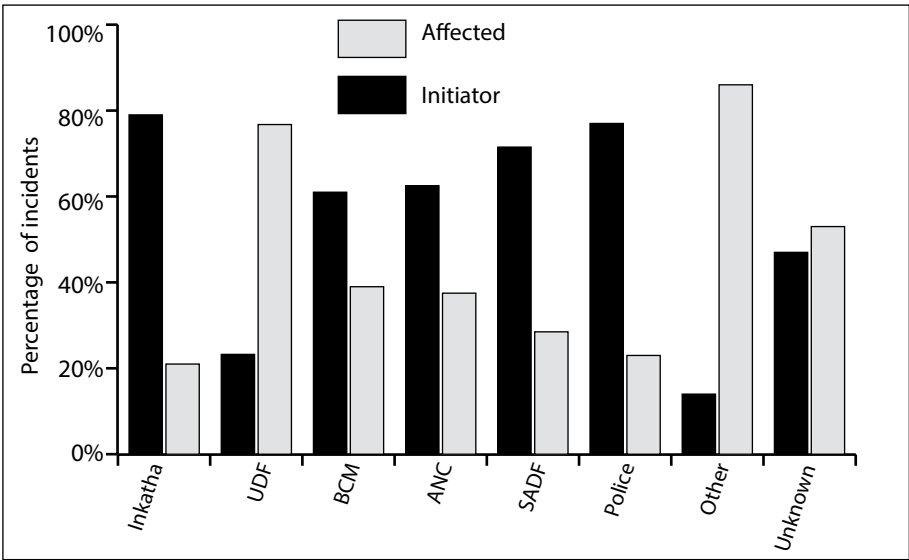
Table 5 Events and incidents of political violence and unrest, 1988

Table 5 can be portrayed graphically showing, for each party, the ratio between incidents in which it was aggressor and those in which it was victim. Observations that can be made are the number of unknowns; the large number of Inkatha initiated incidents and the similarly sized number of UDF supporters affected; and the relatively few BCM and police related incidents. The number of incidents is highest at the beginning of the year, shows a rapid decrease, but then rises steadily again towards the end of the year. Vulindlela

and Hammarsdale, being the most heavily affected areas, contribute most to the dominance of this pattern. One small rural area, Trust Feed, stands out in the latter part of the year as a site of unrest events.



Graph 8 Incidents of political violence by affiliation, 1988 (see Table 5)

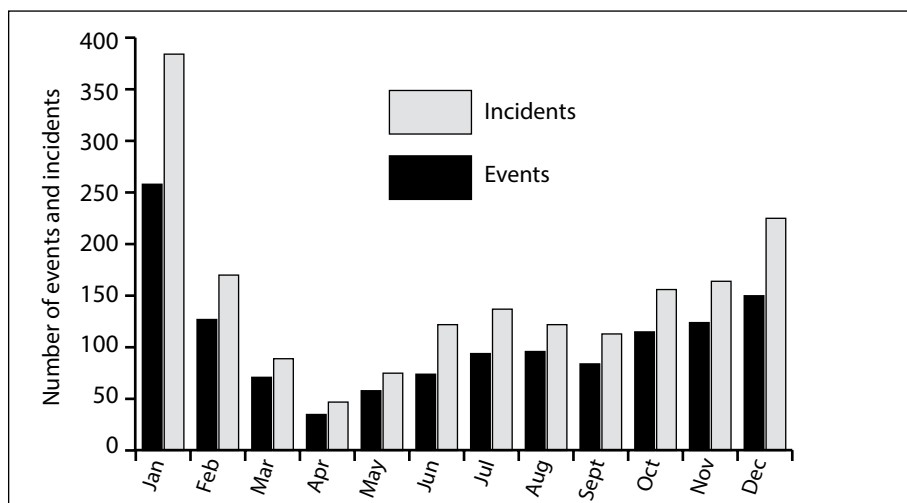


Graph 9 Incidents of political violence by affiliation, 1988 (see Table 5)

Month	Events	Areas	Incidents	AffiliationInitiator/Affected							
				Inkatha	UDF	BCM	Rad	Pol	SADF	Other	Unknown
Jan	258	13	384	113 17	25 95	1 1	– –	29 9	1 –	1 6	214 256
Feb	127	11	170	60 14	18 44	3 1	– –	17 2	– –	– 6	72 103
Mar	71	12	89	11 1	2 14	– –	– –	29 2	4 –	2 6	41 66
Apr	35	7	47	8 5	4 8	1 –	2 1	7 1	– –	3 3	22 29
May	58	11	75	18 7	5 19	1 –	– –	3 3	– –	1 5	47 41
Jun	74	12	122	46 10	13 36	3 2	– –	2 3	– –	– 9	58 62
Jul	94	12	137	40 8	13 45	2 2	2 1	10 5	– –	1 6	69 70
Aug	96	12	122	29 3	4 21	– –	1 1	2 3	– –	– 4	86 90
Sep	84	10	113	29 7	12 27	– –	– –	6 1	– –	– –	66 78
Oct	115	12	156	47 27	14 50	– –	– –	2 5	– –	1 2	92 72
Nov	124	11	164	58 17	19 60	– –	– –	16 –	– –	– 1	71 86
Dec	150	14	225	80 27	23 83	– 1	– –	33 12	– 2	– 7	89 93
Year	1 286	26	1 804	539 143	152 502	11 7	5 3	156 46	5 2	9 55	927 1 046

Notes: see table 1.

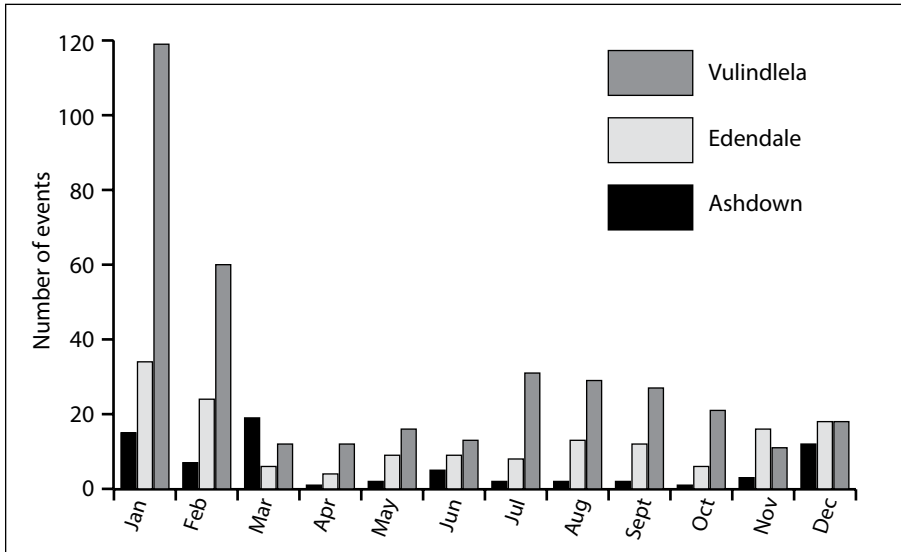
Table 6 Events and incidents of political violence and unrest by month, 1988



Graph 10 Events and incidents of political violence by month, 1988 (see Table 6)

Area	Events	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Imbali	116	12	4	5	2	8	5	13	12	8	14	13	20
Ashdown	71	15	7	19	1	2	5	2	2	2	1	3	12
Sobantu	29	6	3	3	3	3	3	5	2	–	1	–	–
Edendale	159	34	24	6	4	9	9	8	13	12	6	16	18
Vulindlela	369	119	60	12	12	16	13	31	29	27	21	11	18
Slangspruit	47	18	4	4	–	–	4	4	2	1	1	6	3
Pietermaritzburg	51	3	12	2	3	2	5	2	3	1	7	3	8
Mpophomeni	3	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–
Howick	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Hammarisdale	294	36	7	13	10	14	21	17	22	18	52	39	45
Georgedale	14	–	–	2	–	–	–	1	–	–	3	5	3
Sankotshé	1	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Emalangení	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Inchanga	12	–	–	2	–	–	–	1	4	4	–	–	1
Fredville	29	–	–	2	–	1	4	8	1	7	3	3	–
Thornville	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Richmond	2	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1
Hopewell	2	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Ixopo	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Greytown	18	7	–	–	–	1	–	1	4	–	–	–	5
Trust Feed	38	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	2	23	11
Mpolweni	2	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1
Albert Falls	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–
Table Mountain	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–
Ehlanzeni	1	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bulwer	1	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Midlands	21	4	3	–	–	–	2	1	1	3	3	1	3
Totals	1 286	258	127	71	35	58	74	94	96	84	115	124	150

Table 7 Events of political violence and unrest by area, 1988



Graph 11 Events of political violence and unrest by area, 1988 (see Table 7)

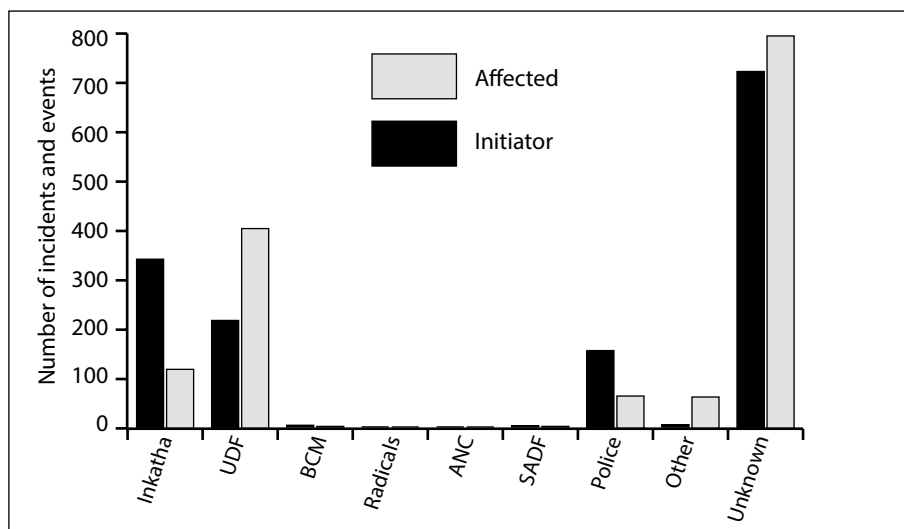
1989

There were 1 044 recorded events of political violence and unrest incorporating 1 452 discrete incidents: table 8 and graph 12 give a detailed breakdown of events and incidents. The affiliations of initiators of violence and their victims in the majority of the incidents remain unknown (723 incidents had unknown initiators and 795 had unknown victims).⁵ Where a judgement could be made about affiliations the following picture emerges.

Year	Events	Incidents	Initiator/ Affected	Affiliation								
				Inkatha	UDF	BCM	Rad	ANC	SADF	Pol	Other	Unknown
1989	1 044	1 452	Initiator Affected	343 120	219 405	3 1	– –	– –	2 1	158 66	4 64	723 795
Notes: see table 1.												

Table 8 Events and incidents of political violence and unrest, 1989

Table 8 can be portrayed in graphs showing, for each party, the ratio between incidents in which it was aggressor and those in which it was victim. Observations that can be made are similar to those about the previous two years: the number of unknowns; the large number of Inkatha initiated incidents and the similarly sized number of UDF supporters affected; and the relatively few BCM and police related incidents. The worst months are January, October and November; and the worst areas Imbali, Edendale, Vulindlela and Hammarsdale



Graph 12 Incidents of political violence by affiliation, 1989 (see Table 8)

(the last showing a major escalation in October and November and a sudden decline in December.) Also noticeable is the growing conflict in a number of rural areas such as Richmond, Swayimane and Ehlanzeni.

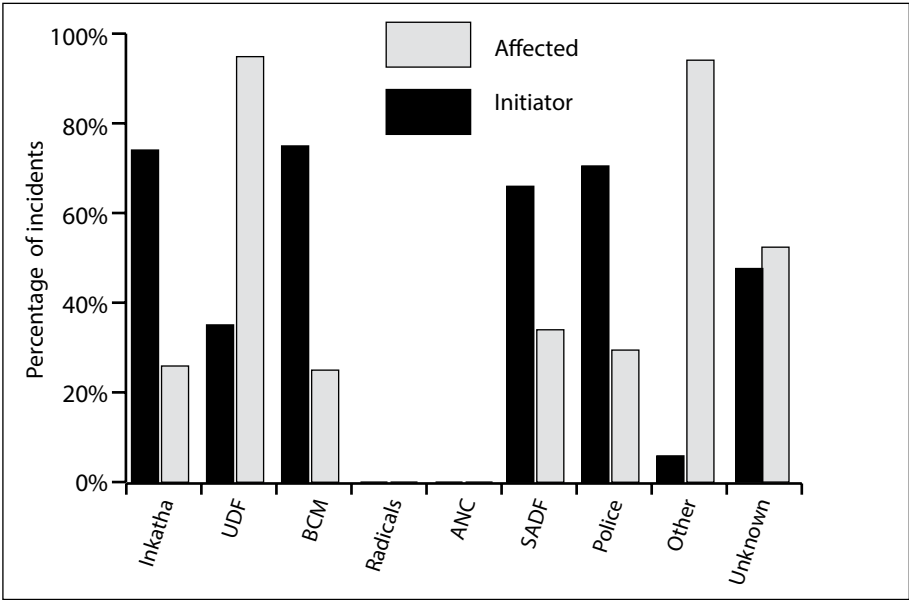
Month	Events	Areas	Incidents	AffiliationInitiator/Affected							
				Inkatha	UDF	BCM	Rad	Pol	SADF	Other	Unknown
Jan	119	11	152	49 5	30 43	—	—	5 5	—	— 16	68 83
Feb	86	11	102	36 10	20 34	3	—	2 2	—	— 11	41 41
Mar	91	11	141	37 9	13 62	—	—	28 5	—	1 2	62 63
Apr	73	11	109	44 4	9 47	—	—	18 2	—	— 7	38 49
May	80	11	93	26 10	15 38	—	—	12 1	—	— 3	40 41
Jun	62	10	101	19 4	17 24	—	—	12 —	—	3 6	50 67
Jul	61	10	105	17 17	20 16	—	—	5 3	—	— 5	63 64
Aug	61	11	79	16 5	12 22	—	—	9 5	2	— —	40 47
Sep	87	12	124	25 17	30 34	—	—	20 5	— 1	— 6	49 61
Oct	106	10	150	22 10	21 31	—	—	22 8	—	— 6	85 95
Nov	132	13	182	28 17	23 39	—	—	18 22	—	— 1	113 103
Dec	86	17	114	24 12	9 15	—	—	7 8	—	— 1	74 78
Year	1 044	27	1452	343 120	219 405	3 1	—	158 66	2 1	4 64	723 792

Notes: see table 1.

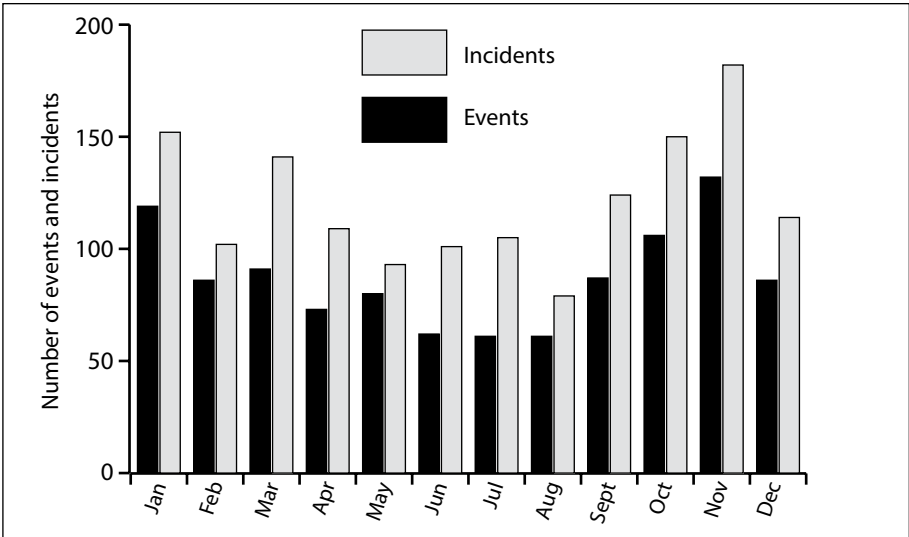
Table 9 Events and incidents of political violence and unrest by month, 1989

Area	Events	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Imbali	140	19	8	15	6	5	7	2	17	19	9	14	19
Ashdown	22	4	3	5	2	–	1	–	5	1	–	–	1
Sobantu	2	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–
Edendale	129	21	28	22	11	11	9	7	3	5	2	5	5
Vulindlela	204	27	19	23	25	18	11	11	13	9	14	15	18
Slangspruit	14	–	1	–	1	2	1	3	–	6	–	–	–
Pietermarburg	44	8	4	7	3	8	3	–	2	–	5	–	4
Mpophomeni	42	1	5	4	13	1	1	6	–	3	3	4	1
Howick	9	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	–	2	–	3	1
Mooi River	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–
Hammarisdale	295	25	12	5	6	28	24	21	13	24	63	66	8
Georgedale	11	3	–	3	–	2	–	–	2	–	–	1	–
Sankotshe	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–
Inchanga	7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	3	3
Fredville	14	7	4	2	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–
Richmond	22	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	–	3	6
Hopewell	3	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Mid-Illovo	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Springvale	1	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Greytown	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Lalane	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–
Trust Feed	3	–	1	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Cramond	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Wartburg	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	4	–
Swayimane	10	–	–	–	1	–	–	4	2	–	1	–	2
Table Mountain	4	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	1
Ehlanzeni	36	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	10	5	9	11
Midlands	20	2	–	3	3	1	1	1	–	4	2	1	2
Totals	1 044	119	86	91	73	80	62	61	61	87	106	131	86

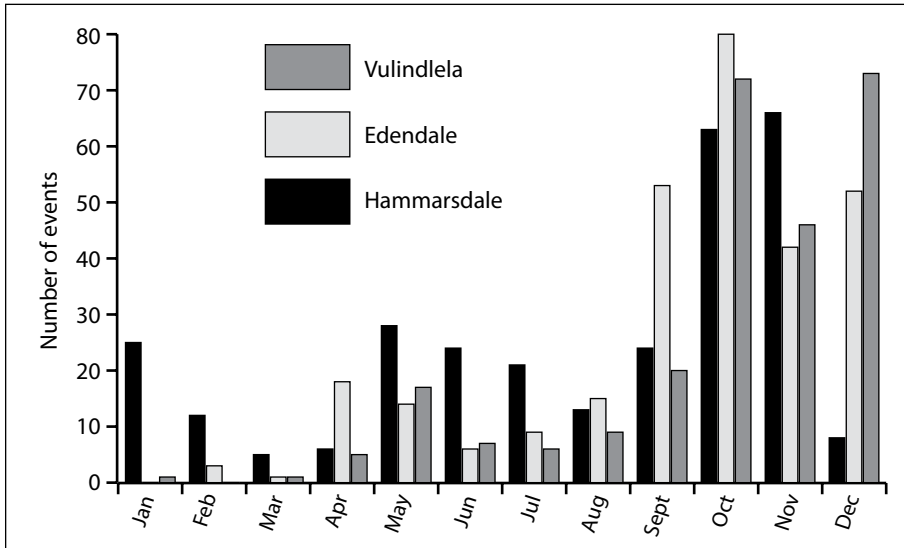
Table 10 Events of political violence and unrest by area, 1989



Graph 13 Incidents of political violence by affiliation, 1989 (see Table 9)



Graph 14 Events and incidents of political violence by month, 1989 (see Table 9)



Graph 15 Events of political violence and unrest by area, 1989 (see Table 10)

The problem of the unknowns

It has already been observed that the affiliations of more than half of the initiators and affected are unknown. Table 11 summarises this picture. A similar situation arises in the statistics on the people killed in the violence during this period.

Year	Events	Incidents	Initiator/ Affected	Affiliation	
				Known	Unknown
1987	938	1 202	Initiator Affected	592 534	610 668
1988	1 286	1 804	Initiator Affected	877 758	927 1 046
1989	1 044	1 452	Initiator Affected	729 657	723 795
Totals	3 268	4 458	Initiator Affected	2 198 1 949	2 260 2 509

Table 11 Affiliations known and unknown in unrest incidents, 1987–1989

This large unknown category requires some explanation as well as caution in interpretation. First, in compiling these statistics the term unknown was used to categorise cases where the political affiliation, or non-affiliation for that matter, was not known. It was not intentionally used as a category in which to place people who had no affiliation or were neutral (*asilutho*, or

‘we are nothing [not affiliated]’). One reason for the large numbers in this category was the extreme rigour to which ascribing an affiliation to attackers or victims was applied. Even where it seemed highly probable that a person was on one side or another (an assumption that could be based, for example, on knowledge of the dynamics of a particular area) the temptation to do so was resisted. If one had adopted Laurie Schlemmer’s technique of ‘fingertip feeling’ to produce estimates, undoubtedly the number of unknowns could have been whittled down considerably.⁶

Second, for the entire period during which the data in this study were collected, neither the police nor their unrest report usually gave any details of names of those involved in unrest events or their affiliation. Tracing names and affiliation (if any) required a major work of detection and information gathering in the face of state hostility under a harsh State of Emergency. These difficulties are important to note and a corrective to any simple notion that the large number of unknowns represent a category of people whose unaffiliated status is definitely known. In addition, the idea that the unknown category represents a residual non-political or criminal component of violence is hard to sustain. In chapter 4 it is noted that there were continuing high levels of criminal or domestic homicide during this period. Indeed, it is likely that the more clearly political unrest has been underestimated because the police unrest report was often noticeably silent on incidents initiated by Inkatha.

Third, over the years 1987 to 1989, there was a slight decline (from 55% to 52%) in the percentage of incidents whose initiators and affected fell into the unknown category. It could be argued that this reflected an increased politicisation of the conflict with more people becoming affiliated. However, a contrary trend was evident in the death statistics with an increase in the number of persons killed of unknown affiliation (from 50% to 64%). In other words, there is no clear evidence of a trend. Interpretations of the causation of the violence based on the percentage of unknowns, and on the rise or fall of this percentage over the years, would therefore be exceedingly speculative.

ENDNOTES

- 1 A few records contain details of more than one event. This is mainly the case in more remote localities.
- 2 M.B. Miles and A.M. Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods* (Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1991), 21–22.
- 3 A higher than average percentage of these unknowns was from the Hammarsdale (Mpumalanga) region. This is largely the result of inadequate information reaching

monitoring groups in Pietermaritzburg and Durban from this area, which is equidistant from both, a factor that affected other years.

- 4 A higher than average percentage of these unknowns was from the Hammarsdale (Mpumalanga) region.
- 5 A higher than average percentage of these unknowns was from the Hammarsdale (Mpumalanga) region.
- 6 The phrase 'fingertip feeling' was used by Schlemmer when he spoke at a press briefing on 11 February 1992 in Cape Town where the HSRC released the results of an opinion poll. Schlemmer's specific 'fingertip feel' was that the IFP had 'wide support' in the rural areas of Natal, although this had not been substantiated in the poll.

3

DAMAGE AND DESTRUCTION

THE YEARS 1987 TO 1989 constituted a devastating period of destruction, dislocation and abnormality for the Natal Midlands.¹ A litany of hell could be constructed from the Unrest Monitoring Project (UMP) database keywords used to describe the types of violence and their consequences. It was a period of abductions, abuse, ambush, armaments, arson, assault, attacks, attempted murder, axing, battles, beheadings, boycotts, collusion, confrontation, conspiracy, contempt of court, damage, defeating the ends of justice, demonstrations, disappearance, disinformation, disruption, expulsion, extortion, false number plates, fighting, firearms, forced entry, forced recruitment, fraud, hacking, hand grenades, harassment, hijacking, hostages, illegal gatherings, incitement, injury, intimidation, kidnapping, killing, looting, marches, missing persons, modelling, murder, mutilation, necklacing, petrol bombing, police shooting, protest, public violence, rape, refugees, riot, robbery, sabotage, shooting, sjamboking, stabbing, stayaways, stoning, tear gassing, theft, threats, torture, unrest, weapons, wounding, and wrongful arrest.

This Midlands violence was one of the greatest contributors to the most destructive period in South African history in the years from 1985 onwards.² The cost in economic terms was astronomic.³ The cost in human terms is not amenable to statistical analysis and is perhaps best comprehended by listening to some of the poems and laments published in *Echo* by township people. Four examples are reproduced here.⁴

What's happening in Maritzburg

Tell them Khaba
Tell them about Maritzburg
Say the capital city is on fire
Flames are burning like that
Of a tractor tyre size necklace
Above the city's head plays the cloud
The cloud of crisis which is the outcome
Of this burning capital city of Natal

Day and night – no difference
 There's always darkness
 People do not recognise each other
 With their chest they are bombarding each other
 On both side of the city the two graveyards
 Sinathing and Mountain Rise are ravenous
 Their thunder being sharpened by the smelling of blood
 Their mouths are ready for action – prey
 They are ready to swallow the outcome
 They are ready to swallow the dead Maritzburg
 Thus tell them Khakazile
 Purification is gaining ground in Maritzburg
 But others fear that the outcome is nonsense.
 It is millions of millions of kilograms of ashes.
 Bonginkosi Bafanyana Ndlovu

Death on my doorstep
 After seeing their targets
 On the road
 They alighted from a bus
 And gave them chase;
 Then they saw you standing in your home yard
 As their targets ran past the gate,
 They thought you were one of them,
 Gave you chase,
 They caught you, then killed you
 O Lins, Lins,
 A few minutes later
 You laid on the street
 Serene in rivulets of blood.
 I know you've met Mdayisi,
 Tana, S'fiso, Mlu, Magugu, Hleke, Nhlanhla,
 And the rest;
 I am sure you have revised
 Your respective brutal deaths.
 And there is no complaining
 About anything anymore.

And there are no temptations anymore.
And there is not eating, nor smoking,
No drinking, no cinemas,
And there is no womanising
O Lins, Lins
Your movement to heaven
Was a reminder that we are
Not for this world,
We all have to be covered with
Our last blankets some day;
Soil.
O Lins, Lins,
You have reached a stage
Of total tranquillity and eternity.
Ellington Ngunezi, Edendale

The streets of Pietermaritzburg

You are wondering what is happening in town
You were built for vehicles to move
But now you are a battlefield for fools
If you have something to say
Would you tell me the reason for this
People walk on you having weapons in their hands
Police are up and down trying to catch
The culprits, but you are divided
into many different streets
People die day by day in you
Aren't you tired to see such foolishness
Hey, Retief Street, how many people
Do you kill in one year?
You are looking like you are the worst in town
Hey, West Street, how many people
Do you also kill in one year?
I regard you as the best second killer,
Hey you, East Street, how many people
Do you kill in a day?

Hey you, Victoria Street, why do you always
 kill people? Aren't you feeling lonely at night?
 Even you, Church Street, the most beautiful
 Street of town, you are also a killer.
 Why do you let the killers walk on you?
 Call the police to look after you every day.
 Otherwise you will be regarded as killing streets.

Musa Ndlela, Ashdown

The times of ideology

This is time of ideology
 When people listen to rhythmic tunes
 Tunes of ideology
 When people combine
 To form different organisations
 Sharing different ideas
 For ideas may have different sounds
 To others and that's for sure

 The time of ideology is when banned
 Organisations are forced to shut up
 It's when the youth struggle
 Shouting for a better future
 It's when black youth
 Drown within the pools of teargas
 The time of ideology is time
 Of antagonism
 'Tis time when one's ideas
 Are indeed opposed in public
 When the truth becomes sour
 To the oppressor and his aides
 When one starts treading
 On the soil covered with blood
 Blood spilt from black people

The times of ideology is now
 When man becomes ashes through flames
 Of burning tyres and liquid tubes
 When air becomes polluted by smoke
 Of blasted houses and roasted flesh

The time of ideology is when mourners
 Cry for their lost lovers
 I mean these are the times
 Time of ideology! ideology! ideology!

Ernest Themba Ngubane, Dambuza

On 15 November 1990, the managing director of the South African Special Risks Insurance Association (SASRIA), Rodney Schneeberger, said nationwide unrest-related insurance claims, paid and outstanding, were R12 million for 1987, R16 million for 1988 and R260 million for 1989 and 1990 (of which R51 million was for claims from Natal). It has been estimated that less than 10% of the damage was covered by SASRIA insurance.⁵ Estimates made in 1990 about the costs of violence would suggest that over the three years 1987–1989 the region could have suffered losses of several hundred million rands.⁶ The cost of premature death was conservatively estimated at R200 000 for each individual in lost earnings and fruitless expenditure on education. For 1 810 deaths that means R362 million. Extra hospital costs would be about R50 million. This chapter presents some of the statistics drawn from the Centre for Adult Education (CAE) database that portray the direct consequences of the violence to people and property. It also briefly examines some of the other statistics drawn from the database.

The direct consequences of the political violence

Table 12 presents the basic statistics regarding the consequences of the violence from 1987 to 1989 for people and for their houses and possessions. In assessing the reliability of these statistics it has to be acknowledged that except for those on deaths, they are incomplete and likely to be serious underestimates.⁷

Type	Numbers	1987	1988	1989
People				
Killed	1 810	413	673	724
Wounded	1 057	241	475	341
Injured and burned	677	160	245	272
Tortured	14	1	1	12
Raped	12	9	2	1
Abducted	38	18	15	5
Property				
Arson	973	321	373	535
Stonings	436	100	171	165
Damage	118	8	82	28
Robbery/theft	86	26	23	37

Table 12 Consequences of various types of political violence, 1987–1989

The following provides detail on some of the major consequences of the violence.

Deaths

In 1987 there were 413 political killings, in 1988 there were 673 and in 1989 another 724. In all, over three years 1 810 people were killed in political conflict. These figures, it must be remembered, do not include deaths from the areas around Durban, Inanda and Shongweni where many Natal people were killed, particularly in late 1988 and in 1989. Chapter 4 looks in more detail at the death statistics.

Wounded

From January 1987 to the end of 1989, 1 057 people were reported wounded. This is an obvious underestimate unless an astounding six people were killed for every four wounded. That these figures are underestimates seems evident from local hospital records from which it would appear that approximately 70 to 80% of shot or stabbed victims taken to hospital survived.⁸

In 1987 there were 241 people recorded as wounded by bullets, assegais, pangas, bushknives, knives and other sharp implements. In terms of affiliation, 36 Inkatha supporters were wounded, 90 United Democratic Front (UDF), 1 Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), 112 unknowns and 2 KwaZulu police (KZP), shot by mistake in a gun battle with the South African Police

(SAP). Given the death toll of 413 for the year, many more than 241 people must have been wounded. At Edendale Hospital the number of people passing through its theatres with violent injuries (bullet and stab wounds, skull injuries and the like) increased by 80% in the final month of 1987.⁹

In 1988 another 475 were wounded (22 Inkatha, 188 UDF, twelve police, one South African Defence Force (SADF) soldier and 252 unknowns). In 1989, 341 were wounded (29 Inkatha, 145 UDF, 16 police and 151 unknowns). Understandably this influx of wounded into the hospitals put a considerable strain on resources.

On 21 February 1990, the medical superintendent at Northdale Hospital, Dr Dwarkapersad, said that trauma-related cases had more than doubled at the hospital as a result of the unrest of the past few years. Dwarkapersad said that people came to the hospital from all over the Edendale valley because they were afraid to go to Edendale Hospital. Northdale was just one of Natal's hospitals stretched to its limit by a flood of unrest victims. Whereas in the past Northdale Hospital had dealt with between 350 and 450 cases a day, it was dealing with more than 800: 'About 50% of the black out-patients we deal with come in with severe wounds and patients have to be admitted,' he said. Commenting on this statement, the *Natal Witness* said it had received several unconfirmed reports that Edendale Hospital had been unable to cope with the influx of unrest victims and had been sending patients to private clinics or to Northdale because of inadequate facilities. The chief medical superintendent of Edendale Hospital, Peter Evans, confirmed that services at the hospital were 'severely stressed'.¹⁰

On 30 March 1990, the member of the Executive Council for local government, Peter Miller, said that 'in the last two months, more people suffering from gunshot wounds have had to be attended to in Natal than was generated in the entire border war situation over 17 years.' He added that the member of the Executive Council for hospitals Tino Volker had recently disclosed that, on average, the cost of treating each gunshot-wounded person had been calculated by his department to be R17 000.¹¹

Injured and burned

From 1987 to 1989 over 677 people were injured (in stonings, clubbings, beatings, sjambokings and so on) or burnt in petrol bombings and arson attacks. In 1987 more than 160 people were injured, in 1988 another 245 (fourteen Inkatha, 55 UDF, four BCM, five police, one SADF soldier and 166

unknown). In 1989 there were 272 (fourteen Inkatha, 163 UDF, seventeen police, 73 unknown and five others).

Torture

Although there were many allegations of police assault, only one person testified in court about torture in 1987 and a court granted an interim interdict restraining the police from torturing the applicant. In September 1988, the complainant, a 19-year-old schoolboy, received an out of court settlement of R8 000 from the Minister of Police. In 1988 various reports of torture were received from detainees by the Detainees Aid Committee (DACOM). Only one of these incidents is recorded in the database. In 1989 there were twelve cases of UDF supporters being tortured by the police.

Rape

There were incidents of rape as acts of political violence. There may be many unreported cases, but the figure of nine people raped in 1987, another two in 1988 and only one in 1989 seems mercifully, but probably unrealistically, low.

Abductions

A horrifying feature of the conflict was the number of abductions that eventuated in murder. The scale of abductions may be gauged from the recorded number of survivors. In 1987 there were fifteen incidents involving eighteen people where those abducted survived. Two of these were Inkatha, seven UDF and nine of unknown affiliation. In 1988 another fifteen people survived abduction (six UDF and nine unknown.) In 1989 another five survived (one UDF and one unknown.)

Damage to property

The main damage in the Midlands was done to houses and vehicles. Presumably large quantities of household goods were also destroyed, damaged and looted, but on this there are no statistics or estimates.

Houses and other buildings

It is safe to assume that considerably more than a thousand houses and a few other buildings were destroyed or badly damaged over three years. Arson and petrol bomb attacks resulted in the razing of or damage to 1 103 houses and buildings. It is difficult to assess the degree of damage done in particular attacks

and the extent to which this could be repaired. In 1988 another 324 houses, two schools, two creches, five shops and two other buildings were damaged or destroyed. In 1989 even more property was affected: 477 houses, three shops and one tribal courthouse. Most heavily affected were Hammarsdale (232 houses), Ehlanzeni (90), Swayimane (44) and Vulindlela (43).

Stonings also resulted in damage to 209 buildings. In 1987, 41 houses were stoned. In 1988 damage was done to 89 houses, four schools, one church and another building. In 1989 the damage was more than 73 houses.¹² Other, usually more minor, damage to houses and buildings affected four houses in 1987, 51 in 1988 and several houses and two shops in 1989.

Arson and stonings together accounted for damage and destruction to 1 312 buildings from 1987 to 1989. This must, however, be seen as yet another, possibly gross, underestimate.

On 29 November 1989, Hammarsdale's Mpumalanga township manager claimed that one thousand houses had been damaged there since the beginning of the year. The database figure for 1989 is 305 (although it is noted that the number of houses damaged when rows of houses were stoned in September 1989 is not recorded.)

An Inkatha Institute spokesman was reported as saying that, though there had been no official house count in Mpumalanga, with the recent outbreak of violence the number of damaged homes escalated drastically. He said township houses had an average occupant ratio of eight people, which meant about 8 000 people were now homeless from Mpumalanga alone. 'Negotiations to resolve the problem are ongoing. People are discussing ways of halting the violence so repairs to homes may be carried out,' he said.¹³ Unofficial sources claimed that damage to homes ran into millions of rands but a spokesman for the Department of Works, who admitted it was a conservative estimate, said that over an extended period more than 600 homes were damaged. He said the average repair cost for each home was about R3 000, making the total well above a million rand (it actually worked out at R1.8 million). A committee to investigate the rebuilding of houses damaged during the Mpumalanga violence was set up by Inkatha and the UDF following a meeting of local leaders of both organisations in Hammarsdale on 4 December 1989.

The Hammarsdale estimates suggest that the database figures could be half the reality.¹⁴ But even this Midlands underestimate of 1 312 for 1987 to 1989 would have a severe impact in terms of homeless refugees seeking shelter (10 496 using the eight occupants per house formula) and the knock-on effects

on householders' lives and resources as well as on the regional economy and the housing shortage. Sally Jacques made the points that

The housing crisis has grown larger in the face of violence. Not only have hundreds of houses been destroyed or damaged or simply vacated because it is not safe to stay in certain areas, but the building of new houses has been hampered. Both the government and private finance, for example, building societies, are not putting funds into the region because of the war. Building contractors are nervous about going into areas to build.

Jacques reproduced an interesting picture from the local press showing two security guards, armed with shotguns, protecting a building site under construction in Imbali and commented

This question of private developers pulling out of the black housing market was raised in an article in the *Natal Witness* of 26 October 1990 by the business editor, Lesley van Duffelen. Van Duffelen points out the same trend BESG noted of developers using armed patrols and others pulling out. She quotes the following construction companies as pulling out of black housing: LTA, Comiat Homes; Schachat Home Builders; Time Holdings; Gough Cooper Homes; Bester Homes; and Grinaker Construction.

She also noted reports that 'these companies can leave nothing that is transportable at the building site, for fear of it being stolen, and often partly built houses are destroyed before completion.'¹⁵

Vehicles

In 1987 about 95 vehicles were damaged or destroyed by arson or stoning, 23 of them buses. In 1988 another 58 vehicles were affected, 31 of them buses. In 1989 yet another 138 were damaged, 72 of them buses (62 of them having been stoned passing through Edendale in January and February). The total for the three years was 291.

Some other unrest statistics

This section briefly examines other factors related to the unrest.

Arson

Arson and petrol bombing were a feature of the violence in the region. Such attacks appear to have been directed mainly at houses, though they also led to some deaths. In 1987, 287 houses and 35 vehicles were involved and three people were injured. In 1988, 335 houses and other buildings and 31 vehicles suffered and two people were injured. Targets were 41 Inkatha, 88 UDF, six other and 235 unknown. In 1989 another 481 houses and other buildings and

53 vehicles were involved, and five people injured, in arson attacks. Targets were 65 Inkatha, 217 UDF, five police, five other and 247 unknown.

Stonings

In 1987 there were 83 incidents with more than 119 people or households affected. In 1988, 89 houses, six other buildings and 58 vehicles were damaged and 21 people injured. In terms of affiliation those involved were 23 Inkatha, twelve UDF, ten police, eighteen other and 129 unknown. In 1989 another 50 people were injured, 85 vehicles (including 73 buses) and more than 75 houses and other buildings damaged. Targets were 55 Inkatha, seven UDF, twelve police, 60 other (mainly buses) and 81 unknown.

Assaults

The database records of assaults, which include beatings with the hands and implements such as sjamboks, are mainly laid at the door of the police and particularly that of the riot police in their enforcement of the Emergency regulations.

In 1987 there were 42 incidents of assault and over 52 people affected including two policemen. In 1988 as many as 427 people were affected (364 UDF, one police and 51 unknown.) In one incident, a mass round up and detention in Ashdown on 21 March 1988, 259 youths were generally abused, assaulted and sjamboked. In 1989, 68 people were assaulted (one Inkatha, 44 UDF, one police, four 'scabs' and fifteen unknown). People injured in assaults have been recorded in the statistics on the injured.

Illegal gatherings

These are gatherings suppressed under the Emergency regulations. Relatively few of these are recorded (43 in 1987, 26 in 1988 and 24 in 1989.) Most of these gatherings were groups of youths in the streets whom the police ordered to disperse. Relatively few were real meetings or gatherings of some substance. A very few were extremely large groups, there being one record of about a thousand people taking part in a riot in Hammarsdale in 1987.

Intimidation

There has undoubtedly been political intimidation on a massive scale and many reporters have commented on this, yet perhaps because it was so pervasive, there are relatively few records of this normal abnormality. In 1987 there were

65 incidents, in 1988 some 81 incidents affecting 225 people (10 Inkatha, 43 UDF, 64 other and 99 unknowns). In 1989 there were 24 incidents affecting 51 people (3 Inkatha, 13 UDF, 7 other (including 4 'scabs' and 28 unknowns).

Refugees

There were varying estimates of the number of refugees ranging from about ten thousand to one hundred thousand.¹⁶ On 22 October 1987 the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA) gave an approximate number of 250 families who had left their homes as a result of the violence; some of their homes having been burnt down, while other families left in fear of their lives.¹⁷

On 9 October 1988, at a Table Mountain unity feast to which Inkatha, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and comrades were invited, Chief Maphumulo said, 'Most people, both young and old, are fleeing from Mpumzu, Inadi, Mafunze, Edendale, Imbali and Sobantu ... At first it was mostly Inkatha members fleeing. But now it is mostly UDF and neutral people.'¹⁸ Maphumulo said that he had taken in more than five hundred families and now there was no spare land available. A report claimed ten thousand refugees of all political persuasions being sheltered by Chief Maphumulo. Either this is an exaggeration or there were now more than five hundred refugee families there.¹⁹

The Trust Feed Crisis Committee stated on 20 May 1989 that there were a thousand refugees from Trust Feed.²⁰ The author made estimates of two thousand refugees in April 1988; and in mid-1989 of ten thousand permanent refugees and ten to fifteen thousand temporary ones.²¹ Some of them (permanent) had their houses destroyed, or genuinely left their houses for good or at least for a substantial time. Others (temporary) may have been more transient, leaving their homes for a short period when the war was at its height in their area or, as was frequently the case, sleeping out in the fields at night. Another refugee phenomenon was the son who had to flee for fear of bringing destruction on his entire family if he stayed at home. Many of young comrades in Edendale, Mphophomeni and Sobantu were refugees of this type.

It is difficult to ascertain the ratio of the people who became permanent refugees to those who returned home once things had quietened down in a particular area. Hence the disparity between estimates for these years, estimates which have most commonly ranged from ten thousand to sixty thousand.

One estimating method, multiplying the number of houses destroyed by an average household size (in this context conventionally assumed to be eight), does not resolve the problem of people who fled areas but whose homes were not razed;²² nor does it take into account that the database record of houses destroyed may be an under count. The Hammarsdale estimates of houses damaged suggest that the database figures could reflect half the reality.

Taking the database figure of 1 332 houses destroyed or damaged from 1987 to 1989 and assuming this produced about 10 500 refugees provides a minimum figure. To this must be added people who also fled but whose houses were not damaged or destroyed. This must easily double the figure to twenty-one thousand. But even the most rigorous and cautious estimate of 10 500 refugees in the Midlands from 1987 to 1989 would indicate the major impact the violence had on the region.²³

The author's own estimate for the years under review is that at least twelve thousand people moved house permanently and that about another fifteen thousand were not at home for a brief period. The real figures may well be higher. Even with a conservative estimate, the impact of a population movement of this size would have been profound.

School boycotts

Another unusual feature, given the crucial role schools played in black protest, particularly since 1976, was the virtual absence of any school boycotts in the region from 1987 to 1989. Although student protest was never as active in the region as it had been in the Transvaal and Cape Province, it certainly existed in the pre-1987 years in Pietermaritzburg's townships.

The database has two rather vague records of school boycotts in 1987 and two reports of incidents in 1988. In 1989 there were three. The absence of school-based unrest may simply be an indication of the success of the National Education Crisis Committee's (NECC) appeal to schoolchildren to return to classes in 1987.

Schools were not a significant source of violence in the region. This is not to say that schools were not disrupted, and severely so, but this was because the conflict outside affected them, usually in the form of external invasions by groups of armed men. An estimate was given of 28 schools affected by incidents of violence or disruption in 1987 and the first quarter of 1988.²⁴ These incidents led, amongst other things, to many pupils (probably at least four thousand) and staff leaving the schools.

Weapons

In 1987, although there was a report of the discovery of a home-made weapons factory and two men prosecuted for possession of hand grenades, there seems little evidence of the use of weaponry derived from African National Congress (ANC) or other guerrillas. Indeed, there was hardly any use of the AK47 assault rifle as a weapon in Inkatha versus non-Inkatha political violence in the Midlands until after 2 February 1990 and the official ANC suspension of the armed struggle. In 1987 and 1988 the AK47 was hardly used at all. Only three incidents in these two years clearly link its use to Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) and it would seem that either it was not operating in any strength in the region or was under orders not to participate in the regional political civil war.

In 1987 three definite incidents regarding AK47s were reported as well as one vague, hearsay one. Two involved a COSATU leader, Alfred Ndlovu, who appears to have borrowed an AK47 from an MK guerrilla and used it in two attacks on Inkatha supporters in Taylor's Halt in July/August. He was detained, charged, tried, convicted and jailed. There was a report of the finding of AK47 cartridges after an attack at Henley, Vulindlela on 24 October. The allegiance of the attackers and victims is unknown. The other vague hearsay account came from Mayor of Pietermaritzburg, Mark Cornell, who claimed in November that large groups of men as big as five hundred, a few wielding AK47s, had been seen roaming the townships.²⁵

On 18 January 1988, AK47s were associated with two attacks in Mpumalanga. Five people died in the one attack, one person in the other (the actual cause of death being a shotgun wound, but an AK47 cartridge was found on the scene). On 2 March, Chief Msinga Mlaba of Ximba in the Hlanzeni area of the Umgeni Valley was killed by AK47 bullets in a hit squad type assassination. It would appear that he was non-Inkatha and probably pro-Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA). He appears to have been friendly with Chief Maphumulo. No arrests were ever made in connection with this killing. By contrast, in 1987 and 1988 there was 100% police success in killing or arresting, trying and convicting MK people using AK47s.

On 13 April 1988 there was a shootout between MK guerrillas and the SAP near Mpumalanga. Two guerrillas and a bystander were killed as was a policeman by a hand grenade. Two AK47 rifles and magazines were seized by the police. There were three hand grenade attacks in 1989 against people of unknown affiliation.

Regarding weapons in general, there are very few reports of the police seizing weapons or finding weapons caches. There were four reports in 1988 and three in 1989. The general picture in the database records is one in which Inkatha was more heavily armed than its opponents. Evidence led during the Sithembiso Dumakude trial in 1991 indicated that a Pietermaritzburg security police officer, Rolf Warber, had supplied twenty-four handguns to Inkatha supporters, some of whom were later implicated in murders.

Collusion

Given the extent to which both Inkatha and the UDF (and particularly the latter) claimed collusion between the State and their opponents, there were in fact remarkably few records that provided any evidence of active collusion (as distinct from much passive collusion or not apprehending criminals) in 1987: a mere seven alleged incidents in which collusion between SAP or the SADF and Inkatha occurred to the detriment of the UDF.

In 1988 the number of incidents reported increased. There were 42 reports of the police, and two of the SADF, and Inkatha colluding to the detriment of the UDF. The most notorious of these incidents was the Trust Feed massacre. At the subsequent trial in the Pietermaritzburg Supreme Court in late 1991 and early 1992, evidence was presented to prove that a conspiracy between certain policemen and Inkatha officials led to the murder of eleven people on 3 December 1988 as well as to acts of arson, theft, assault, unlawful arrest and attempts to defeat the ends of justice. In 1989 another 32 alleged incidents of collusion between the police and Inkatha took place.

Rabies

In June 1988 it was reported that a riot unit constable had been bitten by a rabid dog in Ashdown. Commenting, Dr Max Bachman of the state veterinary services said the dog was the fifth rabid animal identified in Pietermaritzburg in 1988: 'There has been a big increase in rabies cases this year. Prior to the end of 1987, there had not been a rabid animal in the city since 1985. This spread is due to the increase in the disease all over Natal because the number of animals vaccinated is inadequate.'²⁶

It is perhaps ironic that violence that led to legal, service and social breakdown in the region should finally have manifested itself in rabidness of the most literal kind. Some might consider a bitten riot unit policeman as an appropriately symbolic nemesis.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Qualifying this assessment must be the fact that the region did not normally provide a good life for the bulk of its inhabitants. There was a growing army of the unemployed and violence of a domestic or criminal kind was already high in the region. For example, in areas near Pietermaritzburg 298 murders were reported from the black townships in Ashdown, Imbali, Edendale, Slangspruit and Vulindlela in 1985–1986.
- 2 Major-General P.H. Groenewald, chief director: system co-ordination of the Bureau for Information gave the following information while speaking at an international liaison seminar in Pretoria: during the previous five years at least five thousand people had died in unrest incidents. All those who died in the violence were black people, except for two whites. More damage to property was done during this five-year period than in any war South Africa had been involved in, including the South African War. A total of 25 859 vehicles (11 654 private delivery vehicles, 10 082 buses and 4 123 police vehicles) as well as 8 034 houses (110 of them the homes of policemen), 1 757 schools and 1 243 shops and factories, had been damaged (*Natal Witness* 13 November 1989).
- 3 D. Posel and G. Maasdorp, *The Economic Implications of the Violence in Natal: Violence in Natal: Counting the Cost/Assessing the Future* (Durban: IDASA, 1990): 15–24. Posel and Maasdorp note three major consequences of the violence that impact on the economy: increased absenteeism; physically and psychologically destructive effects on labour; and an adverse impact on the growth of industry.
- 4 *Echo* 18 February 1988, 15 September 1988, 18 May 1989 and 25 May 1989.
- 5 *Natal Witness* 16 November 1990.
- 6 SAPA, 28 August 1990.
- 7 The general trend in these statistics is that people of known affiliation, UDF supporters, suffered the heaviest casualties. Given the State of Emergency that operated during these years, wounded and injured UDF supporters would generally have avoided hospitalisation and the risk of detention that it presented. This is certainly a strong factor in the under reporting of casualties.
- 8 C.A.V. Perrott, 'Pietermaritzburg: city of violence?' *Journal of Emergency Medicine* 7 (1989): 485–9 found that at Northdale Hospital one third of all patients admitted with gunshot wounds died.
- 9 D. Robbins, 'Worst violence in 150 years' *Natal Witness* 21 October 1988.
- 10 *Natal Witness* 22 and 23 February 1990.
- 11 *Natal Mercury* 31 March 1990; *Natal Witness* 31 March 1990.
- 12 In September 1989 whole rows of houses were stoned. No figures are available detailing the actual number damaged in these particular events.
- 13 *Natal Mercury* 6 December 1989.
- 14 Worries about underestimates need to be balanced by caution about grandiose overestimates such as those given by Peter Gastrow (Democratic Party MP for Durban Central) in Parliament on 10 February 1990 when he said that since the start of 1987 more than twenty thousand houses and shops had been burnt in Natal whilst one hundred thousand people had become refugees (*Natal Witness* 10 February 1990; *Daily News*, 10 February 1990).
- 15 S.M. Jacques, 'Preliminary research into how the violence has affected the housing crisis in the Pietermaritzburg townships'. Unpublished paper submitted in part requirement for a BA(Hons) in Sociology, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1990: 9–11.
- 16 There was some debate, particularly in April 1990 after an enormous influx of about

twenty thousand refugees from Vulindlela and Table Mountain into Edendale and Pietermaritzburg, as to the correctness of the term refugee and some people started using the term displacee. Another term used was internal refugee. Earlier, in 1988, Pietermaritzburg police spokesman Pieter Kitching insisted that people who had moved from troubled areas to safer areas were not to be called refugees, but more correctly described as runaways (*Natal Witness* 28 April 1988). Refugee is a common sense term for a person who has had to flee because of war, danger or oppression.

- 17 *Natal Witness* 23 October 1987.
- 18 *Natal Witness* 10 October 1988.
- 19 *New African* 17 April 1989.
- 20 *Natal Witness* 22 May 1989.
- 21 J.J.W. Aitchison, 'Numbering the dead: patterns in the Midlands violence'. Paper presented at the Centre for Adult Education Seminar on Violence, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1988; J.J.W. Aitchison, 'The civil war in Natal' *South African Review* 5(1989): 457-73; J.J.W. Aitchison, *The Pietermaritzburg Conflict: Experience and Analysis* (Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1989).
- 22 As an example, the claimed number of refugees from Trust Feed was one thousand. The database records 35 houses destroyed, based on a visit by an informant who counted that number of burnt houses. This gives a figure of 280 refugees, only 28% of the claimed number.
- 23 As an example, on 29 November 1989 Mpumalanga township manager Bheki Nzimande was quoted as saying that 'About 1 000 houses have been damaged in unrest in Mpumalanga since the beginning of the year. Businesses are also badly affected. Many have closed down. Many people came to me on Monday asking for assistance and shelter, while some wanted to know if the council had space to store their furniture' (*Natal Witness* 30 November 1989).
- 24 M. Hart, 'The impact of violence on schooling'. Paper presented at the Seminar on Political Violence in the Pietermaritzburg Area held at the University of Natal, 18 April 1988.
- 25 *Daily News* 6 November 1987.
- 26 *Natal Witness* 24 June 1988.

4

DEATHS

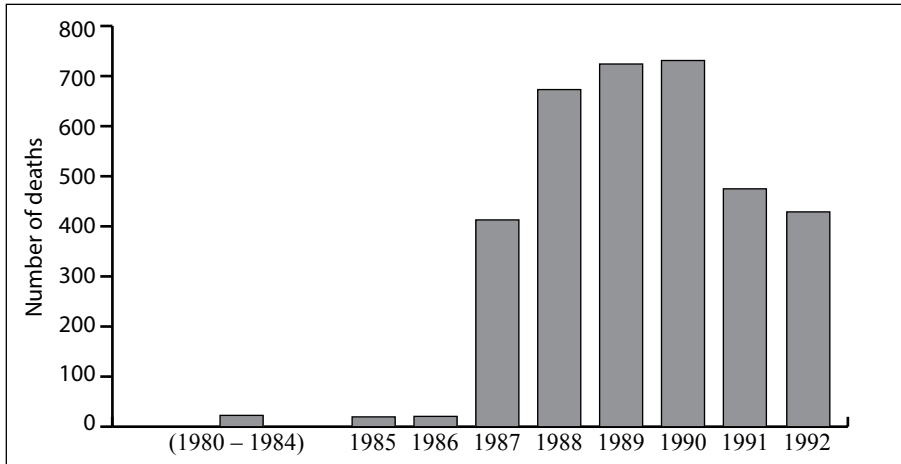
THIS CHAPTER EXAMINES the death toll from the violence and outlines the patterns of conflict it exposes. The statistics for the pre-1987 years, 1987, 1988 and 1989 are tabulated, looked at chronologically (in terms of affiliation of aggressors and victims) and geographically; and deductions made from the patterns that stand revealed.

For a number of reasons, examining the deaths is probably the best way to grasp the dimensions of the Natal Midlands war. The most obvious reason is that deaths are usually the best reported and documented aspect of any conflict. In the Midlands in the midst of a State of Emergency this was partly so because the deaths were the best reported by the police who tended not to report other unrest events and associated injuries and damage.¹ Another reason is that this war was fought with knives, pangas, spears, handguns, shotguns and assault rifles. So the number of deaths bears a closer relationship to the actual dynamics of the conflict than is usually now the case in contemporary war fought on the ground and in the air with technologically advanced weapons of mass destruction that kill large numbers of non-combatants.

The dimensions of the death toll from political violence in the Midlands from 1980 to 1992 are staggering, as shown in table 13 and graph 16. While the run up to the conflict in the years 1980 to 1986 saw the deaths of 64 people, the next three years witnessed the killings of another 1 810. The next three years in the supposed dawn of the new South Africa saw 1 635 more victims of unrest added to the Midlands graveyards.

1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
2	1	8	3	9	20	21	413	673	724	731	475	429
Note: Figures for 1990–2 are provisional and include some northern Natal fatalities.												

Table 13 Deaths from political violence, 1980–1992



Graph 16 Deaths from political violence, 1980–1992 (see Table 13)

Political and criminal violence as a cause of death

Against the enormity of the death and destruction wreaked by politically linked violence must be set the reality that violence of a less overtly political kind was already high in the Midlands prior to the escalation of unrest killings in 1987. This can be gauged from figures released by Minister of Justice Adriaan Vlok on the number of murders reported at police stations in the Pietermaritzburg/Hammarisdale police district.²

Police station	1986	1987	1988
Plessislaer	298	623	618
Pietermaritzburg	?	64	120
Mountain Rise	?	?	73
Howick	?	?	37
Inchanga	?	?	55
Hammarisdale	?	149	366
Others	?	?	188
Totals	?	836	1 457

Note: ? = statistics unavailable.

Sources: For 1987: *Natal Witness* 8 March 1988, *Natal Mercury* 8 March 1988, *Natal Witness* 4 May 1988, *Natal Witness* 4 May 1988, *Daily News* 4 May 1988.

For 1988: *Natal Mercury* 31 May 1989, *Natal Witness* 1 June 1989.

Table 14 Murders in the Pietermaritzburg/Hammarisdale police district, 1986–1988

These police station figures are instructive in trying to estimate a baseline of ordinary criminal and family murder on top of which unrest killings are stacked. Plessislaer police station near Pietermaritzburg, which deals with

crimes in Imbali, Ashdown, Slangspruit, Edendale and Vulindlela, recorded 298 murders in 1986. The Centre for Adult Education (CAE) database³ lists eight unrest deaths in these areas in 1986, so, for this particular part of the Midlands only, 290 ordinary murders a year could be considered an initial baseline.

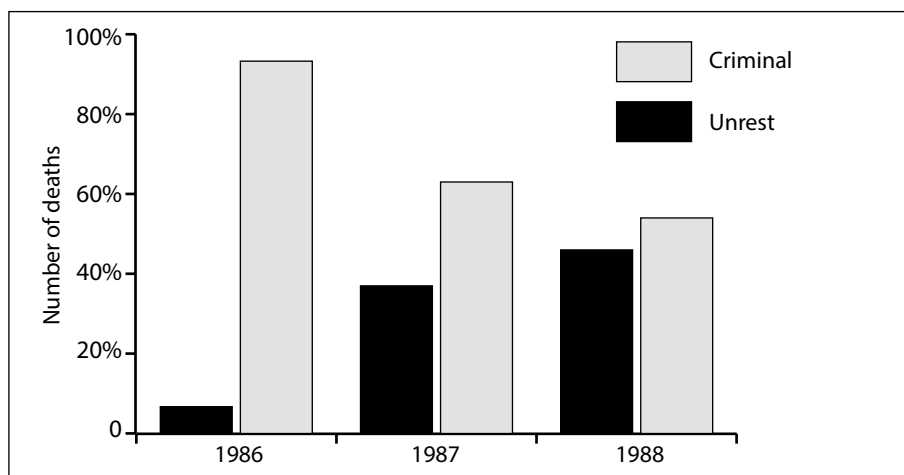
In 1987 Plessislaer police station recorded 623 murders, more than double the 1986 baseline while the database for 1987 had 333 unrest deaths (53% of the total deaths) in the area covered by the Plessislaer police. In 1988 Plessislaer recorded another 618 murders and the database had 420 unrest deaths (68% of the total). In 1987 Hammarsdale recorded 149 deaths and in 1988 another 366 killings. The database figures for these years are 45 (30% of the total) and 153 (42%) respectively.

From this it might be legitimate to deduce that unrest deaths formed from 30% to 70% of the total number of murders in the Midlands region from 1987 to 1989. Using the total police figures and deducting the database death tolls for 1986 to 1988 produces table 15.

Type	1986	1987	1988
Unrest	21	413 (37%)	673 (46%)
Criminal	290+	714 (63%)	784 (54%)
Totals	311+	1 127	1 457

Note: The figure of 290 criminal deaths in 1986 is for the Edendale complex and Vulindlela only. The actual number is therefore higher than this.

Table 15 Deaths from criminal and unrest violence, 1986–1988



Graph 17 Deaths from criminal and unrest violence, 1986–1988 (see Table 15) (1986 for Edendale complex and Vulindlela areas only.)

1980 to 1986

The death figures need to be considered with some caution both quantitatively and in terms of the putative political allegiance of the deceased. No systematic monitoring of political violence took place during this period in the Midlands and these figures have been gleaned largely from press reports in the *Natal Witness* and *Echo*.⁴

Year	Deaths	Affiliation							
		UDF COSATU	Inkatha UWUSA	BCM	ANC	Radicals	Police	Unknown	Faction
1980	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	–
1981	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
1982	8	–	–	–	–	1	–	2	5
1983	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	–
1984	9	–	–	–	1	2	–	6	–
1985	20	5	5	2	–	3	1	4	–
1986	21	9	1	–	1	–	3	7	–
Totals	64	14	6	2	2	6	4	24	6
Notes: UDF – United Democratic Front, COSATU and supporters Inkatha – Inkatha, UWUSA and supporters BCM – Black Consciousness Movement organisations such as AZAPO and AZASM ANC – African National Congress Radicals – Radical youth, either UDF or BCM supporters or both Police – Police, whether South African Police, KwaZulu or their respective special constables (kitskonstabels) Unknown – affiliation unknown, including cases (such as illegal gatherings) where there were no known victims Faction – participants in faction fighting Of the ANC deaths, one was assassinated by fellow ANC members in the mistaken belief that he was a police agent and the other was killed in a shootout with police. Three of the four police killed were KZP.									

Table 16 Deaths from political and factional violence, 1980–1986

Significant, even in this early period, is a characteristic pattern in the tabulation: the United Democratic Front (UDF) had two to three times the Inkatha casualties; and for large numbers of people it was impossible to determine their affiliation.

Areas	Deaths	AffiliationInitiator/Affected							
		UDF COSATU	Inkatha UWUSA	BCM	ANC	Rad	Police	Unknown	Faction
Imbali	13	4	3	–	–	1	–	5	–
Sobantu	2	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–
Edendale	7	2	–	–	2	–	–	3	–
Vulindlela	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	–
Slangspruit	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	–
Pietermaritzburg	7	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	5
Mpophomeni	13	6	2	–	–	3	1	1	–
Howick	2	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Hammarisdale	9	1	–	2	–	–	3	3	–
Thornville	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Richmond	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	–
Totals	64	14	6	2	2	6	4	24	6

Table 17 Deaths from political and factional violence by area, 1980–1986

The areas in which the violence was heaviest in this period were Imbali, Mpophomeni and Hammarisdale. All three were relatively new urban townships and Mpophomeni and Hammarisdale were in particular associated with industrial workers. From the history of the time it is known that Imbali was troubled by conflict between Inkatha town councillors, backed by vigilantes, and radicals. Strife in Mpophomeni was clearly associated with the BTR-Sarmcol strike and its aftermath.

Vulindlela, the scene of an average of 175 deaths a year from 1987 to 1989, was at this stage almost untouched by unrest violence.

1987 to 1989

During the years 1987 to 1989 there were at least 1 375 incidents of politically linked violence leading to the deaths of 1 810 people.⁵ Table 18 indicates the number of incidents leading to deaths and the affiliation of the initiators and victims in these incidents, in so far as this can be determined. Graph 18 displays the monthly toll over the three-year period.

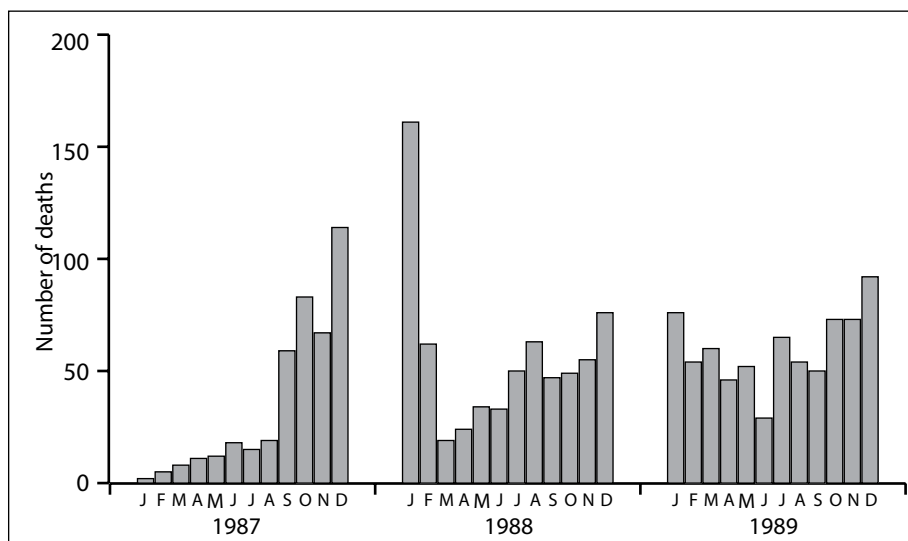
Year	Incidents	Initiator / Affected	Affiliation						
			Inkatha	UDF	BCM	ANC	Police	Other	Unknown
1987	315	Initiator	94	43	5	–	8	–	182
		Affected	46	98	5	–	2	–	181
1988	530	Initiator	136	47	6	2	18	–	304
		Affected	56	134	6	2	6	1	308
1989	530	Initiator	126	46	2	–	27	–	329
		Affected	50	131	1	–	3	5	340
Totals	1 375	Initiator	356	136	13	2	53	–	815
		Affected	152	363	12	2	11	6	829

Note: Police have only been categorised as initiators in what seem to be illegal or unwarranted acts. Violence, including homicides, carried out in performance of their legal duties has not been so categorised.

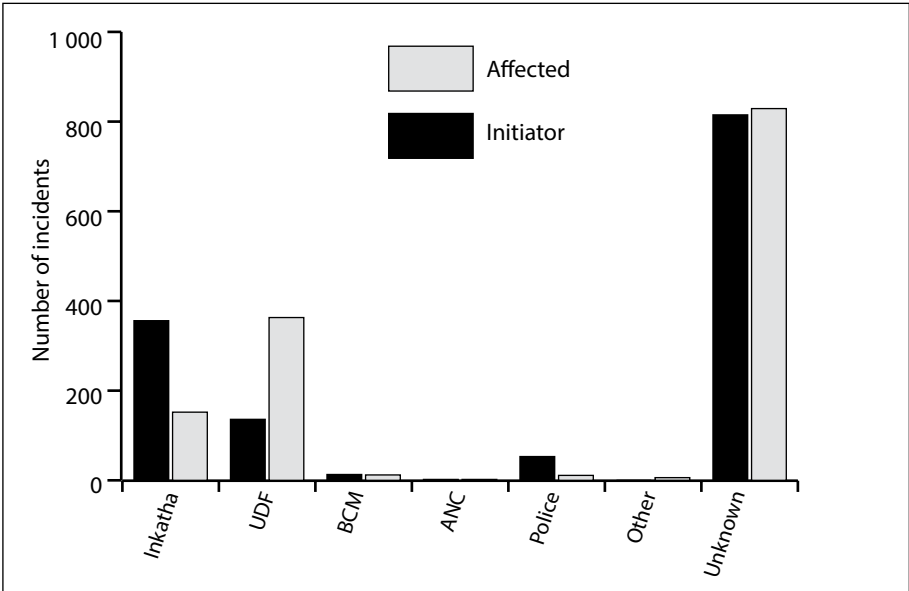
Table 18 Incidents of political violence leading to death, 1987–1989

Table 19 shows the geographical areas in which people were killed during the three years. The following pages then display the actual death toll statistics for each of the three years, examining them in the following three tables for each year

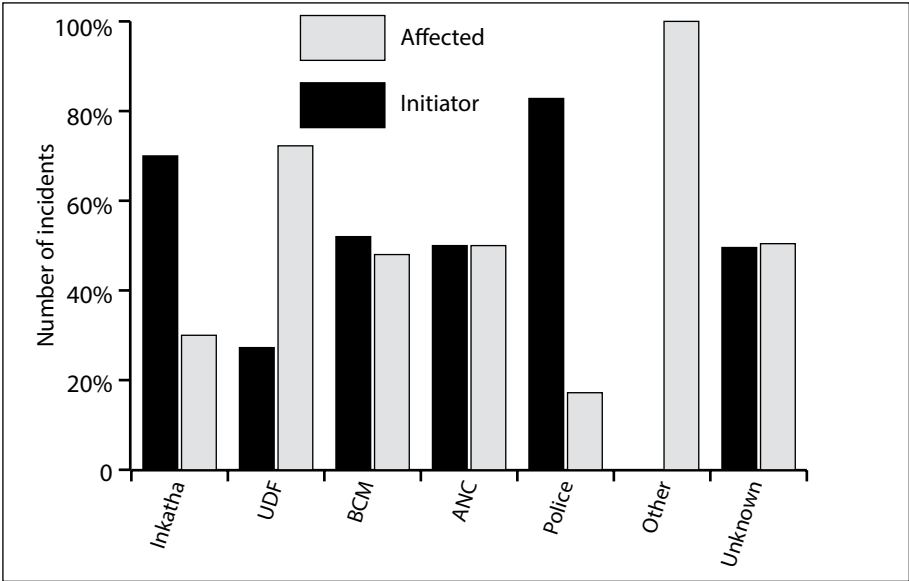
- month by affiliation;
- area by month;
- area by affiliation.



Graph 18 Deaths from political violence, 1987–1989 (see Tables 21, 24 and 27)



Graph 19 Incidents of political violence leading to death, 1987–1989 (see Table 18)



Graph 20 Incidents of political violence leading to death, 1987–1989, by affiliations (see Table 18)

Area	1987	1988	1989	Total
Imbali	40	50	82	172
Ashdown	20	24	14	58
Sobantu	10	9	-	19
Edendale	126	73	58	257
Vulindlela	123	248	155	526
Slangspruit	22	25	2	49
Pietermaritzburg	6	25	33	64
Mpophomeni	3	1	15	19
Howick	-	-	6	6
Bruntville	1	-	-	1
Hammarsdale	45	153	216	414
Inchanga	-	16	5	21
Fredville	-	13	18	31
Thornville	-	1	-	1
Richmond	-	1	32	33
Hopewell	1	2	1	4
Mid-Illovo	-	-	2	2
Springvale	-	-	1	1
Greytown	7	8	1	16
Lalane	-	-	1	1
Trust Feed	-	17	2	19
Mpolweni	1	-	-	1
Cramond	-	-	2	2
Wartburg	-	-	3	3
Swayimane	-	-	27	27
Table Mountain	3	-	4	7
Ehlanzeni	-	1	39	40
Impendhle	1	-	-	1
Midlands	4	6	5	15
Totals	413	673	724	1 810
Note: Figures for Mpumalanga, Georgedale and Emalangení have been incorporated into the Hammarsdale figures.				

Table 19 Deaths by area by year, 1987–1989

1987

Month	Deaths	Affiliation				
		UDF	Inkatha	BCM	Police	Unknown
January	2	1	-	-	-	1
February	5	2	1	-	-	2
March	8	6	-	-	-	2
April	11	3	3	-	1	1
May	12	4	2	-	-	6
June	18	5	5	-	-	8
July	15	10	2	-	-	3
August	19	9	3	1	-	8
September	59	15	18	-	-	26
October	83	32	13	1	1	36
November	67	13	3	4	-	47
December	114	28	17	2	-	67
Totals	413	128	67	8	2	207

Table 20 Deaths by month by affiliation, 1987

Of note are the large number of unknowns in the last four months of the year after the escalation of the fighting in September 1987; and the higher number of UDF fatalities compared to Inkatha (except in September). Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) dead are few, as are police fatalities.

Area	Deaths	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Imbali	40	1	-	2	4	5	8	1	2	1	2	4	10
Ashdown	20	-	-	2	2	-	-	6	-	1	2	5	2
Sobantu	10	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	3	3	2
Edendale	126	-	2	-	1	-	1	1	8	27	36	19	31
Vulindlela	123	1	-	-	2	7	-	1	2	16	30	19	45
Slangspruit	22	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	6	14
Pietermaritzburg	6	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	1
Mpophomeni	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-
Bruntville	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Hammsdale	44	-	3	4	-	-	5	4	4	8	4	8	4
Emalangeneni	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Hopewell	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Greytown	7	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	3	1	-	-
Mpolweni	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Table Mountain	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Impendhle	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Midlands	4	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
Totals	413	2	5	8	11	12	18	15	19	59	83	67	114

Table 21 Deaths by area by month, 1987

Imbali experienced almost continuous violence. The areas where the killings were most pronounced from September onward were Edendale and Vulindlela. In both these areas there was a lull in November, the month of the Inkatha, UDF and Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) peace talks in Pietermaritzburg.

Areas	Deaths	AffiliationInitiator/Affected				
		UDF	Inkatha	BCM	Police	Unknown
Imbali	40	22	5	2	1	10
Ashdown	20	7	5	–	–	8
Sobantu	10	2	–	4	1	3
Edendale	126	41	17	–	–	68
Vulindlela	123	35	33	–	–	55
Slangspruit	22	4	2	–	–	16
Pietermaritzburg	6	2	1	1	–	2
Mpophomeni	3	–	1	1	–	1
Mooi River	1	–	–	–	–	1
Hamarsdale	44	8	2	–	–	34
Emalangen	1	–	–	–	–	1
Hopewell	1	–	1	–	–	–
Greytown	7	4	–	–	–	3
Mpolweni	1	–	–	–	–	1
Table Mountain	3	2	–	–	–	1
Impendhle	1	1	–	–	–	–
Midlands	4	–	–	–	–	4
Totals	413	128	67	8	2	208

Table 22 Deaths by area by affiliation, 1987

1988

Month	Deaths	Affiliation						
		UDF	Inkatha	ANC	BCM	Police	Other	Unknown
January	161	32	7	–	1	–	–	121
February	62	15	8	–	1	–	–	38
March	19	3	–	–	–	1	–	15
April	24	5	8	2	–	2	–	7
May	34	9	8	–	–	–	1	16
June	33	3	8	–	2	–	–	20
July	50	16	3	1	1	–	–	29
August	63	20	1	–	–	–	–	42
September	47	25	2	–	–	–	–	20
October	49	14	20	–	–	–	–	15
November	55	27	8	–	–	–	1	19
December	76	15	12	–	1	4	–	44
Totals	673	184	85	3	6	7	2	386

Table 23 Deaths by month by affiliation, 1988

January 1988 was clearly the most deadly month with a sharp decline to the low of 19 in March. Thereafter deaths rose again until another high of 76 was reached in December.

Area	Deaths	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Imbali	50	5	5	2	–	5	–	4	5	6	7	6	5
Ashdown	24	2	1	3	2	1	2	–	–	–	–	4	9
Sobantu	9	2	–	1	–	–	3	3	–	–	–	–	–
Edendale	73	19	9	1	–	6	5	1	5	4	3	6	14
Vulindlela	248	94	36	4	9	8	6	23	28	18	6	4	12
Slangspruit	25	16	2	–	–	–	1	2	1	–	1	–	2
Pietermaritzburg	25	1	6	1	5	2	–	1	–	–	4	3	2
Mpophomeni	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–
Hammarisdale	149	14	2	4	8	11	9	10	17	6	27	25	16
Georgedale	2	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Emalangeneni	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
Inchanga	16	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	5	10	–	–	–
Fredville	13	–	–	–	–	–	5	4	–	3	–	1	–
Richmond	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Thornville	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Hopewell	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Greytown	8	2	–	–	–	1	–	2	2	–	–	–	1
Trust Feed	17	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	12
Enhlanzeni	1	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Midlands	6	2	1	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	1	1	–
Totals	673	161	62	19	24	34	33	50	63	47	49	55	76

Table 24 Deaths by area by month, 1988

Areas	Deaths	AffiliationInitiator/Affected						
		UDF	Inkatha	ANC	BCM	Police	Other	Unknown
Imbali	50	19	11	–	1	2	–	17
Ashdown	24	6	9	–	–	–	–	9
Sobantu	9	3	–	1	4	–	–	1
Edendale	73	20	7	–	–	3	–	43
Vulindlela	248	79	16	–	1	–	–	152
Slangspruit	25	6	–	–	–	–	–	19
Pietermaritzburg	25	11	9	–	–	–	–	5
Mpopomeni	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Hammarsdale	149	15	21	2	–	2	–	109
Georgedale	2	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
Emalangeneni	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
Inchanga	16	11	–	–	–	–	–	5
Fredville	13	3	8	–	–	–	–	2
Richmond	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Thornville	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Hopewell	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–
Greytown	8	2	1	–	–	–	1	4
Trust Feed	17	5	–	–	–	–	–	12
Ehlanzeni	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Midlands	6	2	1	–	–	–	–	3
Totals	673	184	85	3	6	7	2	386
Note: A claim was made by Durban DESCOM that 24 UDF people were killed in Mpumalanga, Hammarsdale in January 1988. ⁶ The database records only thirteen unknowns and one Inkatha. A report recorded the names of 22 people killed in Greytown/Enhlalakahle in 1988. At most five to seven of these are recorded in the database leaving the possibility of another 15 to 17 deaths to be added. ⁷								

Table 25 Deaths by area by affiliation, 1988

Of note are the large numbers of people of unknown affiliation who died in Vulindlela and Hammarsdale.

1989

Month	Deaths	Affiliation					
		UDF	Inkatha	BCM	Police	Other	Unknown
January	76	22	10	–	–	–	44
February	54	15	11	1	–	1	26
March	60	26	2	–	–	1	31
April	46	16	6	–	–	–	24
May	52	17	3	–	–	2	30
June	29	6	2	–	–	–	21
July	65	7	8	–	–	–	50
August	54	10	5	–	1	–	38
September	50	11	9	–	–	–	30
October	73	12	10	–	–	1	50
November	73	8	4	–	1	1	59
December	92	22	10	–	1	–	59
Totals	724	172	80	1	3	6	462

Note: Included in the other category of fatalities were three NACTU members.

Table 26 Deaths by month by affiliation, 1989

The decline in the monthly fatalities in June 1989, the month of peace talks between Inkatha and COSATU, should be noted.

Area	Deaths	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Imbali	82	11	4	13	4	4	1	1	14	3	4	6	17
Ashdown	14	3	1	3	1	—	—	—	5	1	—	—	—
Edendale	58	9	14	8	6	4	3	3	2	1	1	1	6
Vulindlela	155	22	12	19	22	13	3	4	11	11	10	10	18
Slangspruit	2	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Pietermaritzburg	33	7	1	6	1	5	—	—	—	5	2	—	6
Mpophomeni	15	1	2	—	2	1	—	2	—	1	1	5	—
Howick	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	4	—
Hammarsdale	204	4	15	5	8	18	16	37	12	19	38	30	2
Georgedale	12	1	—	3	—	4	—	1	3	—	—	—	—
Inchanga	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	3
Fredville	18	10	2	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
Richmond	32	6	2	1	1	—	4	4	2	1	—	5	6
Hopewell	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mid-Ilovu	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Springvale	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Greytown	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lalane	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Trust Feed	2	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cramond	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Wartburg	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	2	—
Swayimane	27	—	—	—	1	—	—	5	—	—	9	—	12
Table Mountain	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	3
Ehlanzeni	39	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	—	7	8	7	12
Midlands	5	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	3
Totals	724	76	54	60	46	52	29	65	54	50	73	73	92

Table 27 Deaths by area by month, 1989

Areas	Deaths	AffiliationInitiator/Affected					
		UDF	Inkatha	BCM	Police	Other	Unknown
Imbali	82	34	7	–	1	–	40
Ashdown	14	4	4	–	–	–	6
Edendale	58	19	6	–	–	1	32
Vulindlela	155	50	23	–	–	–	82
Slangspruit	2	2	–	–	–	–	–
Pietermaritzburg	33	10	3	–	–	3	17
Mpophomeni	15	5	3	1	–	1	5
Howick	6	3	1	–	–	–	2
Hammarsdale	204	14	8	–	1	1	180
Georgedale	12	–	1	–	1	–	10
Inchanga	5	–	3	–	–	–	2
Fredville	18	1	6	–	–	–	11
Richmond	32	1	–	–	–	–	31
Hopewell	1	–	–	–	–	–	1
Mid-Illovo	2	–	–	–	–	–	2
Springvale	1	–	–	–	–	–	1
Greytown	1	1	–	–	–	–	–
Lalane	1	–	–	–	–	–	1
Trust Feed	2	2	–	–	–	–	–
Cramond	2	–	–	–	–	–	2
Wartburg	3	–	–	–	–	–	3
Swayimane	27	12	12	–	–	–	3
Table Mountain	4	–	–	–	–	–	4
Ehlanzeni	39	11	4	–	–	–	24
Midlands	5	2	–	–	–	–	3
Totals	724	171	81	1	3	6	462

Table 28 Deaths by area by affiliation, 1989

What confirmation is there of the reliability of the 1987–1989 statistics?

Those derived from the CAE database have been matched with other estimates, particularly those of the political groupings involved, and with police figures. In fact, very little independent data was produced by the political groups involved.

Inkatha sources

V.V. Mvelase, KwaZulu Assistant Urban Representative and Inkatha central committee member, said in September 1987 that sixteen Inkatha members

had been killed from January to August 1987.⁸ The database records show thirteen for this period and the other three are presumably listed amongst the unknowns. In October 1987 an open letter from Mvelase to the people of the townships was published in which he stated that

in Pietermaritzburg where I am stationed there are 31 members of Inkatha who were attacked and injured from 1985 and 18 members of Inkatha were murdered and 28 houses destroyed. If Inkatha is responsible for acts of violence, who is killing and destroying Inkatha members' property? Are they killing themselves? ... The statistic I am giving is a true record. If somebody wants to get the deceaseds' names, I or the Inkatha Institute in Durban will give them.⁹

The CAE database records at least 36 Inkatha deaths from 1985 up to the end of September 1987 from the Pietermaritzburg region (that is, excluding Hammarsdale.)

The Mvelase open letter was used by defence lawyer James Cameron in a defamation case in Durban. Cameron said that statistics from the Progressive Federal Party (PFP) unrest monitoring report of October 1987 state that of 89 people killed in the Pietermaritzburg townships between January and September 1987, the local KwaZulu representative had identified only eighteen as Inkatha members: 'This seems evidence that Inkatha has not been the major victim of the violence.'¹⁰

Another defence lawyer in the trial of 43 Inkatha members convicted of holding an illegal gathering in the streets of Pietermaritzburg, W. von Willich, stated in court on 9 February 1988 that one hundred members of the Inkatha Youth Brigade (IYB) had been killed by the UDF in the last few months. If this is taken to mean October, November and December 1987 the database records only 33 Inkatha dead, or 47 if September is included. If January 1988 is included, another six or more can be added. Such a claim, if correct, would suggest that many Inkatha supporter deaths (as well, no doubt, as many UDF ones) could be categorised among the unknowns. But the accuracy of this claim is placed in serious question by another and much lower Inkatha estimate in an affidavit sworn by Mvelase on 15 February 1988, which stated that 57 members of the IYB had been murdered from the beginning of 1986 to the middle of December 1987 and another 35 from mid-December to mid-February 1988.¹¹ The database figure for the first period is almost identical to Mvelase's – 59 instead of his 57. But for the second it is less, eleven instead of 35.

UDF and COSATU sources

UDF and COSATU documents and journal articles, while providing useful analysis and a coherent story seem to derive their statistics largely from the press and monitoring groups, some of which, such as the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA) and the Detainees Support Committee (DESCOM), were UDF affiliates.

An Ashdown Youth Organisation figure for the period 1987 to June 1988 suggests that at least sixteen radicals were killed. The database figures were seven radicals and eight unknowns for 1987 and three radicals, five unknowns and three Inkatha for the first half of 1988. In this case it appears that some UDF members may be amongst the unknowns.

On 22 March 1989, COSATU released its *Report on Imbali Stage One*. This provides a detailed and localised report on a number of incidents that took place over a short period from 20 November 1988 to 16 January 1989 and were documented by COSATU's Pietermaritzburg lawyers. All the incidents in the COSATU report appear in the database.

BCM sources

Azanian Peoples Organisation (AZAPO) publicity secretary Muntu Myeza claimed that the Natal violence had been 'erroneously characterised as Inkatha-United Democratic Front conflict.' He alleged that 'the strife has been shouldered mostly by black consciousness organisations. We have lost more than 20 cadres in the Pietermaritzburg-Mpumalanga area.'¹² The database records only eight BCM deaths. Whilst it is possible that several AZAPO deaths are recorded amongst the unknowns, it is also possible that Myeza has claimed for AZAPO some people who had in fact moved over from a previous AZAPO allegiance into the UDF camp.¹³ Myeza's contention that black consciousness organisations had borne the brunt of the strife is not confirmed by the statistics.

Other monitoring groups

The Black Sash (Natal Coastal Region) Repression Monitoring Group reported estimates that 26 people were killed in the Mpumalanga area in June 1989. The database recorded only sixteen deaths for this month.¹⁴

Police sources

In late 1987, the South African Police (SAP) appeared consistently to underestimate the death toll. In response to one claim that there had been 83

deaths since the September escalation of violence, the SAP public relations division said that 'All deaths are included in the daily unrest reports issued by this office and these reports can be checked for the official figures. The figure of 83 is a gross exaggeration'. Official reports placed the death toll at 45.¹⁵ Other official figures released during October, November and December 1987 seem to have consistently under-counted the killings usually, by comparison with the database figures, by about a third.¹⁶

Putting any great reliance on the accuracy of police figures was doomed by Adriaan Vlok's statement in parliament on 8 April 1988 when he said that the publication and distribution of information about the number of deaths and injuries in unrest-related incidents in each police district during 1987 might help increase the revolutionary climate. He did not consider it in the interest of the safety and maintenance of order to reveal information about unrest-related deaths and injuries during 1987.¹⁷

While giving evidence in August 1988 against a bail application by an Inkatha member charged with three counts of murder, Captain H.R. Upton, a branch commander of the SAP, told a Pietermaritzburg magistrate that 52 people had died in July and August 1988 alone. Also testifying was a statistician in the riot unit, Sergeant Kobus van Zyl, who said violence in the Edendale valley was most prevalent in Sweetwaters and Mpumuza. Mpumalanga was also a strife-torn area. From the height of the violence in January 1988 when murders totalled 117, the number of cases had decreased until two months previously when the figures began to rise again.¹⁸ Compared to the database both Upton's and van Zyl's figures are low (the database records 161 deaths in January, 50 for July and 63 for August). However, van Zyl's comments about Vulindlela and Hammarsdale being particularly strife-torn and about the rising toll after a drop in March are clearly reflected in tables drawn from the database.

Addressing foreign correspondents in Cape Town on 9 February 1989, and reacting to reports that one thousand people had died in the violence since it began, Vlok said that the correct figure was 668 deaths since September 1987 up to the end of January 1989.¹⁹ The database figure is 1 072: again the police figures are about one third less.

In March 1989 Brigadier Jac Büchner was reported to have stated that deaths had dropped dramatically from a high of 119 in January 1988. The toll was now about 30 a month after reaching a low of less than 10 a month in March 1988.²⁰ Büchner's January 1988 figure had risen by only two from van Zyl's one. The March 1988 figure is still nine less than the database and the average monthly toll from April 1988 to February 1989 is twenty per month

(40%) less than the database average of 51 for the same period. Speaking in parliament on 24 April 1989, Vlok claimed that since 2 September 1988, 279 people had been killed.²¹ This is at least a third less than the database figure.

In August 1989 the following Natal statistics were reported for the first seven months of 1989, drawing on official unrest reports of the SAP and confirmation of deaths by the KwaZulu Police (KZP).²² In January there were 67 deaths, 56 in February, 60 in March, 39 in April, 36 in May, 40 in June and 50 in July, bringing the total to 348 for the first seven months of 1989. The database figure for the Midlands alone is higher than this at 382. On the specific figure given for Hammarsdale (24 deaths in July), the database figure is 37.

In February 1990 a police spokesman said in Cape Town that at least nineteen policemen had been killed and 104 seriously injured while trying to combat the political violence in Natal and KwaZulu in 1988 and 1989.²³ The database figure is ten for the two years. Given that the police figure is for the whole of Natal, this does not appear incongruent.

ENDNOTES

- 1 *Natal Witness* 29 September 1987.
- 2 On the broader terrain of Natal, in 1990 KwaZulu's Justice Minister Jeffrey Mtetwa disclosed staggering crime statistics for the area under KZP jurisdiction, linking them to what he claimed were political attempts to disrupt the homeland's system of government. He claimed that in 1989 there were 3 813 murders in KwaZulu and 2 483 of these cases had not yet been brought to court (*Natal Mercury* 29 May 1990; *Natal Witness* 30 May 1990; *Echo* 30 May 1990).
- 3 J.J.W. Aitchison (comp.), *Political Violence and Unrest in the Natal Midlands: A Register, 1980–86* (Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal, 1993).
- 4 Many of these figures were derived from P. Forsyth, *Pietermaritzburg Conflict Chronology: A Chronology of Political Developments in Pietermaritzburg, 1980–1986* (Pietermaritzburg: Research Project on Contemporary Political Conflict, Department of Historical Studies, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1991). Unfortunately, this chronology gives very terse summaries of events and does not indicate to what extent the original source, usually one of two newspapers (*Mercury* or *Witness*), ascribed a clear political or unrest context for the killing.
- 5 This produces an average of 1.3 persons killed per incident. There were relatively few massacres of groups of people or large engagements as took place in late March 1990 during the so-called Seven Day War. The low average may also indicate the relatively sparing use of firearms, and light ones at that, in this period. It probably also indicates the intensely local and personal nature of the combat. Initiators of the violence often attacked individuals whom they knew.
- 6 *New Nation* 28 January 1988; *Natal Witness* 9 and 10 February 1988.
- 7 *Natal Witness* 15 December 1988.
- 8 *Natal Witness* 18 September 1987.

- 9 *Echo* 15 October 1987; *Natal Witness* 23 October 1987.
- 10 *Natal Witness* 4 and 5 November 1987.
- 11 The affidavit from Mvelase in response to an interdict application in respect of the events at Ashdown and Mpumuza of 31 January 1988 states: 'Over the past two years up to the middle December 1987, 57 members of the Inkatha Youth Movement have been murdered. To date hereof, another approximately 35 people were killed by the radicals.'
- 12 *Weekly Mail* 24 December 1987.
- 13 Another claim by AZAPO officials reported in the *Natal Witness* of 14 March 1990 stated that their members were regularly being killed by both Inkatha and the UDF and these were often claimed by the UDF as UDF casualties.
- 14 Black Sash (Natal Coastal Region) *Repression Monitoring Group Bulletin* 6 (June-August 1989). There is a considerable problem with the Hammarsdale (Mpumalanga) figures. It was extremely difficult to get information about the numbers and affiliations of those killed there. Most of the affiliations of the dead are unknown and they may well be undercounted. Durban DESCOM reported that 24 people had been killed in January 1988 while the CAE figure was 14. Another report from an informant, which suggests that the CAE figure is an underestimate, said that in the early part of the year 10–15 bodies a week were taken to Camperdown for autopsies. Hammarsdale provides 22% of the total deaths for the years 1987 to 1989, but an above average 31% of the unknowns.
- 15 *Natal Witness* 22 October 1987.
- 16 *Natal Witness* 22 and 23 October 1987, 8 and 10 December 1987 and 1 January 1988.
- 17 *Natal Witness* 9 April 1988.
- 18 *Natal Witness* 24 and 25 August 1988; *Echo* 25 August 1988.
- 19 *Natal Witness* 10 February 1989.
- 20 *Natal Witness* 2 March 1989.
- 21 *Natal Witness* 25 April 1989; *Natal Mercury* 25 April 1989; *Weekly Mail* 28 April 1989.
- 22 *Natal Witness* 3 August 1989.
- 23 *Daily News* 14 February 1990.

5

ANALYSING THE CONFLICT

THE STATISTICAL MATERIAL in the three previous chapters has already exposed certain patterns in the conflict during the period 1987–1989. This chapter examines some of these in more detail and raises questions about their correlation with other political and socio-geographic factors and events.

The four patterns or areas that are examined are

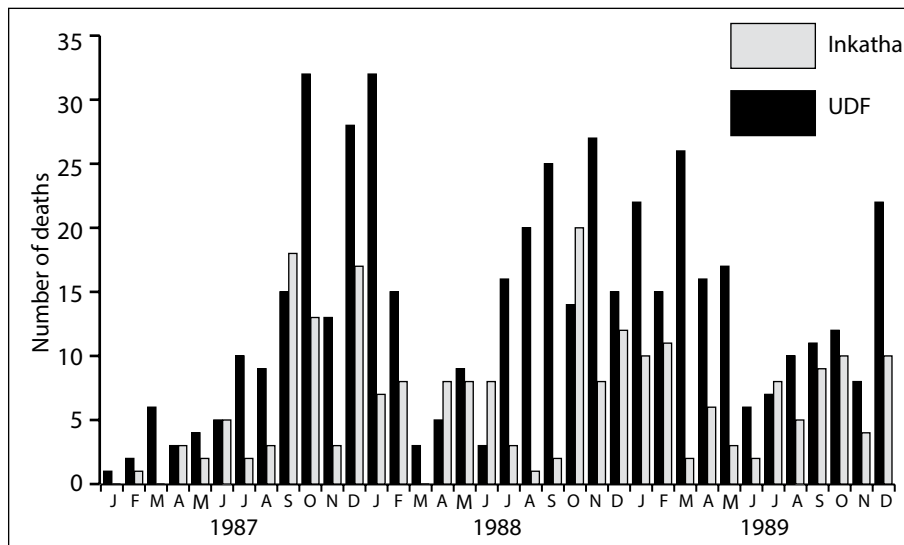
- Inkatha and United Democratic Front (UDF) casualties;
- the geographical progress of the conflict;
- the role of the State's security services, particularly in relation to State of Emergency detention;
- the relationship to critical events.

Inkatha and UDF casualties

The consistent pattern in the monthly death tolls throughout the period was for UDF casualties to far exceed those of Inkatha (see graphs 21, 22 and 23). From 1987 to 1989 the ratio of UDF deaths to Inkatha's was about 7 to 3 in each year.

Year	UDF	Inkatha	Total
1987	128 (66%)	67 (34%)	195 (100%)
1988	184 (68%)	85 (32%)	269 (100%)
1989	172 (68%)	80 (32%)	252 (100%)
Totals	484 (68%)	232 (32%)	716 (100%)

Table 29 UDF and Inkatha deaths, 1987–1989



Graph 21 UDF and Inkatha deaths, 1987–1989 (see Tables 20, 23 and 26)

Looking at the incidents in which people died, the ratio between UDF and Inkatha is similar (7:3), eliminating the possibility that a few massacres might have skewed the ratio. Unless there is a huge systematic error in the compilation of the statistics, the ratio is solid.

One possible systematic error is that a very large number of Inkatha deaths are concealed under the people whose affiliation has been described as unknown. This remains a possibility though it is improbable for several reasons. First, as discussed in the previous chapter, Inkatha's own claims as to their casualties do not greatly differ from these figures. Second, in the process of working with the Centre for Adult Education (CAE) database over a period of five years, new information regularly made it possible to determine the affiliation of some of those previously described as unknown. Yet the newly determined affiliations were not all of Inkatha people, and more or less held to the UDF/Inkatha ratio of 7:3.

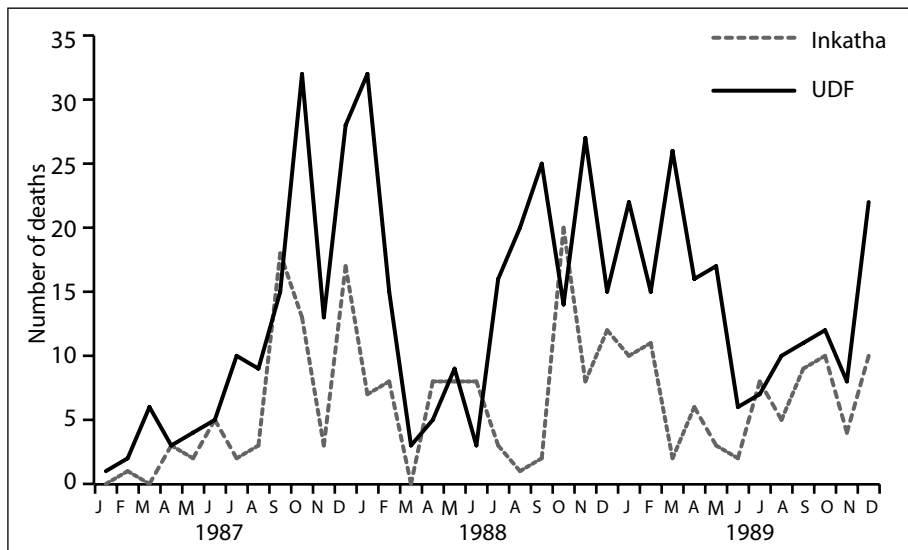
A clear imbalance exists. It is not corrected by assuming that large numbers of UDF supporters were killed by other non-Inkatha combatants such as the police and Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) supporters, for though some were the numbers are insignificant. On the existing evidence it is a safe assumption that virtually all the UDF dead were killed by Inkatha supporters and vice versa.

Accepting then the high probability that Inkatha killed more UDF supporters than vice versa, what is the meaning of this imbalance? The obvious supposition that Inkatha was more aggressive cannot be proved from the statistical tables. That one side was more effective in slaughtering their opponents is not in itself any guide as to who was the aggressor, for the defenders against aggression might simply have been better armed.

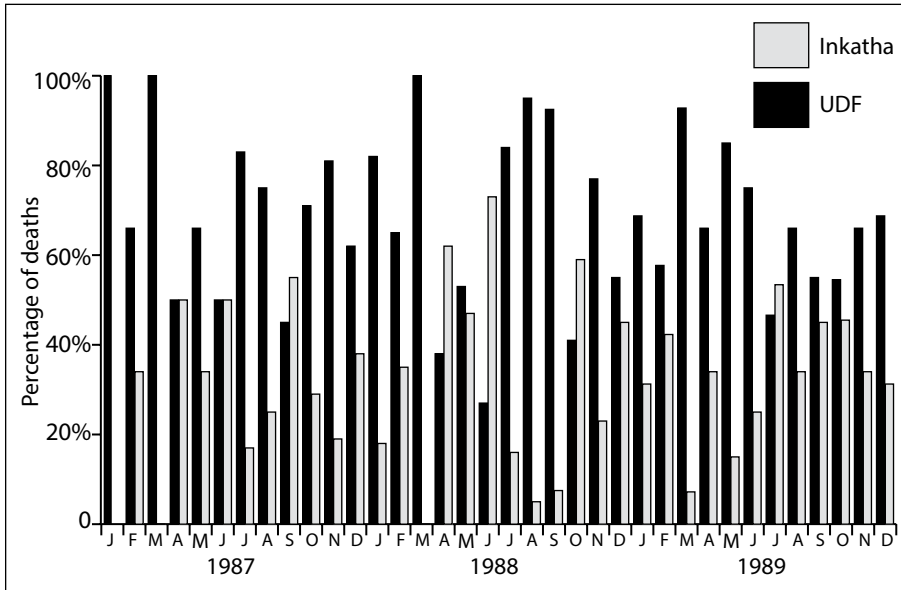
The possibilities appear threefold

- Inkatha was more aggressive, but not necessarily better armed;
- Inkatha was not necessarily more aggressive and indeed could have been mainly a victim of attacks, but was better armed;¹
- Inkatha was both more aggressive and better armed.

Which of these possibilities is to be preferred is dependent on the analysis of other evidence.



Graph 22 UDF and Inkatha deaths, 1987–1989 (see Tables 20, 23 and 26)



Graph 23 UDF and Inkatha deaths, 1987–1989 (see Tables 20, 23 and 26)

The geographical progress of the conflict

Pietermaritzburg region

Questioning what started the chain of violence, evidence for the Pietermaritzburg region seems to show Imbali as a key original locus. In chapter 1 an outline was given of the factors precipitating violence: housing; the excision of townships from the Pietermaritzburg borough; the role of Inkatha-supporting town councillors in black local authorities; and the associated rise in vigilante groups intolerant of any opposition to the KwaZulu/Inkatha authorities, school boycotts and the rise of the UDF. All these factors were strongly present in Imbali.

From 1980 to 1986 the two places with the heaviest death tolls (13 each) were Imbali and Mpophomeni, in the latter case related to the BTR-Sarmcol strike and its aftermath in which nine people were killed in 1985. In Imbali six people were killed in 1985 and four in 1986. In 1987 another 39 were killed (and at regular intervals: by month one, none, two, four, five, eight, one, two, one, two, four and ten).

This locus of politically associated violence in a somewhat conflict-ridden township where political factors, though related to concerns about housing, schools and transport, were prominent raises doubts about suggestions that the September 1987 floods or unemployment and starvation had an important role in initiating the violence; though of course they may well have fuelled it once started.

It was from September 1987 with its associated Inkatha recruiting campaign that violence flowed outwards from the townships adjacent to Pietermaritzburg. There was a major struggle for the control of Edendale in September and October, which the UDF won, that flowed into Vulindlela where there were horrifying casualties in October, December and then in January 1988. This geographical movement is backed up by the testimony of eyewitnesses such as Father Tim Smith SJ who stated about the part of Vulindlela farthest away from Pietermaritzburg that

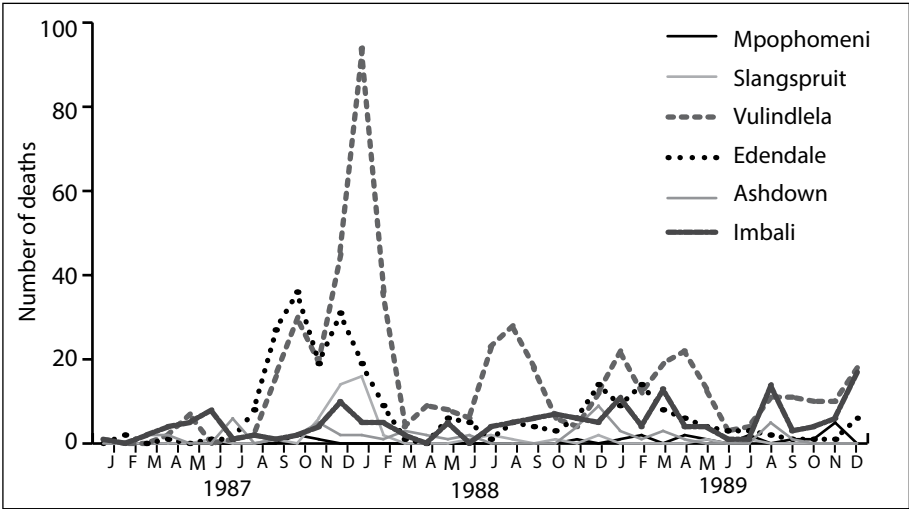
up until September of 1987 it was one of the most peaceful places to be. Incidents of violence there were, but isolated and certainly never politically motivated. I remember discussing with some of our men, at a time when violence was rocking Edendale, how we reckoned that it would never reach our area, since our people were too much tied to tradition, and the rule of the chiefs was so strong. Inkatha had ruled unchallenged for years, and although much of its support was lukewarm, there was no challenge to it. How wrong we were. The September floods were the turning point. While we were still assessing the damage, we started to hear of the explosion of violence lower down, in areas like Sweetwaters and Imbubu, and then suddenly it was upon us too.²

In Sobantu, where the fighting was largely between young supporters of the BCM and the UDF, it was the arrival of radical refugees from Imbali that helped trigger the sub-conflict.

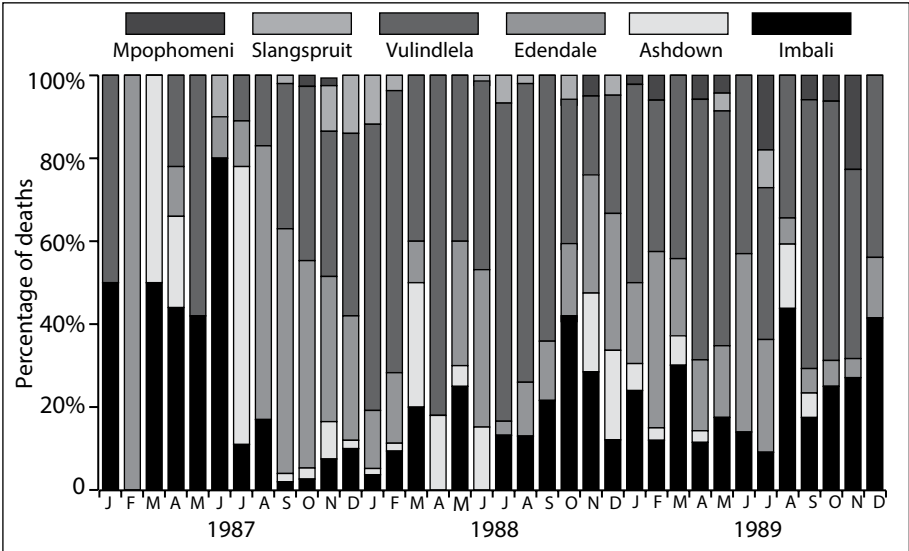
Graph 24, a line graph, shows that Imbali remained a low-level but consistent source of deaths. Edendale, whilst showing two severe peaks (October to December 1987 and December 1988 to March 1989) became a diminishing source of violence. Once Vulindlela had experienced the tremendous conflict of the October 1987 to February 1988 period it remained a relatively high source of violence. This trend is more clearly shown in graph 25, a 100% graph, which shows Imbali and Vulindlela as providing a consistently high percentage of the monthly fatalities throughout the period.

Area	1987	1988	1989	Total
Imbali	40	50	82	172
Ashdown	20	24	14	58
Sobantu	10	9	–	19
Edendale	126	73	58	257
Vulindlela	123	248	155	526
Slangspruit	22	25	2	49
Pietermaritzburg	6	25	33	64
Mpophomeni	3	1	15	19
Howick	–	–	6	6
Bruntville	1	–	–	1
Hammarsdale	45	153	216	414
Inchanga	–	16	5	21
Fredville	–	13	18	31
Thornville	–	1	–	1
Richmond	–	1	32	33
Hopewell	1	2	1	4
Mid-Illovo	–	–	2	2
Springvale	–	–	1	1
Greytown	7	8	1	16
Lalane	–	–	1	1
Trust Feed	–	17	2	19
Mpolweni	1	–	–	1
Cramond	–	–	2	2
Wartburg	–	–	3	3
Swayimane	–	–	27	27
Table Mountain	3	–	4	7
Ehlanzeni	–	1	39	40
Impendhle	1	–	–	1
Midlands	4	6	5	15
Totals	413	673	724	1 810
Note: Figures for Mpumalanga, Georgedale and Emalangeneni have been incorporated into the Hammarsdale figures.				

Table 30 Deaths by area by year, 1987–1989



Graph 24 Pietermaritzburg region deaths by area, 1987–1989 (see Tables 21, 24 and 27)

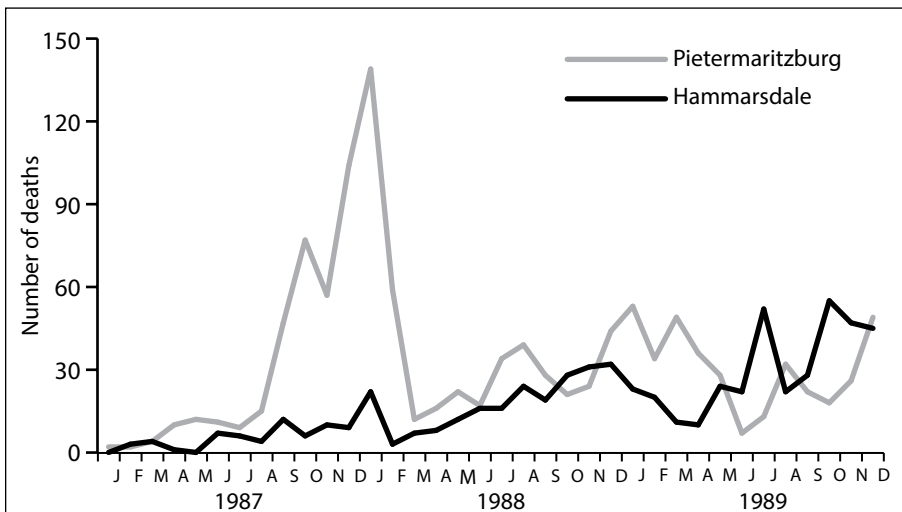


Graph 25 Pietermaritzburg region deaths by area, 1987–1989 (see Tables 21, 24 and 27)

By the end of 1989 it would be fair comment to say that in settled, mature, and particularly freehold urban communities like Edendale not administered by KwaZulu, though there was some violence it was relatively little compared with other areas. Such violence as occurred there was often associated with young refugee comrades from more outlying areas such as Vulindlela.

Indeed, refugee movement also reflected the geographical pattern of the violence. The first movement, in 1986 and early to mid-1987, was that of radical refugees out of Imbali into Sobantu, Mpophomeni and Edendale. After the escalation of conflict in September there were Inkatha refugees from Edendale and some parts of Vulindlela. With the Inkatha counter attacks in early 1988 there was then a surge of non-Inkatha refugees from Vulindlela into Edendale and Table Mountain.

A crisis worker for the South African Council of Churches (SACC), Azariah Ndebele, said in August 1988 that the refugee problem resulted from recruitment drives by Inkatha that caused resistance and fighting among residents. He described the pattern: the first UDF refugees came from Ashdown and settled in the Edendale valley. The war then followed them into the valley. Recruitment drives in Mpumuza and Imbali also sent people into 'exile'. But when Ashdown was taken over by the UDF in late 1987, the first group of refugees returned from Edendale to settle in their homes at Ashdown. Meanwhile, the second group of refugees from Imbali, who were mainly



Graph 26 Deaths in the Hammarsdale and Pietermaritzburg regions, 1987–1989 (see Tables 21, 24 and 27)

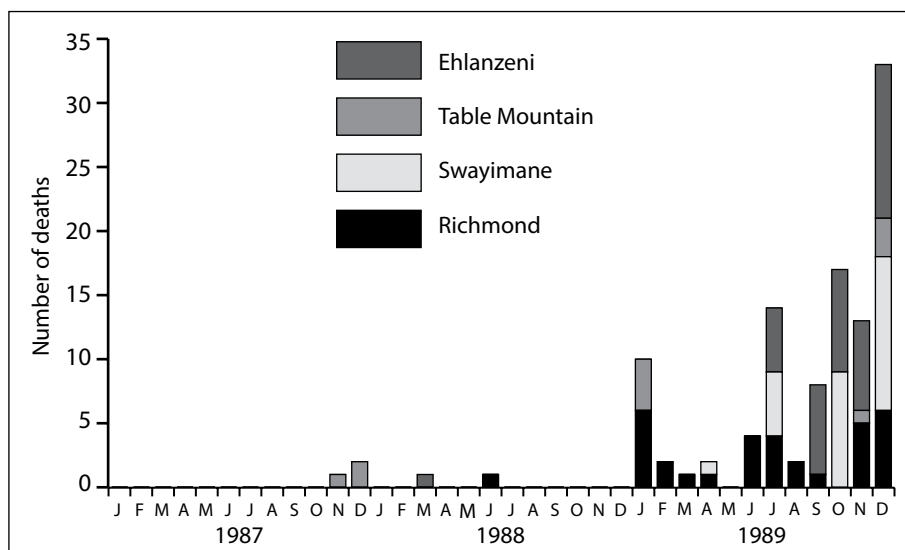
Azanian Peoples Organisation (AZAPO) people, settled in Dark City, Sobantu where they began a battle with UDF supporters.³

In October 1988, Chief Maphumulo said of the many people seeking shelter at Table Mountain: 'Most people, both young and old, are fleeing from Mpumuza, Inadi, Mafunze, Edendale, Imbali and Sobantu ... At first it was mostly Inkatha members fleeing. But now it is mostly UDF and neutral people.'⁴

Hammarisdale region

In Natal, the township areas once totally dominated by Inkatha, but which became contested, had some of the worst violence between mid-1988 to the end of 1989. This is seen particularly in Imbali, Mpumalanga and in some of the Durban townships such as Ntuzuma.

Deaths in the Hammarisdale region showed a steady rise with peaks in October 1988, July 1989 and October/November 1989, followed by a precipitous decrease in December 1989 linked to a locally engineered ceasefire. Compared to the pattern of deaths in the Pietermaritzburg region, Hammarisdale seemed to follow a similar, but much lower level path until September 1988 from which time Hammarisdale tended to experience surges of violence when the Pietermaritzburg region had lulls and vice versa (see graph 26).⁵



Graph 27 Deaths in some rural areas, 1987–1989 (see Tables 21, 24 and 27)

Rural areas

In 1989 it became clear that the conflict was beginning to infect rural areas seriously (other than Vulindlela which was long diseased) as seen in Richmond, Swayimane (near Wartburg), Ehlanzeni (in the Msunduzi-Umgenei valley below Cato Ridge) and most dramatically in the Shongweni area (in the first half of the year until a local peace settlement). Graph 27 shows rural area deaths in Richmond, Swayimane, Table Mountain and Ehlanzeni.

In December 1989, the author made the following comment:

It can be safely predicted that if the conflict continues in the broad band of territory around Durban and Pietermaritzburg, and in particular in the corridor between the two cities, there will be a sorting out of allegiances in tribal areas and that, at least nominally this will be between Inkatha and the UDF/COSATU. The creation of Contralesa, now led by Chief Maphumulo, and the amazing rapprochement between the ANC and the Transkei regime, provide rural chiefs with the possibility of a political home with the radicals that they may perceive as being less costly in terms of violence than remaining within Inkatha.⁶

Within a short period this prediction was realised and came horribly true with attacks on Table Mountain in the early part of 1990, the escalation of the conflict in Richmond, and the devastation of the Natal South Coast.

The role of the State's security services

It may be fruitless to speculate on the understanding by the South African Police (SAP) of the conflict or their agendas in relation to it. There may well have been multiple activities based on those understandings. This section will simply draw on the evidence provided by the database on the role of the security forces, particularly the police.

Generally the database is replete with complaints by non-Inkatha people against the security forces, who claim to have seen or been victims of

- harassment and intimidation;
- violence including assault and unjustified shooting and tear gassing;
- collusion and in some cases active participation with Inkatha vigilantes in harassment, intimidation and acts of violence;
- disruption of political activity at meetings and other events;
- failure to assist complainants and investigate matters;
- partisan use of State of Emergency powers.

A June 1992 report from the Legal Resources Centre and the Human Rights Commission in Durban aptly sums up the charge:

As stated in a memorandum submitted by church leaders to President de Klerk on 11 April 1990, it is difficult to convey the shattering loss that characterises great numbers of these displaced persons who have lost loved ones, houses and belongings and who now face the prospect of having to rebuild their lives from nothing. The evidence supports the view that the conflict would never have reached the current proportions had the security forces (SAP, KZP and SADF) acted energetically and impartially from the start.

The violence cannot be explained in terms of political rivalry only. Ineffective and biased policing has allowed and encouraged the escalation of the conflict into gross and increasingly violent proportions. Although the security forces are not generally the principal protagonists in the conflict, their actions, and particularly those of the KZP, have been an important factor in the increase of violence to the present proportions.⁷

The first responses

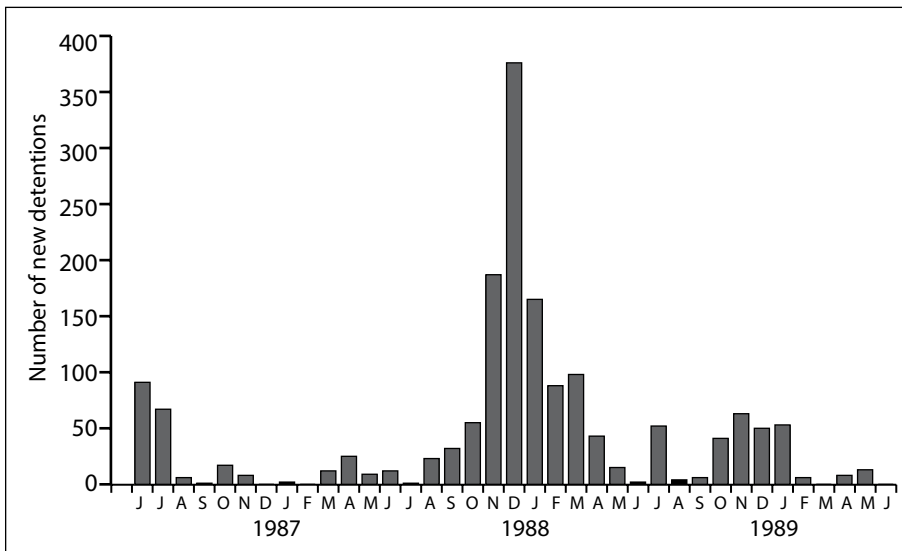
At first, when the number of killings rose dramatically in September and October 1987, there appears, at least for public consumption, to have been a denial of the problem of violence. Brigadier J. Kotze, the SAP's Divisional Commander said, 'There is no reason to worry, entry in and out of the townships is no problem and under control. There have been no stepped-up patrols and the police can cope with the situation ... I repeat, the situation is normal and under control.'⁸ Another police spokesman claimed that a press figure for deaths was 'a gross exaggeration'.⁹

The police unrest report figures under-reported killings as did virtually every other source in 1987. This may partly be due to deliberate unwillingness to publicise large-scale killings that had erupted in spite of a severe State of Emergency. The refusal of the Minister of Law and Order to provide statistics for deaths and injuries in 1987 is indicative of this attitude.¹⁰ In early 1988, after a raging January, the deaths were reduced in number in February and much more so in March. The role of the police in eventually halting the massive number of killings through an equally massive deployment of police reinforcements, including special constables, is undoubtedly important.

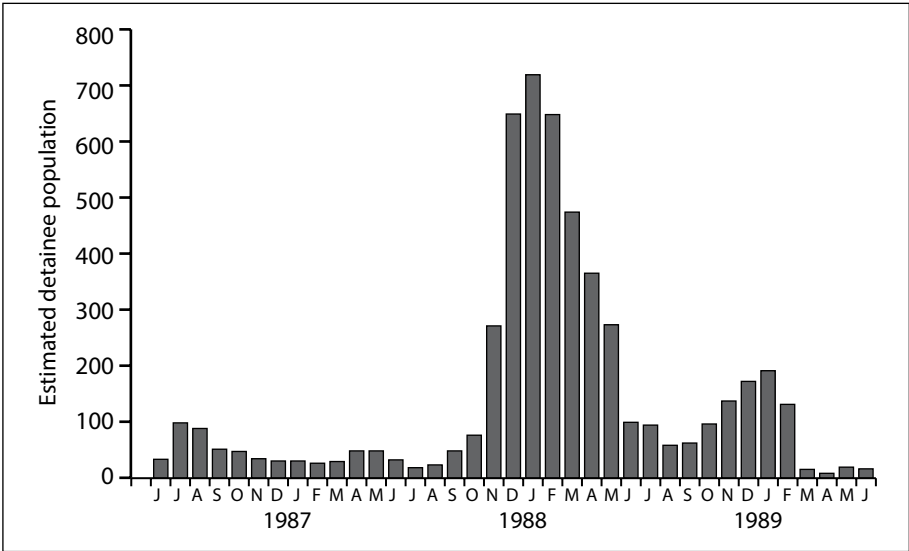
However, the way the police played this dampening role, may well have been a crucial factor in the longevity of what had in effect become a very low-level civil war. In the first half of 1988 the police appeared to many observers to have been totally supportive of one grouping, namely Inkatha. A similar conclusion must be drawn about the use of State of Emergency detention as a means of halting the bloodletting.

Emergency detention and the Natal Midlands violence

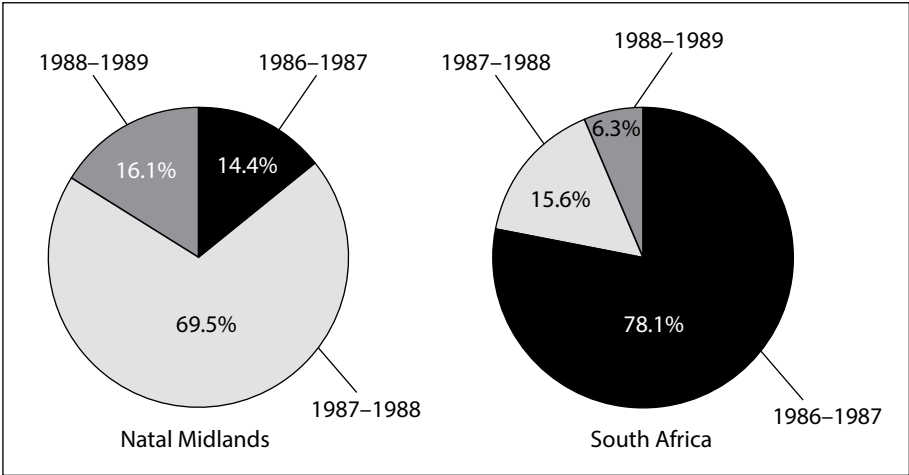
The rationale for the declaration of the 1986 State of Emergency and its annual re-declaration until October 1990 was precisely that unrest and killings required the use of extraordinary measures such as emergency detention. The detention in the Natal Midlands of a large number of UDF/COSATU supporters and comrades in the latter part of 1987 is therefore understandable in terms of this rationale. Undeniably some supporters of the UDF had been involved in killing people, at least 67 according to the database. What is inconsistent with the rationale is that though in the course of the year over 734 anti-Inkatha people were detained, not a single Inkatha member or supporter was detained in 1987, although, also undeniably, Inkatha supporters had killed many people. According to the database there were as many as 128. In 1988 a similar situation prevailed with at least 460 anti-Inkatha people detained



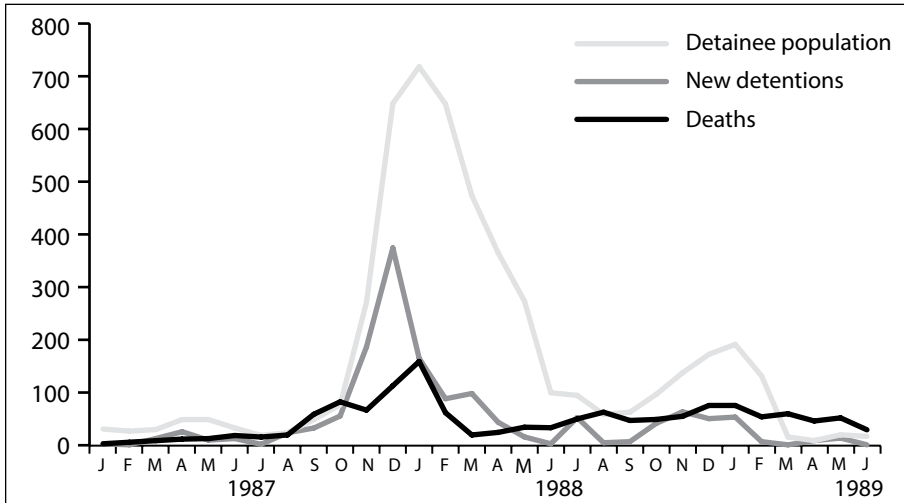
*Graph 28 New detentions per month, 1986–1989
(Excluding administrative detentions at the beginning of each new State of Emergency)*



Graph 29 Estimated detainee population: Natal Midlands, June 1986–June 1989



Graph 30 Detentions in three States of Emergency: Natal Midlands and South Africa, 1986–1989



Graph 31 Detentions and deaths, 1986–1989

during the year, while only 21 Inkatha people were detained and then most of them very briefly.¹¹

Graphs 28–31 depict detentions from June 1986 to June 1989 and show the relationship between the number of people detained and the rise and fall in the level of violence.¹² The relationship is not necessarily easy to interpret. At best one may say that the detentions may have led to a lowering in the number of deaths, but that many deaths took place in spite of extraordinarily large numbers of UDF supporters being incarcerated.

Parallel to this enthusiasm for detention was a strange reluctance on the part of the police to use their awesome powers to persuade potential witnesses to give evidence for the State. Given the record of security detention, both normal and emergency, since 1963 and the infamous ninety-day law of John Vorster, and its success in obtaining confessions and testimonies leading to successful prosecutions against the proscribed enemies of the apartheid state, this new weakness was puzzling.¹³ As an example, in August 1988, giving evidence in a bail application by an Inkatha member accused of three murders, Captain H.R. Upton, a branch commander of the SAP told the magistrate that in up to 90% of unrest-related cases the perpetrators, mostly aged 14 to 20, were known but people often refused to testify in court. He said witnesses were scared to be seen in the presence of investigating officers, and said they would more readily come forward if the accused was in custody: ‘The figures for unsolved unrest-related cases are amazing,’ he said.¹⁴

The charge of security force collusion in violence

The Pietermaritzburg conflict was full of claim and counterclaim that the State, usually represented by the SAP and to a lesser extent the South African Defence Force (SADF), colluded actively or passively with the perpetrators of violence. An example of such claims was that made in Parliament on 11 February 1988 by Pierre Cronje, National Democratic Movement MP for Greytown, who presented evidence of collusion from Hammarsdale. He claimed that a full-scale attack had been launched against members of the progressive movement at a township house by people armed with petrol bombs, pistols and shotguns: 'I have the actual evidence in my possession. The remains of petrol bombs were found on the site but no evidence was gathered and no investigation held.' When he visited the house later the police had not taken statements from the neighbours.¹⁵

Similar complaints were made by Chief Mhlabunzima Maphumulo, MP in the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, who was reported as saying that what the police should have done was to detain all known figures who had killed and maimed people. He said that a number of these people with blood on their hands were roaming the streets and driving their cars freely in full view of members of bereaved families. The number of police in the area was more than enough to round up known killers. He also said that violence in Pietermaritzburg would have long come to an abrupt end had it spilled over into the neighbouring white suburbs of the city. He said that the reason why people took the law into their own hands, by way of attack or counter attack, was because they felt they had no protection from the law.¹⁶

Another example was the large-scale Inkatha attacks on Slangspruit on 25 and 27 June 1988. According to sworn affidavits the attackers included Inkatha members bussed in from Mpumaza, Vulindlela and Hammarsdale. One person was killed, several injured and a number of houses destroyed. What is particularly amazing about this attack is that the day before a thirty-strong delegation of Slangspruit women had gone to the Loop Street police station in Pietermaritzburg and begged for protection from the police against Inkatha attacks. Reverend Moses Ntshangase, a local resident and community leader, said 'What was more frightening is that a delegation of Slangspruit women had appealed to the police but despite that the attacks still took place and continued into Sunday'.¹⁷

Generally the extent of this passive collusion between the security forces and Inkatha was well illustrated by the police and army's tolerance towards

large outdoor meetings, rallies and marches held by Inkatha. These were clearly illegal in terms of the Emergency regulations.

There is no evidence that the SAP aided the UDF. The so-called KwaShange massacre of 25 September 1987 in which thirteen Inkatha youths were killed in an attack led by a policeman revealed no evidence of such collusion and the policeman was subsequently convicted and jailed. Indeed his defence at the trial, which was accepted by the judge and provided the extenuating circumstances that saved him from the death penalty, was that some Inkatha youths he had arrested for arson were released after the intervention of a local Inkatha official and they had gathered to prepare for an attack on him. He had then staged a pre-emptive strike.¹⁸

This very example illuminates the basis of much of the UDF/COSATU complaint about passive State collusion in that Inkatha supporters involved in violence (and particularly the so-called Inkatha warlords, among them chiefs, indunas and councillors alleged to have attacked and murdered a number of people) were not arrested or, if arrested, were released almost immediately. The CAE database has many records in which it was alleged that these warlords killed people and engaged in other illegal acts and that no serious action had been taken against them. By contrast, given that the State of Emergency regulations were ostensibly designed to control precisely such conflict as existed in the Pietermaritzburg area, it is absolutely amazing that in 1987 no Inkatha vigilantes or warlords were detained.

In 1988, a whole series of applications for interdicts against prominent warlords made public the belief held by many that there was passive police collusion with murderers. In addition, there were a number of serious allegations of active collusion in relation to the Inkatha attack on Ashdown on 31 January 1988 and to Inkatha attempts to regain control in Vulindlela in the first half of 1988.

The deployment of special constables (*kitskonstabels*) in the region gave rise to numerous complaints because many known Inkatha participants in the troubles had been recruited. Police explanations in this respect were unconvincing. Police spokesman Captain Pieter Kitching claimed that 'while every special constable is screened as far as their previous criminal records are concerned, we do not question their affiliation to any political organisation. If we enlist men into the police force we do not take into account whether they are members of Inkatha or the UDF.'¹⁹ A good example of this was the case of Muntu Gasa, a criminal with a record going back to childhood, and reputedly the car driver for Sichizo Zuma (one of Pietermaritzburg's more notorious

warlords and an alleged serial killer), who managed to become a kitskonstabel before he murdered another kitskonstabel and then, while out on bail, staged an armed robbery.²⁰

This collusion was in effect officially blessed when Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, said at a police ceremony in Pietermaritzburg on 26 February 1988 that 'The Police intend to face the future with moderates and fight against radical groups ... Radicals, who are trying to destroy South Africa, will not be tolerated. We will fight them. We have put our foot in that direction, and we will eventually win the Pietermaritzburg area.'²¹

On the night of 3 December 1988 a band of policemen and special constables called in by a local Inkatha leader massacred eleven people in the small rural settlement of Trust Feed as part of a campaign to exterminate the UDF in the area (see chapter 1). After two and a half years of cover up by police, who included a general, arrests were made and in 1992 most of the policemen involved were convicted of murder. Clearly revealed in the trial were the complicity of leadership of the SAP riot unit in Pietermaritzburg and local Vulindlela and Trust Feed Inkatha officials in planning the killings, the direct involvement of the New Hanover station commander, and a cover up by the Pietermaritzburg security police and the KwaZulu Police. Vlok had been taken at his word.

At a press conference on 22 March 1989 in Johannesburg, COSATU released a report alleging and documenting active and passive collusion by the police with Inkatha vigilantes.²² Inkatha vigilantes had helped police attack, search, detain, interrogate and shoot residents of Imbali. Police were actively backing Imbali warlords in the Pietermaritzburg region. The dossier detailed 29 incidents that took place between 20 November 1988 and 16 January 1989. These included fifteen murders, fourteen woundings and twenty-one shooting incidents. Sixteen of the incidents appeared to have been initiated by Inkatha, three by the SAP, three by comrades and seven by unknown people. Twenty-eight people were arrested and of them twenty-four detained: twenty-two comrades and two Inkatha. The named warlords, Thulani Ngcobo, Skweqe Mweli, Kissi Mtshali and Toti Zulu, were never arrested. Inkatha members were seen openly carrying unlicensed firearms. At the press conference lawyer Nicholas Haysom said that a few convictions in late 1987 could have prevented 1 100 deaths.

It was this kind of failure, rather than the active collusion of the Trust Feed massacre, that made the SAP the silent partners of the death dealers in the Midlands.

The thwarting of peace talks

The other side of State collusion in violence was seen in the resistance of Vlok and most of his police to peace talks. The first round of peace talks between the UDF and COSATU, and Inkatha and the United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA) on 24 November 1987 was pre-empted and nearly thwarted by the detention of key UDF delegates. Only immense local and international pressure enabled their release for the talks.

In August 1988 another Midlands peace plan that had the full backing of both Inkatha and the UDF had cold water poured on it by Vlok. According to proposals made to him in August 1988, talks would have occurred if he lifted restrictions on eight UDF leaders. Vlok responded with an extraordinary letter in which he asked for information on what role the UDF played in the violence, what contact UDF leadership figures such as Albertina Sisulu and Archie Gumede had with those directly involved in the clashes, and whether community leaders would not have a better chance of negotiating a solution than an organisation 'which is regarded as an important tool by the ANC/SACP alliance'. He added that 'The UDF leaders persistently maintain that the UDF is not involved with the violence. The question therefore arises why the UDF wants to become involved as a party at the talks.'²³ In June 1989 Vlok placed even harsher restrictions on Gumede just prior to new peace talks. Gumede was known to be a moderate who had previously worked for a peace settlement.

Why did the Emergency not work to stop killings in the Midlands?

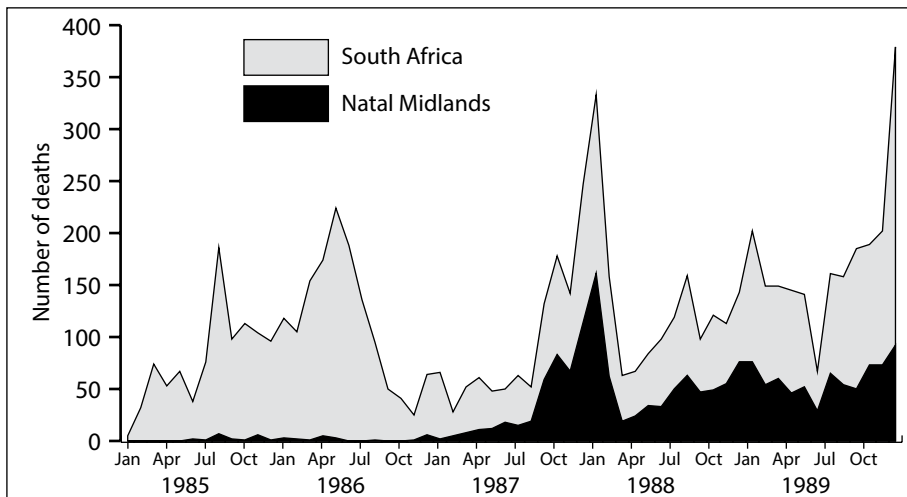
Bennett and Quin claim that at least 4 012 people were killed in South Africa's internal political conflict from September 1984 until the end of December 1988. The dead included 1 113 killed by the police and army.²⁴

This overall period can be compartmentalised thus:

- Early rumblings of revolt from September to December 1984 in which 149 people died;
- build up from January to 20 July 1985;
- regional Emergency, 21 July 1985 to 3 March 1986;
- post Emergency, 8 March 1986 to 11 June 1986;
- countrywide Emergencies from 12 June 1986.

Their national figures from 1985 to 1988 have been added to from other sources to bring them up to date to the end of 1992, compared with CAE's Midlands figures, and depicted in graphical form. Graph 32 shows the extent to which Midlands deaths contributed to the monthly totals.²⁵

The period of revolt can be clearly discerned as can, nationally, the partial effectiveness of the 1985 regional State of Emergency and the high effectiveness of the 12 June 1986 Emergency in reducing the number of deaths (and this includes reducing the number of deaths caused by policemen and soldiers.) The anomaly is Natal, and more specifically the Midlands, which from September 1987 had an enormous new wave of political violence and provided most of the deaths recorded nationally during this period.



Graph 32 Deaths from political violence: Midlands and South Africa, 1985–1989 (Sources: Indicator Project and CAE)

There are two possible interpretations for this second surge of violence in the eighties:

- One is that the violence in Natal was simply a later occurrence of the revolt against government structures that elsewhere started in 1984–1985;
- the other is that it was by nature a different conflict, one about Inkatha and its opponents' ability to command the allegiance of black people in Natal rather than a direct conflict between white government and black rebels.

The two interpretations do not have to be totally exclusive of each other, for undoubtedly the revolt against government-installed township structures was spreading to Natal, but it seems that the second option is more compelling and that the conflict was (at least overtly) about Inkatha's desire to maintain its support (or at least to maintain its ability to claim such support without contradiction) among black people in Natal. The motivation for this can partly

be seen in the context of Inkatha's support in the Pretoria/Witwatersrand/Vereeniging (PWV) industrial heartland. This seems to have progressively withered since 1977 from about 30% (more or less equal to support for the African National Congress (ANC) then) to less than 5% in 1988 (by which time the ANC's support had risen to nearly 50%; and together with the UDF, other radical groups and individuals such as Archbishop Tutu could command the allegiance of more than 70% of the black population of the PWV).²⁶ Another reason for differentiating the Natal conflict from the national one is that it helps explain the curious inability or unwillingness of State forces to crush the violence raging in the region.

The question remains: why was the government able to use State of Emergency measures to curb unrest fatalities effectively within a few months in South Africa as a whole in 1986, when, in spite of heavy use of detention against UDF supporters, in the Midlands a horrific conflict was allowed to escalate?

Inkathagate

On 19 July 1991, startling revelations were first made in the *Weekly Mail* that the government, through its security services, had been funding various Inkatha and UWUSA activities, particularly mass rallies. The SADF had also provided special services type military training to a group of 200 men sent in 1986 to the Caprivi and possibly to more trainees through covert funding of various private, supposedly adult education organisations.

Notable were Inkatha rallies addressed by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi on 5 November 1987 and on 25 March 1990, both at King's Park Stadium in Durban.²⁷ Some of the worst outbursts of violence happened after mass Inkatha rallies, notably the *imbizo* rally addressed by King Goodwill Zwelithini and Buthelezi on 19 November 1989 and the above-mentioned 25 March 1990 rally (after the first, in Hammarsdale; and in Vulindlela, Edendale, Imbali and Table Mountain after the second). Another Inkatha rally, at Nzumbe on the Natal South Coast, was funded by the police via Gavin Woods of the Inkatha Institute as late as 26 January 1991. Evidence was gained that more than R250 000 was spent on these rallies. UWUSA activities and rallies were also funded, allegedly to the tune of R5 million.²⁸

The important question in relation to this state political support of Inkatha is: did it lead to violence? There is clear evidence of a correlation between the 19 November 1989 and 25 March 1990 rallies and massive increases in violence.

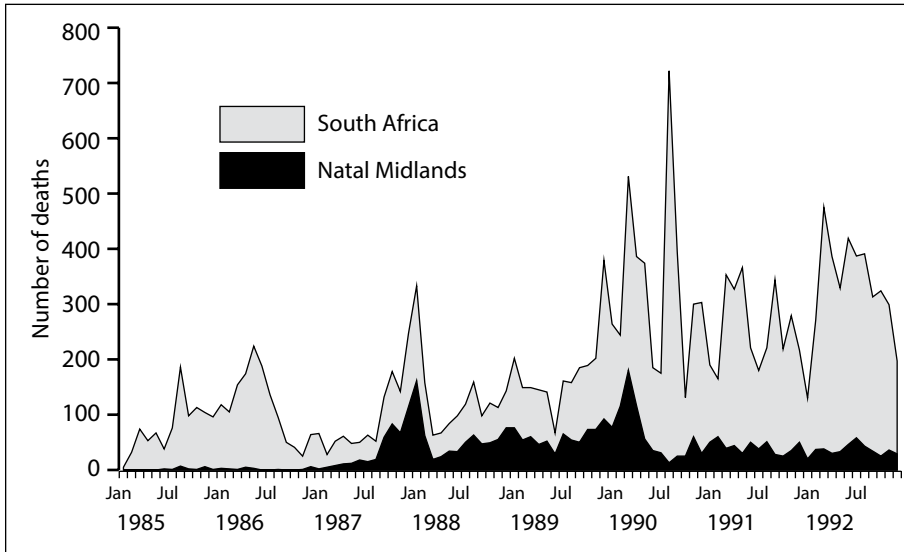
Political control of violence

Another crucial question, and one germane to another question about what caused the violence, is whether there was political control of, or influence on, the violence using political control in a broad sense.

Apart from the previously noted issue of the Inkatha rallies, the one clear indication that political decisions could and did influence the violence relates to the peace talks that took place in June 1989 in Durban between Inkatha and COSATU/UDF. For a brief period it looked as if peace was within grasp and graph 32 clearly shows that these moves correlate with a sharp decline in fatalities.

The issue has, of course a wider context than that of the Midlands. Graph 33, which extends the picture to the end of 1992, shows the devastating impact of the spread of violence to the Transvaal from August 1990. Patterns in this Transvaal violence have been examined by David Everatt of the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE).²⁹ The Human Rights Commission (HRC) observed that from their records fatalities in Natal in 1990–1 averaged close on one hundred a month and that the violent carnage there continued virtually uninfluenced by events in the rest of the country, appearing to have a momentum of its own. By contrast in the Reef/Vaal complex fatalities were very high in August and September 1990 (preceded by the launch of Inkatha as a political party in July and by the ANC's suspension of armed struggle on 6 August 1990), followed by a trough in October 1990 (the lifting of the State of Emergency and de Klerk's trip to Europe) and in January and February 1991 (the opening of Parliament and the Durban Royal Hotel peace accord of 29 January) and in June (the government-sponsored peace summit). These observations were taken further by David Everatt and Safoora Sadek of the HRC in a report prepared for the International Commission of Jurists. The authors contend that there 'is clear evidence that the violence erupts at points when it most weakens the ANC and its allies, and dies down dramatically when it would most harm the government of FW de Klerk.'³⁰

A final observation may be noted in this connection about graph 33. In the nineties the peaks of violence in the Transvaal were frequently accompanied by a trough in the Midlands. Could this mean that combatants moved from Natal to the Transvaal?³¹



Graph 33 Deaths from political violence: Midlands and South Africa, 1985–1992 (Sources: Indicator Project, CAE, CS-LS, HRC and SAIRR)

The relationship to critical events

Another consideration is whether the death figures point to any critical event or events that stimulated the violence. The UDF/COSATU story of the 1987 conflict has it that there was a massive recruitment drive by Inkatha in September and early October accompanied by heavy intimidation. It was this event that provoked resistance and increased the number of killings. Rebuffed, Inkatha then staged a counterattack, melodramatically described as Operation Doom or Operation Cleanup in January 1988, followed by a relative lull. After this, Inkatha, backed by the police, systematically began regaining control in Vulindlela and later in areas such as Trust Feed.

The sudden rise in fatalities in September 1987 (from nineteen in August) lends credence to the belief that there was some critical event or events in September. Another surge is evident in late December and early January. These patterns can be interpreted as a link between an Inkatha recruiting drive and, later, a counterattack, although of course figures cannot reveal who were aggressor and victim in the actual violence.

One non-human event in September 1987 was the devastating flood. The extent of its material and psychological impact on communities in the Msunduzi valley is a matter for conjecture.

Stayaways and commemoration days

During the three years there were a number of stayaways or days of protest, some by now traditional such as the commemorations of Sharpeville and Soweto. Others were more specific or local, such as stayaways in Howick/Mpophomeni, Hammarsdale and Pietermaritzburg in protest at police action or killings (such as the Congress of South African Trades Union's (COSATU) on 5 and 6 June 1989 in protest at the murder of Jabu Ndlovu). Throughout this period June was also a tense month because of the ending and reimposition of successive States of Emergency. In all three years June showed a rise in fatalities compared to the previous month or months. However, compared to other leaps in the death toll these rises are not particularly significant.

Stayaways, although often accompanied by skirmishes of various kinds, are not particularly associated with massive escalations of the conflict. The death figures provide no evidence that the 6 May 1987 stayaway in protest at the whites-only election was a critical event.

Peace talks

There does seem to be some correlation between peace talks between Inkatha and its opponents and a reduction in fatalities. November 1987 showed a drop, as did September 1988, June 1989 (the most significant) and January 1990. Correspondingly, the breaking off of peace talks, in December 1987 and October 1989, was followed by rapid increases in violence.

Rallies

Mass meetings and rallies held by Inkatha were often accused of stimulating violence. At the local level this was certainly true in some areas. The larger rallies held by Inkatha, on 5 November 1987 (State funded), the King's *imbizo* on 19 November 1989 and the rally on 25 March 1990 (also State funded) had varying impacts. The November 1987 rally had no obvious effect on the violence, though it did increase over the next two months. The November 1989 *imbizo* led to an enormous upsurge of violence in the Hammarsdale region and there is evidence that Inkatha combatants from other areas entered Mpumalanga along with those returning from the rally. The rally of 25 March 1990 was linked to incredible violence in Edendale, Vulindlela and Imbali.³²

Other political events

The white general election of 1987 and the black municipal and township elections in October 1988 seem to have had little impact. In relation to these political events at the national scale, it is now known that the deal for a negotiated settlement between the ANC in exile and the South African government was made in 1987.³³ The extent to which this major shift in South African politics is linked to the Natal violence is a matter for historians and expositors of government and security force conspiracies to unravel.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Being better armed would include the possibility that the police in effect fought on their side and defended them against attacks or at the very least did not confiscate their weapons as they regularly did those of UDF supporters.
- 2 Tim Smith, 'Experiencing the violence'. Paper presented at the Centre for Adult Education Seminar on Violence, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1988.
- 3 *Weekly Mail* 26 August 1988.
- 4 *Natal Witness* 10 October 1988.
- 5 This negative correlation also occurs in the nineties between national fatality figures (largely Transvaal supplied) and those for the Midlands (see note 31).
- 6 J.J.W. Aitchison, 'Natal's wastelands: the unofficial war goes on' *Indicator South Africa* 7(1) 1989: 58–61, 72.
- 7 Legal Resources Centre, *Obstacles to Peace: The Role of the KwaZulu Police in the Natal Conflict* (Durban, LRC, 1992): 5.
- 8 *Sunday Tribune* 18 October 1987.
- 9 *Natal Witness* 22 October 1987.
- 10 *Natal Witness* 9 April 1988.
- 11 All detention statistics for this period were obtained from the Pietermaritzburg DESCOM and its successor DACOM. These are summarised in *Detention Under Three Emergencies: A Report on the Natal Midlands, 1986–1989* (Pietermaritzburg: Detainees Aid Committee, 1989).
- 12 Based on figures researched by Christopher Merrett and published in *Detention Under Three Emergencies*. The graph showing new detentions excludes people already held in prison who were administratively detained at the beginning of each new State of Emergency.
- 13 The General Law Amendment Act of 1963 legalised ninety-day renewable interrogative detention and established the Sobukwe clause.
- 14 *Natal Witness* 24 August 1988; *Echo* 25 August 1988.
- 15 *Natal Witness* 12 February 1988.
- 16 *Echo* 7 January 1988.
- 17 *Natal Witness* 28 June 1988; *Echo* 30 June 1988.
- 18 This incident was regularly presented by Inkatha and Inkatha Institute spokesmen as evidence of police/UDF collusion although their attention was drawn to the court findings by UDF lawyer Yunus Mahommed, the police press liaison officer in Pietermaritzburg,

Pieter Kitching, and this author. It was also an event that showed up the inadequacies of the official police unrest report. Though the incident was reported it claimed that the deaths were the result of inter-group or factional conflict.

- 19 *Natal Witness* 10 March 1988.
- 20 Muntu Gasa's sorry story came to an end on 21 July 1991 when, after rumours spread that he had crossed over to the side of the ANC, he was assassinated.
- 21 *Natal Witness* 27 February 1988.
- 22 Congress of South African Trade Unions, *COSATU Report on Imbali Stage One* (1989).
- 23 *Natal Witness* 17 August 1988; *Sunday Tribune* 30 April 1989.
- 24 M. Bennett and D. Quin, *An Overview of Political Conflict in South Africa: Data Trends 1984–1988* (Durban: Indicator Project, 1988).
- 25 The two other main sources are the *South African Conflict Monitor* (Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, University of Natal, Durban) and the annual *Race Relations Survey* (South African Institute of Race Relations). The Indicator Project had its own estimates of the Midlands death toll. The CAE's are generally larger than the Indicator Project's. Assuming the CAE's figures to be more accurate, the national figures are underestimates by the difference.
- 26 M. Orkin, 'Politics, social change, and black attitudes to sanctions' in M. Orkin, *Sanctions Against Apartheid* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1989). Also see J.J.W. Aitchison, *The Opinion Polls: How Do the Parties Fare?* (Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Adult Education: University of Natal, 2nd ed., 1991).
- 27 The *Weekly Mail* of 19 July 1990 published the full text of the memo from Major Louis Botha of the Durban security police, to the head of the security police in Pretoria, concerning the need to fund a major Inkatha rally in March 1990. He said of the 5 November 1987 rally that it had been 'a gigantic success [’n reuse sukses]’.
- 28 *Sunday Tribune* 21 July 1991.
- 29 D. Everatt, *Who is Murdering the Peace?: CASE Research Statistics* (Johannesburg: CASE, 1991).
- 30 D. Everatt and S. Sadek, *The Reef Violence: Tribal War or Total Strategy?* (Johannesburg: CASE, 1992).
- 31 The Rank Spearman correlation test (listwise) was applied to the nineties figures with a negative correlation between the national (largely Transvaal) and Midlands monthly figures at a significance level of 0.46. This is not large enough to justify more than speculation on a possible movement of fighters or leaders of fighters from one province to another.
- 32 J.J.W. Aitchison (ed.), *The Seven Days War: 25–31 March 1990: The Victims' Narrative* (Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal, 2nd rev. ed., 1991).
- 33 D. Everatt, M. Orkin and S. Pityana, *CASE Perspectives on Transition Politics in South Africa: Party Power and Prospects* (Johannesburg: CASE, 1991).

THE PURPOSE OF THIS chapter is to examine how participants in the conflict, or its direct observers, interpreted it from the beginning of 1987 until 2 February 1990. Material from the Centre for Adult Education (CAE) database was gathered about how people more or less directly affected by the conflict understood it, how they interpreted it, who they saw it involving, and how they saw it originating. All the records in the database that contained some kind of comment on the violence were examined. However, in selecting items for inclusion in this chapter, comments on the violence by those at some remove have been deliberately omitted. This means that the following participants' views are examined:

- the Inkatha Cultural Liberation Movement, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA);
- the United Democratic Front (UDF);
- the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU);
- the African National Congress (ANC);
- the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESAs);
- the South African Police (SAP) and the KwaZulu Police (KZP);
- the National Party (NP); and
- business community spokesmen.

There were also ordinary people. Comment by the press, monitoring groups and academics has generally been avoided.

In assessing the usefulness of the data, the obvious question arises: were some commentators not lying or in some way trying to mislead, particularly if they were involved in defending their particular organisation against accusations of participation in violence? Many of the comments made were deceitful. However, successful lies are generally garnished with considerable quantities of truth. Lies or not, the commentators wanted their hearers to believe that they believed what they were saying. And what they say to achieve this tells us a lot about their general views of the Natal Midlands violence.

Inkatha

Inkatha and its leaders were prolific, indeed verbose, commentators on themselves. The discourse is consistent, if at times slightly contradictory; though far less contradictory than might be expected. Essentially, Mangosuthu Buthelezi and Inkatha used rhetoric about the war almost indistinguishable from that of the South African security services during the total onslaught period of the late seventies and early eighties.

The cause of the violence is a political organisation. The organisation singled out (there is only one conspiracy, only one evil empire) is the ANC. The other political organisations are all surrogates, agents or pawns of the ANC (external mission). For the more local and concrete manifestations of violence the UDF and COSATU are blamed. At an even more local level, comrades (*amaqabane*) are responsible for violence, but are consistently seen as representing a particular ideological or political position, not in any sense an ethnic one.

The flip side of this is that, possibly contrary to expectations, Inkatha is itself identified as a political organisation not yet totally merged into a national/cultural/ethnic identity, though there are hints it could head that way. In this sense, in the period 1987 to the beginning of 1990, Inkatha was still publicly spoken of as a modern political organisation.

One reflection of total onslaught thinking lay in Inkatha's perception that the conflict between it and the ANC and its surrogates was unfair because the ANC was somehow illegitimate: the ANC and its agents had no right to challenge Inkatha.¹ This led to Indians or whites who seemed to side with the ANC/SACP/UDF/COSATU/CONTRALESa alliance being seen as traitors to their own side. The language used here is not so much ethnic as quite overt racial apartheid, own affairs stuff.² It is interesting that the only evidence of self-criticism within the Inkatha camp related to an Inkatha official objecting to an essentially apartheid-like verbal attack on a white peacemaking group, the Imbali Support Group (ISG), staying in township homes. The language was also totally intemperate. The question of applying 'Indian' as a label to anti-Inkatha, Zulu-speaking people is worthy of further exploration as it showed a willingness to use an ethnic sounding label for political reasons.³ It may also shed light on how the term Xhosa began to be used in the conflict in the Transvaal in the latter part of 1990. Certainly in the Midlands the use of a Xhosa label was not frequent, though it is possible that this was not so in other regions.

Like the white apartheid state, Inkatha tended to deny all accusations about its own role in violence and was extremely hostile to a critical press. Another contradictory and more minor interpretation articulated by Inkatha was that the violence was socio-economic in origin. It came across rather weakly, often as a way of dodging accusations of Inkatha's involvement in violence, and probably owed much to the efforts of Inkatha Institute staff.

The one area where the Zulu idea loomed large was with the king and the chiefs. The extraordinary sensitivity to alleged slurs on the king and to supposed threats to the chiefs from CONTRALESA revealed an exposed nerve. It is likely that the increasingly ethnic language of Inkatha in the nineties had in fact a lot to do with the growing influence of the chiefs within its war polity in Natal and the sloughing off of more modern political elements such as Oscar Dhlomo.

Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi

Because of the overwhelming importance of Buthelezi in the Inkatha National Cultural Liberation Movement, in the Inkatha Freedom Party formed in 1990 and in the KwaZulu government, his public utterances are a useful starting point. How did he see the unrest violence in the Midlands?

Buthelezi's statements oscillated between portraying the violence as ANC conspiracy and mindless anti-social behaviour induced by apartheid and social deprivation. The two sometimes blurred into one, as for example when he described the violence as barbarism, 'orgies of hate and revenge' and 'black-on-black violence' that had its origins in the 'anger caused by apartheid which is now being used by political idiots for their own ends'.⁴

The ANC conspirators and other political idiots included the UDF, the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) and 'certain other individuals and organisations ... encouraging violence between black people in the townships'. The violence in Natal had been 'deliberately fomented' by ANC broadcasts; the ANC mission-in-exile was waging an armed struggle and the UDF and COSATU were working together to make the country ungovernable: 'The violence that has been perpetrated in Pietermaritzburg against Inkatha is violence directed at the free enterprise system as such and at the politics of negotiation.'⁵ The violence in Pietermaritzburg's townships epitomised the real intentions of the ANC. His people were 'dying hideous deaths' because they wanted to make Pietermaritzburg's townships a no-go area for Inkatha. South Africa's black majority was against what both the NP and the external mission of the

ANC were doing. The chances of peaceful change in South Africa were being impeded not only by 'the Treurnichts and the Heunises of this world' but also by 'our own black brothers who belong to organisations that are opposed to us in their tactics and strategies'.⁶

Locally, the conflict is clearly associated with the UDF and COSATU. They 'are not worthy of the status of organisations to whom we need to be reconciled. It is their choice that death keeps us apart and death is keeping us apart.' The two organisations were described as 'hideously violent', reflecting 'a tendency which is alive and well among core ANC National Executive members and activists. It is alive and well in factions of the UDF and COSATU. They want more killing. They want the annihilation of Inkatha.'⁷ 'I say bluntly that the COSATU-instigated SARMCOL strike was the forerunner to the hideous Pietermaritzburg violence.'⁸

In an answering affidavit to an interdict application against Inkatha after a rally on 31 January 1988, Buthelezi said 'The cause of the violence does not rest at the door of Inkatha but ... lies fairly and squarely with the UDF and to a certain extent with [COSATU] since many of its leading members are also members of the UDF.' He accused the UDF and COSATU of using the court application, and a string of previous interdicts against Inkatha warlords, for propaganda. He placed the blame for the violence squarely on the shoulders of the ANC, UDF and COSATU. In strongly worded statements that echo the State's case in the Delmas treason trial, Buthelezi accused the UDF of being a 'surrogate of the ANC' and being formed 'with the express instruction to exclude [Inkatha] from affiliation'.

The main subjective cause of the violence is essentially to be found in the attitude of the external mission of the ANC to [Inkatha] and to myself as chief minister of KwaZulu government and president of [Inkatha]. The UDF is in substance an internal surrogate organisation of the ANC external mission and has adopted a similar attitude to [Inkatha] and to myself.

Buthelezi used the acronym ANC(EM) to distinguish the ANC of his youth, of which he claimed to be a loyal supporter from the ANC of today, which he referred to as the external mission. He said the UDF adopted an attitude similar to the ANC(EM) against Inkatha and him and that COSATU had been 'brought into the conflict area created by the ANC(EM)' as many leading officials of COSATU were either members or supporters of the UDF. He said that since the ANC(EM) broke off relations with him in 1980, they and their surrogates had used every opportunity by violent means to attempt

to discredit Inkatha and him: 'There is ample evidence of ANC activity in the Pietermaritzburg area and as KwaZulu's Minister of Police I have access to information that leaves no doubt in my mind that the ANC(EM) has been involved in fomenting violence.'

After outlining his association with the ANC, Buthelezi told how the break between Inkatha and the ANC came about after a joint meeting between the organisation's external mission and Inkatha in London in 1979. 'During the conference suggestions were made to Inkatha which would have resulted in Inkatha becoming a surrogate organisation of the ANC.' He refused to accept this and his refusal 'led in 1980 to the ANC breaking all relations with Inkatha and me'. Since that time, Buthelezi said, Oliver Tambo, president of the ANC, 'began criticising me publicly. Mr Tambo did not have the courage of his convictions and he could not control his own organisation, and had perforce to side with those who saw Inkatha as a threat and did not want future evidence to prove that black democratic opposition could be a powerful force for bringing about change.' He alleged that the UDF was a surrogate organisation of the ANC which used the former to create a situation of ungovernability in South Africa.⁹

In April 1988 Buthelezi revealed to members of a combined delegation of members of West Germany's Christian Democratic and Christian Social Unions that the enormous growth of Inkatha to a membership of one and a half million was what made it necessary for the ANC, UDF and COSATU to destroy the movement in the greater Pietermaritzburg area.¹⁰ 'Inkatha's membership began growing in the area as people counted the cost of the failed violence of the preceding years.'¹¹ The fact that it also had the biggest youth wing made nonsense of glib analyses claiming that its influence among the new generation had waned.¹²

In April 1989 Buthelezi wanted the same high-level consultation with the ANC as the UDF and COSATU so that 'We can then know if the leadership of the ANC is prepared to withdraw its call on the youth to go on the rampage and to make the country ungovernable and the call to kill town councillors and other so-called collaborators'.¹³

More hopefully, in the same month he called on the ANC, the UDF, COSATU and the churches to stand 'shoulder to shoulder' with Inkatha to bring about peace.¹⁴ In June, when hopes of a London meeting with the ANC were high, Buthelezi emphasised that without the involvement of the ANC any peace initiative would probably be futile. He had also recently argued that the ANC, the UDF and COSATU could sign a statement of intent as separate

organisations with Inkatha, but 'Inkatha is not likely to be involved in such initiatives unless there is proof the leadership of the ANC Mission in Exile support it.' The Inkatha movement then adopted a resolution calling on the 'presidents and national leaders of the UDF, COSATU, and the ANC Mission in Exile to meet our president and leaders of Inkatha at a mutually acceptable venue so that the political organisations directly involved in the violence can establish a joint initiative in the pursuit of peace in the region.'¹⁵

By July 1989 the ardour for peace was beginning to cool: 'If there is not an end to the vitriol and mud-slinging between the ANC/UDF/COSATU alliance on the one hand, and Inkatha on the other, I doubt if we are going to succeed in creating peace ... I believe that a moratorium on mud-slinging must be seen as a precursor to peaceful co-existence between the various organisations.'¹⁶ However, Buthelezi said on 23 July 1989 that there was substantial agreement between Inkatha, the UDF and COSATU that the killing must stop and that efforts must be made to help people fight the violence: 'Inkatha was not formed to fight any other black organisation. It was formed to fight apartheid.' He said it was the UDF and COSATU which had condemned Inkatha at their launching rallies. 'We welcome their rethink and we are quite prepared to talk to them even if they have in the past attempted to make us their enemies.'¹⁷ He demanded that the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) incorporate him, but also attacked it as a notion created by the UDF and COSATU specifically to exclude him and his organisation from the broad anti-apartheid front.¹⁸

In a speech at the *imbizo* or convention called by the Zulu king in Durban on 19 November 1989, Buthelezi echoed the king's call for talks, saying it was 'really important' that Walter Sisulu and other ANC leaders should meet him and the king. Talks would be about 'peace between black and black, and unity in putting South Africa first'. However, while claiming that the king was always above party politics, he then added, 'You know that the UDF and COSATU have come into your midst to turn you against Inkatha.' One of the reasons for calling the convention was to urge an end to a campaign of vilification: 'The killing-talk, the hurling of insults, the singing of vile songs about the leader of the Zulu nation, all make up a recipe for killing.'¹⁹

Initially, Buthelezi denied that Inkatha played any role in the violence. 'Bullshit' tended to be the term he used.²⁰ These denials were sometimes qualified by his claim not to be in control of all the millions of Inkatha members. He responded similarly to allegations in late 1987 about forced recruitment by Inkatha.²¹ Eventually grudging and qualified recognition was given and he acknowledged 'that in some instances certain individuals and groups who

may claim allegiance to Inkatha, the UDF and COSATU do not appear to be blameless and Mr Gumede and I have publicly stated that, regrettably, the situation is such that we simply cannot anticipate or control their actions. A vicious criminal element is also responsible for terror experienced by residents', but he maintained that Inkatha was the victim of attacks.²² In May 1989 he claimed that the UDF and COSATU refused to attend peace talks in Ulundi so that they could 'paint Inkatha as a continuing villain of the peace [sic]'. Buthelezi said anyone who knew anything about black politics would see the action of COSATU and the UDF as a slap in the face for Inkatha.²³

Buthelezi often exhibited a dislike for people who reported on or monitored the violence in what he regarded as the wrong way. He accused certain newspapers of presenting the situation in Pietermaritzburg as a violent clash between the UDF and Inkatha aimed at showing each other who was boss; and of maligning him and Inkatha. 'The facts are entirely different, and no amount of mediating by people who jet in and jet out will put an end to violence there.'²⁴ He was 'staggered by the shallowness in the media coverage of the Pietermaritzburg violence. It is sensation-mongering and amounts to the deliberate humiliation of the defenders of that which the whole of South Africa needs defended.' He said that Inkatha members died for their right to employ 'non-violent tactics and strategies against apartheid', for their commitment to the free enterprise system and for their right to elect their own leaders democratically. 'Yet is it we [Inkatha] who are clobbered by hideous press coverage.'²⁵ The Pietermaritzburg violence had led to such media bias against Inkatha that the UDF wanted the strife to continue: 'I think there is little doubt that thus far we are losing the media battle. The media is on the side of those who kill Inkatha's members.' It gave credibility to false claims that the disturbances were caused by Inkatha's use of violence and intimidation in recruitment campaigns.²⁶

Addressing a Shaka's Day rally at Taylor's Halt on 25 September 1988, Buthelezi, wearing a bullet proof vest, referred to MP Jan van Eck who was reported to have become involved with a petition asking that the meeting be moved to another venue because of the violence which might erupt. Buthelezi said that people who warned of violence if Shaka Day celebrations were held in greater Pietermaritzburg were guilty of trying to perpetuate unrest.

Certain white elements, in cahoots with some of our people have again been stirring the pot of anarchy. The suggestion was made in the so-called petition that our gathering here in this way will cause further violence. Clearly such people are the initiators of the hideous

violence that has cost the lives of so many innocent people. The so-called petition is no less than an effort to incite people to acts of violence.

He called for black unity and the expulsion of dissenters and blamed white progressives for encouraging black-on-black violence:

Clearly such people were the initiators of the hideous violence which has claimed so many black lives ... I am no racist, but I want to say that it leaves me flummoxed that it should be other people from other race groups who, in the name of peace, are always seen in the forefront of efforts to wreck peace and to incite our people to more and more self-lacerating violence ... It boggles my mind that after the signing of the so-called accord between us [Inkatha] and COSATU that there should be people in the other camp who still speak this kind of language.

After this tongue lashing, and an attack on those who 'fanned the flames of violence [through] trading insults and vilification campaigns', Buthelezi spoke strongly in favour of a peace settlement and endorsed the agreement signed between Inkatha and COSATU at the beginning of September, adding that such agreements needed to be forthcoming from the UDF and ANC.²⁷

On 23 May 1989 he claimed that the *Sunday Tribune* and the *Natal Witness* 'select news items and shape them in such a way that it is COSATU and the UDF who benefit most'. Their editorials could only worsen the situation:

I say to white editorial writers: get off the backs of those who really are working for peace; leave Inkatha and leave COSATU and the UDF to find the common ground that I know we can and should now find ... I ask anybody who is not directly involved to back off. It would be tragic, now that the top leadership of Inkatha, the UDF and COSATU see the need to get together, for unnecessary midwives to interfere with what could be a healthy natural birth and for those in control of the media to make the delicately hung issues impossible to handle.²⁸

The first time Buthelezi made reference to anything Zulu in connection with the Midlands violence was in relation to the lack of enthusiasm displayed by the Edendale community towards the hosting of the wedding of King Goodwill Zwelithini to a local woman. Apart from the fear of violence, the local Edendale Crisis Committee (ECC) had said the king took part in party political squabbles. The *City Press* newspaper claimed that the king had attacked critics of Inkatha and Buthelezi. In a press statement, Chief Buthelezi said that press reports were misleading the people, provocative and un-Zulu.

His Majesty has quite rightly upheld Zulu dignity by condemning those who are fanning the flames of internecine black-on-black confrontation. His Majesty will not be dragged into party politics and every decent-minded Zulu will see the *City Press* article for what it is – an

attempt to get His Majesty involved in party political disputes, and to use his name for party political propaganda purposes.

The ECC claim that 'His Majesty is a party political figure demeans the Zulu throne, the Royal House and is lamentably un-Zulu ... It is the kind of un-Zulu behaviour His Majesty rejects on behalf of the Zulu people. I call on every Zulu in the Pietermaritzburg area to treat these reports with the disdain they deserve.'²⁹

Buthelezi claimed that another victim of unfair attacks was the traditional leadership of KwaZulu. He said that Chief Maphumulo could be part of attempts by CONTRALESA to infiltrate traditional leadership in Natal and he would not be surprised if Maphumulo were involved in attempts to 'prostitute the offices of chiefs'. Buthelezi said the party politicisation of chiefs was a threat to all members of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly and CONTRALESA was out to 'clobber' him.³⁰

Buthelezi accused senior UDF and COSATU members of allowing youths to sing 'filthy songs' about him. He said he realised violence was sometimes perpetrated under the banner of the UDF by people who did not have any idea of what the UDF represented: 'If the UDF and COSATU cannot control their supporters, then they must at least condemn it. They must condemn the songs that lead to the killing.'³¹

Addressing a meeting of KwaZulu chiefs on 14 September 1989 at Ulundi, Buthelezi accused CONTRALESA of attempting to thrust an 'ANC spear into the heart of Zulu unity and against my leadership'. He said that they had come to 'do that which needs to be done – thrust Contralesa to the mercy of the vagrant forces which only leave carrion in their wake. We have come to close the ranks and to rejoice in our unity and to tell Inkosi Maphumulo to go to hell. We must do what needs to be done.' He said there were those in the ANC leadership who wanted him butchered, but could not succeed. Buthelezi said

We have met today to end all hopes of so-called Contralesa's becoming anything of importance in our political life. We have not met today because there is an impending terrible threat, but we have a duty to flush out anything that in any way undermines the unity and solidarity of our people. We append to this charge that Contralesa is an affiliate organisation to the UDF which is in turn part of the ANC/UDF/COSATU alliance sworn to political vengeance against the Chief Minister and therefore against His Majesty and the people of KwaZulu. Stand up, I say, as the Zulus who you are and tell Inkosi Maphumulo that he is making himself an outcast.

The chiefs dutifully did so. They also resolved 'to be vigilant and act with power against Contralesa because His Majesty the King and the Prince of

KwaPhindangene, the Chief Minister of KwaZulu, are inseparably linked in the historic working out of the destiny of the people of KwaZulu, and Contralesa has set itself the task of destroying both.³²

Speaking at an Inkatha Women's Brigade conference Buthelezi delivered a tirade against his political rivals, including the MDM, the ANC and Transkei's military leader, Major-General Bantu Holomisa. The Women's Brigade applauded Inkatha's declaration of a moratorium on Natal peace talks. The final resolution stated that

certain members of the Indian community are engaged in clandestine activities of abducting our black children from townships and involving them in violent and even murderous activities. We therefore resolve to call upon all Indian community leaders to advise their communities to desist from these atrocious activities by people bent on bringing about internecine blood letting strife among blacks.³³

Talking about the moratorium on peace talks, Buthelezi released a lengthy statement in which he stated that he 'knew that the ANC/UDF/COSATU were going to mount a peace initiative to trap me politically.' He said that at an ANC meeting held in February 1989 in Lusaka, a peace initiative was discussed as 'a means of consolidating the UDF/COSATU as organisations'. He said the peace talks were originally contrived as a political trap for Inkatha. He had never claimed that no member of Inkatha had ever been an aggressor: 'All I say is that no decision Inkatha has made as Inkatha that I know of, has ever been a decision to adopt violence.'³⁴

Addressing a press conference with Adriaan Vlok, Buthelezi said the causes of the violence were far more complex and deep-rooted than the ideological feud between the ANC/UDF/COSATU alliance and Inkatha which was usually blamed. 'There is an element of the political feud in the violence, but in the areas where the latest eruption of violence has taken place, socio-economic reasons are clearly responsible. Rapid urbanisation, a high incidence of unemployment and poverty have all contributed. There have been personal conflicts and squabbles over territory.'³⁵

Inkatha leadership

The views of Inkatha on the Midlands conflict were reflected in the statements of prominent Inkatha leaders in the region: particularly those by KwaZulu MP Velaphi Bethuel Ndlovu; KwaZulu Assistant Urban Representative and Inkatha central committee member, Vitus Vusumuzi Mvelase; and KwaZulu MP, induna of KwaMncane and reputed warlord, Thandabantu David Ntombela.

Mvelase spoke of attacks on Inkatha by 'some elements'.³⁶ A pamphlet entitled 'Violence and unrest in the black schools' issued by the regional council for Inkatha Midlands circa September 1987, clearly saw the conflict as a UDF-Inkatha one and blamed the UDF for initiating it. The 'UDF wants to proceed with violence' and the

members of Inkatha have been the target of a horrifyingly intend[ed] campaign. The aim [is] to try and break the organisation [Inkatha] ... This anti-Inkatha campaign in the townships is being verbally inflamed and assisted by the UDF and its affiliates like EDEYO, IYO, AYO, church groups and civic associations to vilify and denigrate Inkatha leader Dr M.G. Buthelezi and his movement at every opportunity. Inkatha is accused for being moderate and non-violent ... Inkatha is strongly opposing disinvestment and sanctions because we feel that blacks will suffer most when disinvestment and sanctions are imposed in South Africa.

Ndlovu originally claimed that the violence was 'a terrible misunderstanding.' He denied that Inkatha was engaged in any campaign to kill anybody or to drive young people out of the townships. 'If people are running out of the townships, they are not doing the right thing. If Inkatha or UDF people are running, they should rather go to their leaders and tell them to do something about the violence.'³⁷ In an open letter to the people of the townships, Mvelase appealed to all to stop the violence and work to combine their forces, while continuing to deny Inkatha's role in the violence and claiming that 'radical groups have wrongfully labelled the movement responsible for acts of violence and unrest in the schools ... No freedom will be achieved if Inkatha is not participating in any struggle, more especially in Natal and Johannesburg ... If Inkatha is responsible for acts of violence, who is killing and destroying Inkatha members' property: are they killing themselves?'³⁸ KwaZulu's Secretary for Education, D. Zimu, said of the disruption of schools in the Pietermaritzburg area that Inkatha does not disrupt its own schools.³⁹ Oscar Dhlomo said that Inkatha members could not be expected not to defend themselves against attacks by UDF elements.⁴⁰

It was reported that Inkatha's overseas representative, Ben Skosana, criticised the international media for suggesting that Inkatha was to blame for the violence in the Pietermaritzburg area

Some of the overseas press agents in South Africa continue to portray Inkatha as the conservative Zulu movement which is after the blood of the UDF members for being radical. This unbalanced reporting to overseas readers continues despite the fact that Mr Archie Gumede, the UDF president in Natal, made the press statement on October 1 where he cautioned about the real source of the escalating violence in these townships.

Skosana quoted Gumede as having said that 'We are aware that certain undisciplined individuals and groups who call themselves UDF are taking advantage of the support which the movement is enjoying in our communities to further their own ends by committing acts of violence against innocent people.'⁴¹

Inkatha Youth Brigade (IYB) leader Musa Zondi said that the UDF was the aggressor in the conflict. Velaphi Ndlovu added 'As far as Inkatha (which is being attacked) is concerned, there is no difference between self-defence and retaliation. It is all one thing.'⁴² Mvelase noted that 'Some people are capitalising on the unemployment situation in Pietermaritzburg. They are offering money to anyone who will kill their enemies, and we have lost a lot of people this way.' He said that people in the area 'from all sides' were living in fear of these groups.⁴³ At a poorly attended open-air Inkatha rally at Mpumuzu on 16 December IYB members chanted 'Comrades, here are the vigilantes, you are in danger.' At the rally Ndlovu said that Inkatha could not be intimidated out of existence because it was a black organisation led by blacks for blacks: 'We are not a pushover and we will die if necessary for our democratic rights.' He also expressed grave reservations over the presence of non-Africans in the UDF peace talk delegation and criticised the presence of Indians and whites in the UDF leadership. He criticised the presence of 'non-African' UDF leaders A.S. Chetty, Midlands chairman, and Martin Wittenberg, joint secretary for the region, on the UDF/COSATU negotiating team. He questioned their presence at a time when 'African' members of the UDF were being killed in the conflict and not white, Indian and coloured members; and accused non-African leaders of 'using our children to burn down their schools'. No Indians or Europeans had died in the Pietermaritzburg violence, he said, and it was 'fishy' that leaders of the organisation did not belong to the same group as those who were dying:

The UDF here is led by A.S. Chetty, an Indian, but no Indians have died in the violence. And Martin Wittenberg – why his involvement? He is white and none of his group are involved in the violence and are dying. This is not racism, but if leaders of an organisation are of a different race and none of their race group is being killed while their members are then there is something not right about it – there is no mutual interest and this makes peace difficult.⁴⁴

Ndlovu said there could be no peace in Pietermaritzburg because too many Inkatha people had been killed.⁴⁵ He said the people of Pietermaritzburg had ignored the call of Inkatha president Mangosuthu Buthelezi to down weapons:

They have ignored the call of our President and the call of everyone else, what can we do now? The people of the other camp do not want to listen to Dr Buthelezi. We will have to wait and see. They have no leaders who are calling for peace, their leaders are far away; this war will only end in Lusaka because that is where it originated. The ANC wants to spread communism in our country.²⁴⁶

At a large Inkatha rally billed as a prayer meeting and held at Mpumzu (KwaMkhulu) on 31 January 1988, attended by fifteen thousand people many heavily armed and bussed in from elsewhere, a large group of Inkatha members carrying spears, sticks and guns and allegedly backed by the SAP, marched into Edendale and then to Ashdown. The content of the speeches at the rally were documented in an interdict brought by nineteen residents of Ashdown and Sweetwaters and COSATU. In an affidavit, Andreas Mpangase described how he attended a meeting and heard speeches from several Inkatha leaders. He alleged that Philip Zondi said the only way to end the violence in the area was 'to drive the UDF and COSATU from KwaZulu to Xhosa areas'. The UDF and COSATU were 'Indian' organisations and all who belonged to them should go and live with the 'Indians'. Any 'Indian' who did not move or repent and apologise, would be killed. He advised parents whose children had joined the 'other camp' to kill their children.' Mpangase alleged that KwaZulu MP Velaphi Ndlovu started his speech by

instructing us to remain loyal to the chiefs and to be certain that if we live in a chief's area to be members of Inkatha. He stated that our children must also be members of Inkatha and if they were not they must be brought to the chief's house where a formal apology was expected. Failing that, we would have to leave the area. He threatened that refusal to join and refusal to leave would be reason for being killed. An unnamed chief from Ladysmith allegedly said in his address to the meeting that 'COSATU is controlled by Slovo who is receiving instructions from Russia.' He became emotional and started chanting. He rhythmically punctuated his chant with the Zulu word *abajojwe* [stab them] while simultaneously stabbing into the air with his spear. 'What should we do about them? Abajojwe! Let's stop them! Abajojwe! Finish them off! Abajojwe! ... Kill them!' At each stabbing of the spear, the women would ululate and the men would stab into the air with their spears or sticks. As the pace increased the crowd became more frenzied.

At this point, Mpangase claims, a woman screamed that houses were burning at ePhayephini. Some people rushed off, but others remained at the rally. Other speakers then allegedly pursued the theme that 'Indians' should no longer live in the area. The last address was delivered by David Ntombela:

He said anyone who did not want to belong to Inkatha should be killed. He said he was prepared to go anywhere and kill all those who were not Inkatha. He said he would go

to each of the chief's areas and kill the *amaqabane* [comrades]. He asked permission of the chiefs to stop the meeting so that he could lead the people out and drive the UDF and COSATU from the area.

In replying affidavits Inkatha respondents claimed that the crowd which left the meeting and attacked residents in nearby Ashdown acted in self-defence against radicals who had burnt their homes. Mvelase claimed also that the police, correctly in his view, did not stop retaliation in self-defence and that Inkatha would not punish members who acted in this way. Even if members should go on the rampage, Inkatha did not have the machinery to take effective steps against them or the organisational structure to police compliance with Inkatha leadership. He said that

if the Inkatha members of a certain branch were to act in self-defence against an attack by radicals ... no punishment would be called for. Even if the members of a certain branch of Inkatha had actually gone on the rampage, there is very little the Disciplinary Committee can do in terms of the Constitution ... To the higher echelons of authority in the Inkatha structure such as the respondents in this matter, it is totally impossible to take any effective steps whatsoever.

Mvelase said the meeting on 31 January had been called to end the violence in the area and speakers had appealed to children to follow the 'old customs of the Zulu nation.' He denied that people had attended the meeting out of fear, or that speakers incited the crowd against the UDF or COSATU. He also denied that he had derided the UDF or COSATU as 'Indian' organisations or suggested parents should kill their children if they joined the anti-Inkatha camp. He said he had blamed violence in the area on bus drivers who were members of the COSATU-affiliated Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU). The drivers, he said, transported COSATU and UDF members at night to attack moderate Zulus. He admitted telling the audience that

COSATU/UDF were the tools of the ANC and the Communist Party and that they should not listen to them. I added that in spite of having resigned [from the ANC military leadership], Joe Slovo was behind all the violence in South Africa. I finally besought them not to pay any attention to COSATU and the UDF but to respect and support their chiefs, the KwaZulu government, and also Inkatha.

Mvelase, a former member of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL), cited two periods in detention and police interrogation as being instrumental in his conclusion that the ANC was 'infiltrated by the communists'. He said the UDF's determination to abolish the tribal system 'has fostered decadent, detribalised gangs of youths.' He added that

the present conflict has arisen because the conservative and moderate Zulus have started defending themselves against these indiscriminate attacks by members of those organisations. In certain areas the moderates have banded together to defend themselves and groups of vigilantes have inevitably been formed. In certain instances, groups are formed by Inkatha supporters exclusively, and sometimes by Inkatha supporters and other moderates. Often groups form on an ad hoc basis to defend themselves against impending attacks. Sometimes local Inkatha leaders manage to exert control over their followers and on other occasions not. The scene of violence is interspersed with faction fights and familial revenge killings. It is therefore a gross misconception to class any opponent of the radicals as a member of the Inkatha organisation merely because Inkatha opposes revolution.

David Ntombela, Inkatha branch chairman and member of the Mpumuza Tribal Authority, also denied allegations that he had called for violence. He said that he had been the target of 'an orchestrated campaign of terror and violence' because 'I am a moderate and have on most occasions opposed actions which the radical elements have propagated.' His house had been razed in a 1979 petrol bomb attack and his sister had been attacked by 'a well-known UDF supporter'.⁴⁷

A senior Inkatha member, Ben Jele, was reported as having called on the Minister of Law and Order to investigate the PFP after a spokesman asked for an investigation into an interdicted Inkatha member. Jele said 'Inkatha is very angry with the PFP and Roger Burrows for their constant interference in black politics. The PFP only intervenes when Inkatha is involved. It must leave us alone.'⁴⁸

In May 1988, Musa Zondi, the chairman of the IYB, commented that

Our white compatriots in Jeugkrag found it difficult to understand how we were able to condemn the government for their clampdown on 17 organisations, including the UDF and COSATU, against the background of their role in the Pietermaritzburg violence. We pointed out that whatever the UDF, COSATU and ANC did in Pietermaritzburg against us does not make them less of our brothers.

He also claimed that repeated attempts to meet the ANC mission-in-exile and the UDF and its associates had been rejected. 'It is the UDF and its allies who reject Inkatha and spurn its hand of friendship.'⁴⁹ Zondi also said that

The African National Congress does not want peace in the area – that is the problem ... I do not see the war ending soon ... When in 1979 Inkatha met the ANC at a consultative conference in London and failed to agree to differ, we knew then that a Pietermaritzburg situation was to follow. From the arrogance displayed by the ANC at that meeting the only logical conclusion was Pietermaritzburg.

Asked to comment on the perspectives of the two academics, Yunus Carrim and John Aitchison, Zondi said 'I am not eager to comment on conclusions of academics, particularly those from the University of Natal because they are party to perpetrating the war in Pietermaritzburg. They just want to find a wrong party. I do not care about these so-called research institutions.' He described the Midlands war thus: 'It is like Iraq and Iran. Well, internationally it is understood that war is undesirable and by going to war they are breaking international law. But both sides have the right to defend themselves.'⁵⁰ Ntwe Mafole, 31-year-old national organiser of the IYB, said 'The situation in Pietermaritzburg is authored in Lusaka. It's in the programme of the UDF. It's in the documents of the MK to assassinate all community council members and frighten people away from Inkatha.'⁵¹ On Sunday 4 September 1988 the IYB of Mpumzu and KwaMncane started their boycott campaign towards tithes and offerings in churches as a result of Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu's support for sanctions. 'We are against sanctions, boycotts, black-on-black violence, looting and stoning of schools as these are built by our suffering parents and chiefs' courts.' The youths did not agree that Tutu talked on behalf of black South African Anglicans because he had never been to Mpumzu and Mncane to hear their viewpoint and get a mandate. Mvelase said that some township residents who belonged to neither COSATU nor Inkatha might be defying the peace settlement reached by the two organisations. Speaking prior to a Shaka's Day rally on 25 September 1988 at Taylor's Halt, Velaphi Ndlovu said the meeting was not being called 'on an Inkatha basis [but] as a nation'. The Zulu king and KwaZulu's Chief Minister would both attend and the organisers had asked everyone preferably to wear 'cultural attire. They should wear traditional dress, Zulu, Sotho, Swazi, Malawian or anything else.'⁵²

Zakhele Nkehli, a member of the Inkatha national committee and a councillor from Mpumalanga, said that the UDF was trying to drive Inkatha out of Mpumalanga. 'They're busy killing us ... When [the UDF] kill a person they form a mob and each person then stabs the victim. This is so that the case will be regarded as public violence rather than murder.' Nkehli said the UDF was trying to undermine his influence in the area: 'If I leave Mpumalanga, all the violence will stop. These people are dying because I'm still alive.'⁵³ He also commented, in response to a call to suspend church services so that people could go to a peace rally, that 'These people who are fighting are not necessarily churchgoers. They are Inkatha and UDF members. Therefore I suggest he consult with the leaders of the fighting factions ... I, as an Inkatha leader, am prepared to bring all Inkatha members, fighting or non-fighting, to

any venue to negotiate.’⁵⁴ In November 1988, Musa Zondi claimed that ‘A third force, the criminals who further their own ends, profits by this violence. These criminals, parading under the banners of political organisations, are often involved in looting and then burning down houses.’⁵⁵ The Inkatha newspaper *Ilanga* said that ‘since the outbreak of violence in Natal, Inkatha has been the victim of vindictive advocacy journalism whereby groups of stick-wielding people shouting slogans like “uSuthu” were immediately baptised by certain journalists as “Inkatha members”, without a shred of substantiating evidence.’⁵⁶

Inkatha vice-chairman in Imbali, S.S. Mtolo, saw the violence as an intra-Zulu conflict:

I request you Zulu to stop fighting. We know who our enemy is. Let’s forget that we ever killed one another. If we don’t want to listen, we will always remain oppressed. And even if we get our freedom, without unity there won’t be peace. Our leaders should negotiate for a better future for us all irrespective of our political affiliation.⁵⁷

The other tendency in Inkatha statements, to depict the violence as having socio-economic origins, is found in the KwaZulu government mouthpiece, *Clarion Call*.⁵⁸ It argued that it would be wrong to apportion blame to specific individuals or organisations for the continuing violence. Neither Inkatha, the UDF, COSATU, nor other organisations could be blamed for the violence, although ‘as far as the external mission of the ANC is concerned, a definite decision has been taken and articulated by them to foment violence in Natal/KwaZulu and elsewhere throughout South Africa’. Quotations from the ANC’s Radio Freedom and its national consultative conference in June 1985 were prominently displayed. It pointed out that ‘overall crucial socio-economic and other accompanying political factors regarding violence are accepted by numerous sociologists and other academics of varying political persuasions who have examined the issue’. Citing an unnamed survey, the publication stated that most of the killings were criminally inspired and that supposed politically motivated killings were nothing more than acts of revenge. Other factors contributing towards violence included unemployment, forced removals, poor wages, the lack of township services, and overcrowding.⁵⁹

But Mvelase told a gathering at Mafunze that ‘all that is happening in Pietermaritzburg is the instruction of the ANC mission in exile, who are working through their internal groups, the UDF affiliates’. He emphasised that Inkatha was not trying to establish itself ‘as supreme. We are not struggling to become dictators. We are not struggling to eclipse all other political groupings.

We struggle for freedom and we struggle for the type of freedom in which people are free to disagree with us and to do what they think is best.’⁶⁰

In a long interview Velaphi Ndlovu said that ‘The violence is actually between children and adults. One thing you must know is that our people were never born killers. They are being used to kill.’ Asked if there were killers on both Inkatha and UDF sides he refused to answer, saying ‘No, no. Now that is a political question. You want me to say there are killers in my organisation.’ He appeared to deny that Inkatha recruitment drives had caused the violence, linking it to township revolts and attacks on councillors across the country, as well as to criminals. He said

The UDF takes instructions from the ANC. Check the Natal Indian Congress as well. The two supply the ANC with leadership. In 1979 our president sent people to talk to the ANC about fighting the Boers peacefully. In 1980 they ... changed their strategy, the ANC saw Inkatha becoming powerful. We have never wanted to fight the ANC. But on Radio Freedom they swear and fight us.

Explaining why they had stopped talking to the UDF, he said ‘The ANC holds the key to black unity. We want the big fish. We believe in talking to the father, not the son. Once we get the ANC talking to us and P.W. Botha on the table we will have won.’ He rejected Inkatha being described as moderates: ‘Never call us that. We hate being labelled “moderate”. That word has been used against us in the past. We are just clear-headed and straight-forward people.’⁶¹

In early 1989 an Inkatha Institute paper blamed factors like poverty, unemployment, overcrowding, the loss of traditional values and the lack of political rights as the cause of township violence. It was poverty, not politics, feeding the violence.⁶² The perception that the current violence in black townships in Natal/KwaZulu was mainly attributable to a struggle for supremacy between Inkatha and the UDF obscured the real roots of the problem, according to Gavin Woods, director of the Inkatha Institute for Southern Africa. He argued that while it was clear that there was animosity between the supporters of the UDF and Inkatha, this ‘has never in itself been sufficient reason to have compelled community members to resort to the most extreme and degrading form of human behaviour, like killing each other ... The brutal methods employed are in themselves an indication of an extreme irrationality, implying psychological conditions rather than a simple clash of political ideologies’. He argued that groups calling themselves Inkatha or *othelweni* on the one hand or UDF, *amaqabane* or comrades on the other, had scant formal or ideological connection with the established Inkatha and UDF movements.⁶³

There are numerous records of Inkatha supporters claiming that they were attacked by the UDF or comrades.⁶⁴ There are also many denials by Inkatha leaders that Inkatha members going to or from rallies or meetings had attacked or would attack local residents or comrades.⁶⁵

In an interview David Ntombela said that 'I stand against schools' boycotts perpetrated by the UDF hooligans who don't want to go to school.' He rejected suggestions that he forced people to join Inkatha. He admitted that there were no Azanian Peoples Organisations (AZAPO) or UDF people in his area, but said this was because they trusted Inkatha. The bloodshed was caused by youths: 'Youths are inspired by a minority to perpetuate violence, but they later find themselves dying alone.'⁶⁶

At the beginning of May 1989 the Inkatha Central Committee called on the leaders of the ANC, UDF and COSATU to meet Buthelezi and Inkatha leaders at a mutually acceptable venue 'so that the political organisations directly involved in the violence ... can establish a joint initiative and joint priorities in pursuit of peace.'⁶⁷

At the *imbizo* (convention) called by King Goodwill Zwelithini in Durban on 19 November 1989 he said that 'the Zulu people' had been 'excluded' from welcome home celebrations for recently released Rivonia trialists. His speech and that by Buthelezi contained some sharp references to the ANC, the UDF and COSATU that drew roars of approval from the large crowd. He put great stress on the unity of the Zulu nation and also on black unity, strongly attacking Chief Maphumulo and claiming that there were 'ever-increasing attacks against us as Zulus in more recent years.' He was defensive of KwaZulu and said that 'Anyone who swears at what we in KwaZulu do to oppose apartheid, swears at history and swears at Black dignity.' He said that 'any organisation, and any political party, which sets black brother against black brother in your midst is a black political party or organisation which must be thrust aside, spurned and trampled on if necessary.' He also launched a slashing attack on Indian radicals, but applauded Fatima Meer for calling for 'reconciliation instead of fanning the flames of black-on-black violence.' He said he hoped the rumours were not true that 'black children are being carted off to receive intensive indoctrination and training in the use of violence by Indian activists' adding that 'when Indian activists use Indian money to subvert the morals of black children and to turn them into young killing demons, there will be a very strong reaction among blacks.' The UDF, COSATU and ANC were all implicitly condemned for not being enthusiastically pro-Zulu, unlike Inkatha:

You know that the UDF and COSATU have come into your midst to turn you against Inkatha. Why? Is it because Inkatha is led by a Zulu? I am not being party political. I will not be drawn into Party political defence of Inkatha. I speak now as King of the Zulus and I say: let no party attack my people. I say to the leadership of the ANC, COSATU and the UDF: leave my people alone and let them do their Zulu thing.

Buthelezi gave a long vote of thanks after the king's speech and said that one of the reasons for calling the convention was to urge an end to a campaign of vilification: 'The killing-talk, the hurling of insults, the singing of vile songs about the leader of the Zulu nation, all make up a recipe for killing.'⁶⁸

On 23 November it was reported that KwaZulu government MP for Vulindlela, David Ntombela, had warned whites and Indians

squatting in Imbali to get out as soon as possible or we will be forced to take the law into our own hands. They must not come here and interfere in our affairs. They must go to Northdale and attend to the rates increases there. They are coming here just to cause trouble and escalate the violence we are trying to sort out with our brothers in the UDF. When I drive through Moscow⁶⁹ the amaQabane greet me ... and that shows we're getting somewhere.

The threats were aimed at the ISG peacemaking group whose members would stay with any household under threat of attack that requested their presence. In practice they were only asked by non-Inkatha householders. The so-called mayor of Imbali, Phikelele Ndlovu, said 'There are people who do not want them here. We are black people and black people must obey black rules. They are whites and must stick to white rules.' Inkatha Central Committee member in Imbali, Ben Jele, criticised these threats. Later his son was killed by Inkatha attackers and he had to leave Imbali.⁷⁰

State and government

Interpreters from the state and the NP government sided with Inkatha in seeing the war as a political conspiracy by the ANC/SACP/UDF/COSATU alliance against a political organisation, Inkatha. Inkatha was not described in ethnic, but political, terms: it was moderate as against radical. However, socio-economic causes were sometimes also trotted out as a weak second choice.

In October 1987 the SAP public relations division in Pretoria attributed the unrest in the Pietermaritzburg region to the conflict between various organisations, criminal elements exploiting the situation and unemployment. It admitted that there were 'certain areas dominated by a specific group ... As with any feud it would be irresponsible ... for any member of one group to enter the area of the other group.'⁷¹ Criminal elements were exploiting the unrest, driving people from their homes, which they then looted and burned.⁷² General

Johan van der Merwe, chief of the Security Police, said that the violence in Pietermaritzburg was the result of a 'desperate attempt' by the UDF to increase its support: 'What is happening there is quite simple. Inkatha has kept the UDF pinned down for years, and now the UDF is trying to break out through violence.'⁷³

Addressing a Riot Unit Christmas party in Pietermaritzburg, Minister of Law and Order Adriaan Vlok said the government would not allow revolutionaries and radicals to destabilise the country and kill innocent people.⁷⁴ At the end of December 1987 the Ministry of Law and Order said clashes between members of the UDF and Inkatha in the Pietermaritzburg area were taking on alarming proportions.⁷⁵ In Parliament Vlok reiterated that the UDF and other radicals were responsible for what was happening in Pietermaritzburg. MP Danie Schutte (NP, Pietermaritzburg North) said that part of the violence in Pietermaritzburg was being caused by intimidators in the UDF and Inkatha who were trying to gain support from people who, to a large extent, were not interested in either organisation. He said there were strong feelings against what many people believed was corruption within the Inkatha controlled KwaZulu Government and resentment over the system of chieftainship which denied land ownership. Unemployment and criminal elements also contributed to the unrest. It would be an oversimplification to state that the trouble was only being caused by the dispute between Inkatha and the UDF.⁷⁶

Brigadier Jac Büchner in a SABC televised interview on 24 January 1988 blamed the UDF and said the massive deployment of security forces in the Pietermaritzburg area was aimed at restoring the control of the traditional chiefs. He also offered a number of his own contributions to black ethnographic studies. Back again in Pietermaritzburg to present a trophy to the neatest police station in South Africa, Vlok said that 'the police intend to face the future with moderates and fight against radical groups. Radicals, who are trying to destroy South Africa, will not be tolerated. We will fight them. We have put our foot in that direction and we will eventually win the Pietermaritzburg area.'⁷⁷ In response to criticism of this statement, which seemed to threaten police impartiality, Brigadier Leon Mellet from the Ministry of Law and Order reiterated that the police would continue to fight radicals and asked 'what has radicalism got to do with politics?'⁷⁸

In his annual report for 1987, the Commissioner of Police, General Hennie de Witt, said 'In Natal the attempts of the UDF to dethrone Inkatha led to

bloody fights between the two groups which claimed several lives.⁷⁹ At a press briefing in March 1989, Büchner said that of unrest cases brought to court from April 1988 to then, 252 were Inkatha supporters and 156 were supporters of the UDF. He remained firmly convinced that only long-term socio-economic upgrading of the area and the declaration by the community that they had had enough would bring the politically motivated violence to an end.⁸⁰

In April 1989 Vlok made his iron fist speech in parliament in which he blamed the ANC/SACP alliance, of which COSATU/UDF were the agents together with some good but naive clergymen inspanned to do the ANC/SACP's devilish work.⁸¹ An NP MP told the BBC the war was a glorified faction fight between the Zulu Inkatha and the Xhosa UDF/COSATU.⁸² Vlok again: the government had no intention of instituting an inquiry 'as the main causes for the ongoing violence have been ascertained through thorough research and investigation'. The violence was caused by 'revolutionary agents of the ANC/SACP alliance, namely the UDF and COSATU' who were engaged in a power struggle with the Inkatha organisation. Other causes were poor socio-economic circumstances caused by unemployment and the population explosion; the internal struggle for leadership within the ranks of Inkatha and the UDF; family and tribal disputes; and criminal elements. The last consisted mainly of former comrades who, during the initial unrest, were responsible for intimidating and committing crimes against the population and who now 'continued to make a living from crime.' Inkatha and Buthelezi were being blamed by the leftist radicals for having started the violence, but 'he [Buthelezi] and Inkatha are prepared to work for peace and maintenance of law and order ... they did not start the violence'.⁸³

In a letter dated 4 October 1989 from Vlok to the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness, he said 'Information indicates that the UDF has declared war on Inkatha arguing that this organisation is an enemy of the people. UDF leaders have publicly attacked Chief Buthelezi and Inkatha. They have encouraged their supporters to attack Inkatha members. In many cases Inkatha has merely responded to the UDF in self-defence.' In December 1989, Deputy Minister of Defence, Wynand Breytenbach, told troops deployed in Durban townships that the violence was caused by the 'onslaught' of ANC revolutionaries.⁸⁴

Radicals

The radical organisations, to use Vlok's favourite appellation during this period, the UDF, COSATU, ANC and CONTRALESA were united in having a straightforward political understanding of the conflict in which they saw themselves as victims of attacks by Inkatha, aided and abetted by the police and other security services whose actions fitted in with the State's desire to destabilise progressive organisations. The radical organisations did recognise some lack of control within their own camp and young comrades were sometimes criticised.

UDF

In November 1987, the two joint secretaries of the UDF Midlands region, Martin Wittenberg and Skumbuzo Ngwenya Mbatha, claimed that

The overwhelming majority of the people who have had to flee the townships and live elsewhere are UDF members. According to affidavits in the hands of lawyers, reports of monitoring agencies and press articles, the vast majority of those killed or assaulted whose organisational links have been determined are from the UDF and COSATU. It is clear that the main victims of the violence are UDF and COSATU members ... Again, it is very revealing that almost all the school children who are being forced to write their examinations outside the townships at present are UDF members.⁸⁵

Archie Gumede, a president of the UDF, called on Inkatha leaders to stop their forced recruitment of members, which he described as the root cause of the violence.⁸⁶

A memorandum by COSATU and the UDF issued in November 1987 provided a history of the Pietermaritzburg conflict and saw it as part of attempts to 'destroy all progressive organisations' and 'stamp out all non-Inkatha political activity'. It linked the beginnings of organised vigilante violence to the 18 July 1985 stayaway and consumer boycott in support of the BTR-Sarmcol strikers. The memorandum also noted attempts by Inkatha vigilantes to suppress the Imbali Civic Association, the 1986 Christmas Against the Emergency Campaign, the 5 and 6 May 1987 stayaway against the white elections (and particularly the actions of the bus drivers of the TGWU that ensured its success), and various UDF-affiliated youth organisations. The UDF and COSATU claimed that the dramatic increase in violence in September and October 1987 was the result of a forced recruitment drive by Inkatha and that it was accompanied by Inkatha claims on certain territory as its own, which other organisations or non-Inkatha supporting individuals were not allowed to enter. 'Closely linked to this notion of "our territory" and complete control

over it is the emergence of what are effectively “warlords”.’ The memorandum said that the violence fitted into a national pattern in which the State and conservative forces attempted to destabilise and crush progressive forces. It also alleged that there was direct and indirect support by certain policemen for the vigilantes. The memorandum concluded that

the violence that has become so much part of everyday life in the townships has largely been the result of a systematic attempt to smash our organisations ... In coming to this conclusion, we do not wish to dispute that members of our organisation have been involved in acts of violence. Nevertheless, the evidence points to the fact that the lion’s share of the violence can be directly credited to the vigilantes and the failure of the police to intervene or prevent further violence. Furthermore, in a situation where our membership feels and has evidence to believe that the police is a good deal less than sympathetic to the victims of vigilante attacks, it is hardly surprising that people are starting to take the law into their own hands and retaliating in kind. Conflict is generated by a lack of democracy. The underlying reason for the bloodletting in Pietermaritzburg is the lack of a democratic process in South Africa. In a situation where organisations do not have to prove their popular support, it is possible for conservative groupings which do not have significant popular support to emerge and to impose themselves on the population.⁸⁷

Because the political message of conservative groupings was more palatable in official circles than that of their more radical rivals, it seemed that the police were willing to turn a blind eye to some of their more coercive practices. In this situation any resistance to these groupings launched a spiral of violence. The more they lost the support of the population due to the use of force, the more desperate they became and the more willing to resort to force to bolster their political position. The suppression of information due to the State of Emergency compounded the situation, because those people who had the influence to curtail the coercive activities of these groups did not have accurate information at their disposal. Consequently, they were blinded by their political sympathy for these groups. The result was the kind of polarisation and escalating conflict seen in the Pietermaritzburg area. This is a good representation of what became the basic UDF/COSATU line publicised in a number of papers, magazine and journal articles.

At a more day-to-day level, there were numerous allegations by UDF supporters of attacks on them by Inkatha vigilantes, with or without passive or active police collusion, and there was relatively little comment other than variations on this theme. Particularly during periods of widespread detention of UDF supporters and officials from late 1987 to mid 1989, UDF comments, statistics and analysis were often heavily dependent on the reports put out by monitoring groups, including the CAE Unrest Monitoring Project.

ANC

The ANC, in a statement from Lusaka, called for an end to the fighting and accused the South African government of fomenting the violence in a bid to prolong apartheid.⁸⁸

Winnie Mandela, speaking near Imbali, said the government was using the oppressed people against themselves to promote black-on-black violence. It was part of an NP strategy to cripple UDF sympathisers: 'Black-on-black violence is the climax of apartheid. We need to achieve absolute unity in our methods. Popular democracy has never had problems in identifying the enemy. It is only unfortunate that the enemy has enticed us to be tools to implement the system, to be collaborators and to make our people suffer.'⁸⁹

A local ANC member and crisis worker for the South African Council of Churches, Azariah Ndebele, told the *Weekly Mail* the refugee problem resulted from recruitment drives by Inkatha that caused resistance and fighting among residents. The first refugees came from Ashdown and settled in the Edendale valley. The war then followed them into the valley. Recruitment drives in Mpumaza and Imbali also sent people into 'exile'. But when Ashdown was taken over by the UDF, the first group of refugees returned from Edendale to settle in their homes at Ashdown. Meanwhile, the second group of refugees from Imbali, who were mainly AZAPO people, settled in Dark City, Sobantu, where they began a battle with UDF supporters.⁹⁰

Freed from jail on the 26 November 1988, ANC and SACP activist Harry Gwala warned that some conflicts were arising out of 'deliberate action to stifle the struggle of the people'. The killings in the townships were ugly aspects of a revolutionary situation. He said his first concern would be to 'add to the voice of reconciliation, particularly what is being done by COSATU and Inkatha. It would be wise for the state to allow the UDF to participate in the peace process since it is so much involved in the conflict.'⁹¹ On 2 December 1988 Gwala claimed that the violence in the black townships had been engineered by the 'enemy' who saw that the people were rallying behind democratic organisations to free themselves. It was the ruling class that had engineered the violence.⁹²

COSATU

COSATU general secretary, Jay Naidoo, said that the growing violence in Natal was not a case of black-on-black violence, but a battle for political supremacy. It was an attempt to crush the democratic alternative which had

been offered with the growth of trade unions and community organisations: 'Scores of COSATU members who work in your factories in Natal have been killed and injured in attacks from roving bands bent on crushing all non-Inkatha activity.'⁹³

On 2 September 1988, COSATU and Inkatha reached an accord with the setting up of the Complaints Adjudication Board (CAB). Both organisations acknowledged and regretted that there had been extensive violence in the townships of Pietermaritzburg. Both agreed to encourage freedom of association and condemned forced recruitment, intimidation and violence. Commenting on the absence of the UDF, Alec Erwin said COSATU would never purport to speak for the UDF and had made it clear to Inkatha that COSATU was not a surrogate of the UDF.⁹⁴

On 22 March 1989 at a press conference in Johannesburg, COSATU released a dossier detailing incidents where Inkatha vigilantes had allegedly helped police detain, interrogate and shoot residents of Imbali. Naidoo pointed out that it was convenient for the violence in Natal to be seen as black-on-black. COSATU lawyer Nicholas Haysom said evidence in the dossier of direct collusion or omission on the part of the police suggested it was policy 'at the highest echelons of the South African Police' to assist Inkatha vigilantes.⁹⁵ But a letter from COSATU bus drivers working for KwaZulu Transport complained about comrades (*amaqabane*) stoning and robbing drivers in some UDF controlled areas.⁹⁶

CONTRALESA

For a time, CONTRALESA had a somewhat maverick leader in Chief Mhlabunzima Maphumulo, who was assassinated in 1991. He blamed the SAP for the violence.⁹⁷ In April 1989 he warned that violence would flare up in the Table Mountain area, up until then extremely peaceful and flooded with refugees from other areas, if Inkatha leaders started recruiting there. He said he was worried because recruitment drives had contributed to the two-year violence in Edendale, Imbali and Ashdown between Inkatha and the UDF.⁹⁸

On 7 April 1989 he petitioned the State President to appoint urgently a judicial commission of inquiry into the cause of the conflict. The petition documented a number of Inkatha attacks and stated that

Ideological differences led to Inkatha forming vigilante groups whose function it was to have their opponents removed from townships and areas surrounding Pietermaritzburg. In May and June 1987 Inkatha embarked upon a large-scale recruiting drive ... reports were made of Inkatha recruiters, often heavily armed, urging (and sometimes coercing) residents

to join that organisation. Those efforts led to an escalation of the conflict and the death toll began to rise.

The petition also noted that the major participants in the violence, Inkatha and the UDF, blamed it on their opponents.⁹⁹

Business

The business community in Pietermaritzburg and Hammarsdale played some role in various, usually temporary or abortive, peace settlements. The CAE database contains various records noting the business community's dismay at the economic effects of the violence and of protest stayaways.

Mark Cornell, mayor of Pietermaritzburg, was reported as saying in late 1987 that the violence was 'a fight between the "haves" and the "have nots"'. After the floods a number of people moved into the outlying areas outside the townships. They see what people have in the townships, while they themselves have nothing. It is a formula for violence.'¹⁰⁰

At a meeting held at Ulundi on 30 November between KwaZulu and the Pietermaritzburg City Council, Cornell was taken to task by Buthelezi for a statement attributed to the mayor in a weekly newspaper, quoting him as saying that during the floods, Inkatha members had used the situation to recruit new members.¹⁰¹ Later Cornell was reported as saying that 'Everyone is saying that they are sick and tired of the violence but the violence is carrying on and I am afraid that the leadership of the organisations may not have any control over their members.'¹⁰²

Paul van Uytrecht, one of the mediators in the Chamber of Commerce peace talks, was quoted in the *New York Times* of 21 January 1988 as saying that 'Inkatha warlords had tried to enforce loyalty to the Zulu group (Inkatha) at schools, hospitals and workplaces, even insisting that disaster relief after the floods in October be channelled through its hands.' He also said that patients had been asked to produce Inkatha membership cards before receiving treatment at Edendale Hospital; and had been quoted as saying that previously non-politicised communities had begun turning spontaneously against Inkatha, so much so that it 'may in fact be left with very little.'¹⁰³

Ordinary people

The group that can perhaps be described as ordinary people – whether pro-UDF, pro-Inkatha or despisers of both – also had a common sense view of the conflict as one between competing political organisations. Ethnicity is never

mentioned, except in the sense of sorrow that brother should kill brother. Criticisms abound of bad behaviour by both Inkatha and the comrades. A number of letters to the *Echo* during the period under review articulated the views of such ordinary people, some pro-UDF, some pro-Inkatha and some resolutely non-aligned, the so-called *asilutho* (we aren't anything).

- The police are praised for guarding a township, but Inkatha is cursed for teaching children violence and taking them away from their parents by force. Inkatha blames the UDF but the UDF is innocent (19 November 1987);
- The first targets were 'members of COSATU and UDF. Inkatha leaders eventually tried to distinguish between members of UDF, COSATU, SAP and ordinary members of the public' and 'It was only recently that UDF and COSATU joined hands with some members of the public (most of whom are neither members of UDF, COSATU or SAP) to fight against the common enemy ... The SAP are doing a fine job' (3 December 1987).
- 'Edendale was very quiet and peaceful until Inkatha members forced non-members to join their organisation. Some joined out of fear and others resisted which resulted in their homes attacked and family members assaulted or killed. We saw Inkatha members roaming the streets with all sorts of weapons and the police did nothing. The UDF then decided to retaliate by protecting the non-Inkatha members. Things got out of hand as people began to take the law into their own hands by avenging their families. It then became a vicious circle and the violence increased' (3 December 1987).
- 'The UDF and Inkatha have not benefited the community in any way except by injuring and killing people – so both organisations must be closed. The community was better off without both of them because black people only had one problem; oppression by whites. It is worse today because one even fears one's own armed black brother, yet we are all victims of segregation. Where is the freedom they are fighting for? If UDF members discover that you stay in an Inkatha-dominated area, and if Inkatha members ask if you are affiliated to any organisation, and you are neutral, you die for that. And both organisations end up killing innocent, non-affiliated people. Since Inkatha claims the UDF is manipulated by Indians, it would be better if it also knows who is using Inkatha as well' (21 January 1988).
- 'Inkatha members in my area are thugs. They killed our children and husbands. They stole our things, and broke our windows ... It was doing all the bad things because it knew it was a legal organisation. It would be

puzzling if Inkatha was given the green light to kill the black nation' (25 February 1988).

- 'In November last year the comrades went around from house to house forcing people to join. They stabbed children and burnt houses at Emvundlweni. You did the same at Vulisaka, Mnyandu, Ndeleshane, hacking people and calling those who refused to join oTheleweni' (7 April 1988).
- 'We were already living in fear because the perpetrators were not being arrested and more attacks were expected as non-Inkatha members were resisting being forced to join this organisation ... I disagree that violence escalated after the September flood as a result of the "comrades" forcing other youths to join them. Actually the "comrades" recruited other youths to join them in order to ward off the imminent attacks by Inkatha members on non-Inkatha members who refused to join them or people who were neutral. Most people's homes and lives were saved by these "comrades" who held vigils at night in order to protect innocent lives ... my observation of the unrest situation is that it occurred when Inkatha intimidated non-members to join them. They demanded a joining fee of R5 per family. Some people complied in fear of victimisation. Others resisted and ended up being attacked. The attackers were not arrested and we saw them roaming the streets with all sorts of weapons despite the state of emergency regulations. This gave the impression to the "comrades" and community that Inkatha had a licence to kill and to eradicate any opposition. As a result thereof, the "comrades" then counter-attacked and violence got out of hand. At this stage, some of the community whose members had been attacked began to avenge their loved ones as justice did not seem to be done. The solution, Mr Editor, is for the government, if it has to ban black organisations, to ban Inkatha as well. As long as this is not done, non-Inkatha members will conclude that the state and the police approve the killings of non-Inkatha members by the Inkatha. Inkatha also feels that because of the sympathy of the state and police towards them they can do anything and get away with murder. How can anybody hope for peace then?' (28 April 1988).
- 'Ashdown comrades are the worst in the world. They burn houses leaving people without shelter. The leaders of the UDF do not do this. They fight with pens, mouths and minds. Look at the Dambuza comrades, they are quiet' (22 December 1988).
- 'I would like to explain the difference between Inkatha and Otheleweni. Inkatha is headed by our KwaZulu chief minister. As an Inkatha member,

I regret that all the killings that have taken place in Maritzburg have been attributed to us, Inkatha members. Inkatha is fighting the Pretoria government, not our fellow black brothers. Inkatha is fighting for the rights of all black people in a peaceful way. We Inkatha members have seen that fighting physically with the white won't help us. It is better to talk to them because all those who tried to fight them failed. Others are in jail. We are up to developing the community. There is a school known as Mandleni Youth Camp where we train the youth in a constructive way. The youth is taught sewing, agriculture, and leadership qualities. We have never forgotten about peace and harmony. Honest leaders stand for the truth.

Otheleweni, as the name implies, push our black nation off the cliff. They do not know what they want. They lie if they say they belong to Inkatha. They do not know how to speak nicely with the people. They force people to join them. They are cruel, they kill, they are illiterate, they cannot think, and they are aggressive. Once they fail to think they resort to fighting. They are used by the white Government to further its aims. They are given guns, they kill but they are not arrested' (2 March 1989).

- 'Mpumuza is being deprived of its females and males. What will be said about us when children are killing people? They have infiltrated the church, especially the Methodist and the Roman Catholic churches. Their children stay in town. They are stabbing people. Their mothers are giving them money and food' (28 April 1988).
- 'I would like to say something about this unending practice of being asked in some areas you go in: where you are from, and what your organisation is; not because they want to know your organisation but because they have a craving to kill a human being. Is this the freedom we are looking for? Do you think the whites think we are sane? ... If I stay in Dambuza and I have a relative in Sinatheng, I can't go there now because of these organisations' (9 March 1989).
- I am one of the Inkatha members who lost his two brothers during this madness fighting between Inkatha and UDF/COSATU' (26 October 1989).

Apart from these examples there are many other records in the CAE database in which ordinary people bewail the deadly impact of political labelling on their lives.

The *Natal Witness* reported the story of an old man from Swayimane who had been a member of both Inkatha and the UDF and who was now in hiding

from both organisations after his wife was killed by the UDF, who believed he was an Inkatha informer. In 1982 he was elected as a councillor in Swayimane near Wartburg and told that he must join Inkatha. In 1989 Inkatha leadership declared a boundary in the township, and as he lived on the UDF side he had to join the UDF. However, people who were once members of Inkatha were treated with suspicion: 'The comrades sit and watch and see who crosses the border. When you come back they kill you,' he said. He said he had laid charges after his wife's murder, but knew that nothing would be done. 'The kitskonstabels are happy because they know I am no longer an Inkatha member. They will be happy if I am killed. The comrades are peaceful. It is Inkatha that force people to do things they don't want to do.' The man said that violence in the Midlands was increasing because Inkatha was losing support south of the Tugela River and in consequence getting more desperate in its efforts to retain that support. He told an independent commission of inquiry the solution was to do away with Inkatha: 'The Tugela River should be the boundary between Inkatha and UDF,' the old man said.¹⁰⁴

Postscript

Certain lines of interpretation of the conflict are clearly present in the utterances of those directly or indirectly involved. Dominant are the political, including conspiracy; though socio-economic, including criminal, interpretations are also present. In the next chapter an attempt is made to examine the validity of these interpretations of what caused and drove the violence, particularly as remoulded and systematised by academics or para-academics.

ENDNOTES

- 1 This in itself may indicate that Inkatha still had inner doubts about its own legitimacy as a black nationalist organisation.
- 2 A possible alternative interpretation would be to say that it is a separatist black nationalist, 'black man you are on your own' viewpoint. But it is certainly not tribal or ethnic.
- 3 The use of Indian as a term of political abuse figured quite strongly in Inkatha mobilisation in semi-rural areas near Pietermaritzburg at the start of the Seven Day War of 25–31 March 1990 (see J.J.W. Aitchison, *The Seven Days War: 25–31 March 1990: The Victims' Narrative* (Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal, 1991)).
- 4 *Natal Witness* 29 September 1987.
- 5 *Natal Witness* 14 October 1987; *Weekly Mail* 13 November 1987; *Echo* 20 November 1987.
- 6 *Natal Witness* 7 December 1987; *Natal Mercury* 7 December 1987; *City Press* 13 December 1987.
- 7 *Natal Witness* 7 December 1987; *Natal Mercury* 7 December 1987; *City Press* 13 December 1987; *Weekly Mail* 18 December 1987.

- 8 *Natal Witness* 31 March 1988. This was a somewhat anachronistic allegation as COSATU had not been formed at the time of the strike.
- 9 Replying affidavits from Inkatha respondents to urgent application papers brought by COSATU and 19 Ashdown residents to the Supreme Court (Pietermaritzburg), 11 February 1988.
- 10 The issue of the membership numbers of Inkatha was a complicated and contested one.
- 11 Prior to the then recent Inkatha-UDF/COSATU violence the Pietermaritzburg region had been, by South African political unrest standards, one of the most pacific for decades.
- 12 *Natal Witness* 12 April 1988.
- 13 *Natal Witness* 15 April 1989.
- 14 *Natal Witness* 25 April 1989.
- 15 *Sunday Tribune* 25 June 1989; *Natal Witness* 26 June 1989.
- 16 *Weekly Mail* 14 July 1989.
- 17 *Natal Witness* 24 July 1989; *Echo* 27 July 1989.
- 18 *Weekly Mail* 21 July 1989.
- 19 M.G. Buthelezi, 'Vote of thanks to his majesty King Goodwill Zwelithini ka Bhhekuzulu king of the Zulus following his address to the nation by Mangosuthu Buthelezi, chief minister KwaZulu and president of Inkatha' (1989).
- 20 *Natal Witness* 4 and 5 November and 19 December 1987; *Echo* 5 November 1987.
- 21 *Weekly Mail* 13 November 1987.
- 22 *Echo* 31 March 1988; *Weekly Mail* 8 July 1988.
- 23 *Natal Witness* 24 May 1989; *Sunday Tribune* 28 May 1989.
- 24 *Weekly Mail* 13 November 1987; *Echo* 20 November 1987.
- 25 *Sunday Tribune* 29 November 1987; *Natal Witness* 30 November and 1 December 1987; *Daily News* 1 December 1987; *Echo* 3 December 1987.
- 26 *Natal Witness* 22 and 24 February 1988; *Echo* 25 February 1988.
- 27 *Natal Witness* 26 September 1988; *Echo* 29 September 1988; *New Nation* 29 September 1988; *Weekly Mail* 30 September 1988.
- 28 *Natal Witness* 24 May 1989; *Sunday Tribune* 28 May 1989.
- 29 *Echo* 19 May 1988; *Natal Witness* 27 July 1988.
- 30 *Natal Witness* 11 April 1989.
- 31 *Sunday Tribune* 29 July 1989.
- 32 *Echo* 14 September 1989; *Weekly Mail* 15 September 1989; *Sunday Tribune* 17 September 1989.
- 33 *Natal Witness* 17 October 1989.
- 34 *Natal Witness* 19 October 1989; *Sunday Tribune* 22 October 1989.
- 35 *Natal Witness* 20 December 1989; *Natal Mercury* 20 December 1989; *Echo* 21 December 1989.
- 36 *Echo* 17 September 1987.
- 37 *Natal Witness* 16 October 1987.
- 38 *Natal Witness* 15 and 23 October 1987.
- 39 *Natal Witness* 21 and 24 October 1987.
- 40 *Natal Witness* 22 October 1987.
- 41 *Natal Witness* 3 November 1987.

- 42 *Weekly Mail* 13 November 1987; *Natal Witness* 13 November 1987.
- 43 *Sunday Tribune* 6 December 1987.
- 44 *City Press* 5 December 1987; *Natal Mercury* 17 December 1987; *Natal Witness* 17 December 1987; *Weekly Mail* 18 December 1987; *Daily News* 17 December 1987.
- 45 *Natal Witness* 30 December 1987; *Daily News* 30 December 1987.
- 46 *Echo* 7 January 1988.
- 47 Replying affidavits from Inkatha respondents to urgent application papers brought by COSATU and 19 Ashdown residents to the Supreme Court (Pietermaritzburg), 11 February 1988; *Natal Witness* 30 August 1988.
- 48 *Natal Witness* 5 March 1988.
- 49 *Weekly Mail* 13 May 1988.
- 50 *Weekly Mail* 29 July 1988.
- 51 *Weekly Mail* 19 August 1988.
- 52 *Echo* 22 September 1988.
- 53 *Natal Witness* 20 October 1988.
- 54 *Natal Witness* 24 and 25 November 1988; *Echo* 24 November 1988; *Sunday Tribune* 27 November 1988.
- 55 *Sunday Tribune* 27 November 1988.
- 56 *Natal Witness* 14 December 1988.
- 57 *Echo* 15 December 1988.
- 58 A 1988 special edition of *Clarion Call* examines the violence.
- 59 *Natal Witness* 18 January 1989.
- 60 *Natal Witness* 24 January 1989.
- 61 *Echo* 2 February 1989.
- 62 G. Woods, *A Position Paper on Research Findings into Black Township Violence in Natal/KwaZulu* (Durban: Inkatha Institute for South Africa, [1989]).
- 63 *Natal Witness* 21 February 1989.
- 64 *Weekly Mail* 10 March 1989.
- 65 *Natal Witness* 11 March 1989.
- 66 *New African* 17 April 1989.
- 67 *Natal Witness* 2 May 1989; *Echo* 4 May 1989.
- 68 *Weekly Mail* 10 November 1989; *Natal Witness* 20 November 1989; *New Nation* 30 November 1989; Zwelithini ka Bhhekuzulu, 'Address to the nation by His Majesty King Goodwill Zwelithini ka Bhhekuzulu King of the Zulus', 19 November 1989; Zwelithini ka Bhhekuzulu, 'Synopsis of address to the nation by His Majesty King Goodwill Zwelithini ka Bhhekuzulu King of the Zulus', 19 November 1989.
- 69 The comrades renamed sections of the Edendale complex and Imbali after countries and cities that were supporters of the ANC (Tanzania, Lusaka, Cuba, Moscow) or Inkatha (Ulundi).
- 70 *Natal Witness* 23, 24, 25, 28, 29 and 30 November 1989; *Echo* 23 and 30 November, 14 and 21 December 1989; *Daily News* 8 December 1989.
- 71 *Natal Witness* 22 October 1987.
- 72 *Natal Witness* 24 October 1987.
- 73 *Natal Witness* 1 December 1987.

- 74 *Natal Mercury* 25 December 1987.
- 75 *Daily News* 28 December 1987.
- 76 *Natal Witness* 12 February 1988; *Sunday Tribune* 14 February 1988.
- 77 *Natal Witness* 27 February 1988; *Echo* 3 March 1988; *City Press* 27 March 1988.
- 78 *Natal Witness* 30 March and 14 April 1988.
- 79 *Natal Witness* 10 and 12 May 1988.
- 80 *Natal Witness* 2 March 1989.
- 81 *Natal Witness* 26 April 1989.
- 82 *Weekly Mail* 5 May 1989.
- 83 *Natal Witness* 17 and 19 May 1989; *Echo* 18 May 1989; *Weekly Mail* 19 May 1989.
- 84 *Weekly Mail* 15 December 1989.
- 85 *Echo* 5 November 1987.
- 86 *Sunday Tribune* 3 January 1988.
- 87 COSATU, *Violence in Pietermaritzburg: A Memorandum by COSATU and UDF* (Pietermaritzburg: COSATU, 1987).
- 88 *Natal Witness* 8 February 1988.
- 89 *Natal Witness* 28 March 1988; *Echo* 31 March 1988.
- 90 *Weekly Mail* 26 August 1988.
- 91 *Natal Witness* 29 November 1988.
- 92 *Echo* 8 December 1988.
- 93 *Weekly Mail* 13 November 1987.
- 94 *Natal Witness* 3 September and 2 December 1988; *Weekly Mail* 9 September 1988; *New Nation* 12 January 1989.
- 95 COSATU, *Report on Imbali Stage One*, 22 March 1989; *Weekly Mail* 23 and 30 March 1989; *Natal Witness* 23, 29 and 31 March and 6 April 1989; *New Nation* 30 March 1989; *Sunday Tribune* 2 April 1989; *Echo* 6 April 1989; *Sunday Tribune* 11 June 1989.
- 96 *Echo* 29 June 1989.
- 97 *Echo* 14 April 1988.
- 98 *Echo* 6 April 1989.
- 99 *Natal Witness* 8, 11, 15 and 19 April 1989; *Echo* 13 April 1989.
- 100 *Natal Witness* 2 December 1987; *Sunday Tribune* 6 December 1987.
- 101 *Natal Witness* 1 December 1987; *Echo* 3 December 1987.
- 102 *New York Times* 21 January 1988; *Natal Witness* 4 and 12 February and 16 and 18 March 1988.
- 103 *Natal Witness* 4 November 1988.
- 104 *Natal Witness* 30 January 1990.

IN A PAPER WRITTEN IN MID-1990, the author outlined four common interpretations of the origins of the violence in Natal:

- conspiracy theory;
- black-on-black violence (racial/ethnic causation);
- socio-economic deprivation; and
- political conflict.¹

Conspiracy theory can take two forms. The one form, at times adhered to by the government and Inkatha, is that there was a radical ‘ungovernability’ conspiracy in Natal. The radicals – that is, the African National Congress (ANC), Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), South African Communist Party (SACP) and United Democratic Front (UDF) – were out to seize power by violent revolution. As late as 2 September 1992 at the Orange Free State National Party (NP) congress, Hernus Kriel, Minister of Law and Order, said that it was only the police and the army that prevented a violent overthrow of the government by the ANC.² The left variant is that there was a government, security force or ‘third force’ conspiracy to destroy, or at the very least destabilise, the ANC and its allies so that they could not gain political power in spite of democratisation. Obviously there is some truth in this interpretation as the Inkathagate, Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB) and Trust Feed scandals showed.

The black-on-black interpretation of the violence is essentially a racial rather than an ethnic one, although it is easily transmogrified into a racial-cum-ethnic interpretation, which in its matured form states that blacks are a naturally violent race of warring tribes. The interpretation cannot simply be discarded as white colonialist hokum because of the harsh reality of high levels of interpersonal violence in African communities in South Africa: in the Pietermaritzburg area in 1986 there were already nearly three hundred murders being investigated by Plessislaer police station alone before the escalation of unrest violence in 1987. Explanations have to be sought and they range

from the impact of decades of apartheid-corrupted policing (or rather non-policing), through the influence of faction fighting, to anger and frustration under oppressive conditions displaced onto more immediate neighbours.

The socio-economic interpretation view had adherents as politically divergent as the head of the KwaZulu Police (KZP), Major-General Jac Büchner, and some Marxist academics. One form of the socio-economic view was avidly propagated by the Inkatha Institute, whose executive director, Gavin Woods, produced a number of papers on the subject. Common sense assures one that there must be something in this interpretation, though it seems singularly unhelpful to explain why many people took it upon themselves to kill over eighteen hundred people in three years and systematically worsen everybody's socio-economic position in the process.

The political interpretation makes a great deal of common sense, particularly as it was the predominant interpretation of the common people. They believed in 'sides' and 'parties', particularly when these political constructs had the all too material ability to kill. As Clementine Khumalo from Nxamalala said when asked her opinion of the causes of violence: 'If there were no political parties – or just one – there would be no violence. They just give you labels and then they come and kill you.'³ It is certainly true that most influential actors in the region also made the assumption that there were clearly identifiable sides; and indeed aggressors. However, accepting the importance of the political interpretation in order to understand the conflict does not mean rejecting obvious multi-causal influences.

This chapter explicates these interpretations and assesses some of the evidence drawn from the Centre for Adult Education (CAE) database and from other studies that support particular interpretations.

Conspiracy theory

The first conspiracy theory: the ungovernability interpretation

The very use of the term unrest points to the existence of one major interpretation, the government's allegation of a radical ungovernability conspiracy in Natal. In fact this interpretation was not at first, in late 1987 when deaths began to rise dramatically, particularly forcefully presented. Police spokesmen tended to deny that there was a real problem and the police unrest report under-reported killings. The refusal of the Minister of Law and Order to provide statistics for deaths and injuries in 1987 was further indication of a denial of the problem

(but perhaps also an unwitting acknowledgement that there was a problem) enhanced by too ready claims in mid-1988 that peace had been restored.⁴

State allegations that there was a political conspiracy tended in fact to follow on the heels of the growing chorus of complainants from COSATU, the UDF and monitoring groups who alleged that the State was colluding with Inkatha, particularly through the police's totally one-sided use of emergency detention against the UDF. This collusion was officially endorsed when Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, said at a police ceremony in Pietermaritzburg on 26 February 1988 that 'The Police intend to face the future with moderates and fight against radical groups ... Radicals, who are trying to destroy South Africa, will not be tolerated. We will fight them. We have put our foot in that direction, and we will eventually win the Pietermaritzburg area.'⁵ He reiterated this approach with his 'iron fist' speech in Parliament in April 1989.

This interpretation, which fitted in with the State's analysis of the revolt against government sponsored township structures in the mid-eighties, was congruent with the belief in a total onslaught against the Republic and was, of necessity, shelved after 1990. While from the UDF/COSATU/ANC perspective, Vlok's attitudes and actions after 2 February 1990 still left much to be desired, he stopped pushing this kind of interpretation.⁶ It was, however, a potent article of faith for many Inkatha writers and was often used by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi himself as in his answering affidavit to the interdict application brought against Inkatha in relation to attacks on Ashdown location in Pietermaritzburg on 31 January 1988.

Another example can be seen from the Inkatha Information Centre, which talked of the UDF identifying Inkatha as part of the enemy:

Inkatha is undoubtedly correct in believing that the ANC/UDF sought to destroy it, particularly from 1984 on when the people's war started in earnest. All collaborators and agents of the system became targets in an attempt to render the townships ungovernable, and Inkatha was the prime target ... Despite ANC/UDF statements suggesting it is no longer policy, many Inkatha supporters question whether the people's war has in fact stopped.⁷

The validity of this interpretation of the Natal conflict as part of the armed struggle is dubious in the extreme, not because one denies that there was a clear political contest between UDF and Inkatha, but because there is very little empirical evidence to suggest that there was much armed struggle against Inkatha. In the more than three thousand events of unrest documented in the Natal Midlands from 1987 to 1989, no more than five clearly involved

Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) and only a couple of those were attacks on Inkatha rather than on the South African Police (SAP).

A weaker form of the ungovernability theory is, however, more plausible: that the violence in Natal was part of a general surge of rebellion by UDF supporters, and certainly claimed by the ANC in exile, against government structures in black townships. It must be conceded that there were stirrings of such a revolt in Natal. It is also plausible that Inkatha supporters in the various township bodies they controlled would be extremely worried that they might be targeted for the treatment that black town councillors and people in similar official positions had received in the rest of South Africa.

However, whatever its partial truth this form of the conspiracy theory is weakened by the curious picture that the Midlands makes compared to the rest of South Africa when one looks at the escalation of violence and the impact of State measures against it. The unrest death statistics for South Africa as a whole from 1985 onwards show clearly that there was an escalation of violence and associated fatalities (victims both of revolutionary and State violence) from 1985 to 1986. In response the State declared the regional 1985 emergency and a national emergency in 1986. The situation in the Midlands was very different. Deaths from unrest were minimal throughout this period and the violence only escalated in 1987, more particularly from September. Here the emergency measures did not seem to work to reduce fatalities and the death toll remained at a high level with an average of 52 deaths a month from September 1987 to December 1992.

One conclusion is that the violence in Natal was chronologically a clearly separate wave from the revolt in the rest of South Africa in the mid-eighties and that the violence responded in a completely different way to State emergency restrictions. This calls into considerable doubt the idea of a unified radical conspiracy causing violence.

The second conspiracy theory: the third force interpretation

This variant of the conspiracy theory believes that the State or its security services, or rogue elements within them, were responsible for much of the violence. This is the third force, in addition to the obvious Inkatha and radical combatants.

The adherents of the second type of conspiracy theory would argue that in retrospect it can be seen that many of the South African security system's adventures in external destabilisation over twelve or more years were trial runs

for internal destabilisation of which the Inkatha/non-Inkatha war was the most significant manifestation. An even longer view would see the expertise that the anti-communist West built up in fighting insurgents, or destroying regimes disliked by the United States of America, as informing the South African military's strategic thinking.

Richard Attenborough's film on Steve Biko, *Cry Freedom*, started with a stunning evocation of a dawn police raid in Crossroads squatter camp near Cape Town. But such outright police aggression proved singularly ineffective in halting the surge of migrants onto the sandy flats around the mother port. Far more effective was a development of the early and mid-eighties in which conservative vigilante groups were co-opted into doing the State's dirty work for it.⁸ At the ground level such destabilisation was heavily influenced by highly localised factors, such as the personalities and virtues of local leaders and bad men, including bad policemen. Perhaps it also needs to be said that certainly by the dawn of the eighties the sight of white police bashing black demonstrators was becoming totally unacceptable internationally. Foreign powers, particularly the United States, had put great pressure on South Africa to halt the more (to North Americans) odious features of the sixties and seventies such as bannings, torture and indefinite detention by the white police. It was increasingly clear that deathly repression had to be carried out in future by surrogates with black faces.

The early eighties saw a steady rise in the creation of groups of rural vigilantes who used terror to quell the growing revolt among youth against the old order. That many of the UDF-influenced rural youth were hardly models of Marxist rationality (almost to a man they used traditional war medicine and, particularly in the Northern Transvaal, regularly burnt witches) does not alter the fact that they were, well sort of, progressive; whereas the vigilantes, gathered around homeland leaders, chiefs and headmen, were not. The vigilantes were also quite effective. A relatively lightly armed group of men can, in a rural community which they know well, impose control in a devastatingly effective way that no outsiders can.

The next development in the State's privatisation of repression was originally a response to the needs of urban townships. Town councillors did not have the clout that rural chiefs or squatter rentlords possessed to protect themselves against the rapidly mushrooming forces of the UDF. This problem was also linked to the government's plans to handle the demands for rights by blacks via a complicated system of township representation, possibly eventually leading to the addition of a fourth chamber to the tricameral parliament. So

the invention of the *kits* (or instant) constable (of a municipal or regular SAP variety) who was given six weeks training about how to load a Mossberg pump action shotgun imported from the United States of America and discharge it at an approved enemy.⁹ So successful were these in mowing down the political opponents of their employers – apart from a few accidents with their own colleagues in shebeen brawls and armed robberies – that they began to be exported to rural areas. In the KwaZulu areas in Natal they were to come into their own in the late eighties and nineties.

It is necessary in this conspiracy story to explain a peculiar feature of Natal politics in the eighties that makes it different from Crossroads in the Cape and rural homelands in the Transvaal. COSATU and its predecessor the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) had managed to gain considerable sway over the black working class, including migrant workers, in Natal. Large numbers of Inkatha members were loyal COSATU supporters. This explains to some extent the ineffectiveness of vigilantes in halting the anti-apartheid revolt in Natal and led to the need for a special kind of war. It also, incidentally, explains the long infatuation of organised business interests in Natal and elsewhere with Inkatha and its State-funded clone the United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA) and their inability to see opponents of COSATU in a bad light.

Meanwhile, across the electrified fence along the Kruger National Park boundary with Mozambique designed to fry ANC guerrillas and fleeing women and children escaping from RENAMO, the government securocrats must have marvelled at the ability of South Africa's own contras to bring a poor socialist country to its knees. This was done quite simply by destroying the rural infrastructure of clinics, schools and churches (those of the last that had escaped some of the doctrinaire excesses of Mozambican Marxist-Leninism). Again, it showed how relatively lightly armed surrogate forces with no inhibitions about terrorism could be remarkably effective and yet hardly dent South Africa's image, astounding when considering academic estimates that at least 834 000 people died in Angola and Mozambique as the direct and indirect results of South Africa's deadly engagement with these nations.¹⁰

The last trial run was Namibia. South Africa was beginning to see that it was in its long-term interests to end its involvement in Angola and Namibia. This process was aided by the Soviet-supplied planes beginning to shoot South Africa's creakingly obsolete air force out of the Angolan sky and the beginning of the end of the Cold War. Dirty wars were soon to be replaced by dirty politics. The time of the assassin and the South African businessman with

briefcase bulging with taxpayers' money to buy political support was upon us.

With Namibian independence the trial runs were soon to be over. The real and final match was at home and the home training ground was in Natal. The object of the match was to have a non-racial democracy in South Africa that would still be effectively controlled by white interests and preferably still by the NP.

According to this scenario the government and security forces began to take on Jekyll and Hyde characteristics in relation to the broad movement of radical resistance to apartheid. The Dr Jekyll tendency was all for reform and peaceful negotiations. From February 1990 President F.W. de Klerk came to represent its smiling face. The Hyde and hidden tendency was a follow on from the total strategy concept of the eighties and saw the opposition movements as devilish enemies to be destroyed by any means, fair or foul. Much of this approach borrowed heavily from the technical expertise of military advisors in various counter-insurgency wars of the previous forty years. Snapshots of this tendency at work are seen in the revelations about the CCB and police hit squads.¹¹

The role of counter-insurgency thinking

In early 1988 members of parliament and a number of government officials were given access to a typed summary of a book by John J. McCuen and a document by H.R. Lass. This military manual is particularly interesting because of its encouragement of what in South Africa came to be known as total strategy: counter-terrorism; the use of auxiliary policemen (special constables), militias and surrogate forces (counter guerrillas); control of the press and the media; political indoctrination; and violence and punitive measures (though not terror or torture) to destroy support for the revolutionaries among the civilian population. Among the interesting statements made in this summary are:

- in areas where terrorism occurs, government forces must use the same destructive and constructive strategy as the guerrilla;
- special funds, weapons and supplies must be available immediately to support self defence and counter-organisation operations;
- government must lead all groups, classes, clubs and societies with the organisation of social, career, sport, agricultural, education, medical, religious and military activities.¹²

It can safely be assumed that this approach had been heavily inculcated in the minds both of the top and middle-level leadership of the security forces. In a

broad sense the total strategy way of thinking had clearly influenced the entire establishment since the late seventies, as approvingly documented in the Steyn Commission reports.¹³

Certainly in 1988 and afterwards many features of security force operations can be seen to exemplify some of this advice, particularly in respect of the creation of auxiliary forces (special constables), the arming of Inkatha/KwaZulu officials for self defence and counter-organisation operations, and of course the multifaceted terrorist, intelligence, educational and other activities of the CCB and other similar clones. Within this approach, security force toleration of violent activities by vigilantes was perfectly logical and the rhetoric of non-partisanship simply a public relations ploy for the benefit of the media and the courts of law.

Officially, this approach ended on 2 February 1990 and the State President briefed senior security officials about this earlier in January 1990.¹⁴ It is natural to expect that there would be some transitional difficulties in changing this approach and that partisan behaviour by the police would take some time to taper off: corresponding with this, effective action against violence from all parties would only slowly improve. The statistics on violence do not reflect this anticipated improvement.

However, according to statements made by Frene Ginwala, an important member of the executive of the ANC-in-exile, the deal for a negotiated settlement between it and the government was made in 1987.¹⁵ This puts a whole new complexion on the matter, for it was at the beginning of September 1987 that the violence started in earnest in the Midlands, which had not until then experienced the high casualties of the State versus UDF conflict in the rest of the country leading to the 1985 and 1986 States of Emergency.

This raises three possible scenarios about possible State involvement in the violence of September 1987 and afterwards:

- it was violence sponsored at the highest level of the State and sought to establish a secure position in Natal with 25% of the future electorate precisely because there was going to be a negotiated settlement, as became clear on 2 February 1990, with elections to follow;
- it was violence sponsored by leadership within the security services at high or lower levels who opposed the negotiated settlement; or
- it was violence sponsored by high or middle level leadership who, though not necessarily opposing the idea of a transition to democracy, were intent on ensuring through covert action that their side gained a commanding

advantage in a paramilitary fashion in the townships and later in the elections.

In June 1991, a former major in the South African Defence Force, Nico Basson, claimed that the army had set up a number of secret camps to train youths from the homelands and for storage of arms used in the current wave of township violence.¹⁶ Private security companies were involved in this recruitment and training. This was part of a government plan to create violence and destabilise the ANC. Basson said this destabilisation strategy had been applied in Namibia before the 1989 elections.

The whole process had started years before and was designed to destabilise the entire southern African region to prove to the international community that black people could not run a country. The operation was found to be quite successful in Namibia and it was decided to apply it in South Africa. It was then that de Klerk acquired the courage to deliver the 2 February speech in which he unbanned the ANC, SACP and other organisations.¹⁷

According to Basson, in South Africa the strategy was formulated around ethnic divisions. It was decided that black-on-black violence should be one of the strategies and a confrontation between Zulus and Xhosas should be encouraged, because these two ethnic groups were the largest in the country. The other strategy was counter-intimidation, which the government believed was needed to oppose the ANC's intimidatory tactics. The strategy was also aimed at neutralising the ANC's visibility such as discouraging the wearing of ANC T-shirts and promoting Inkatha in its place.

Basson also claimed that the army was buying AK47s and channelling them to Inkatha as part of a dirty tricks campaign to weaken and discredit the ANC. The second phase of the strategy, he said, was to form an alliance similar to the Namibian Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), a South African backed grouping of relatively conservative and largely ethnically based parties, some, though not all, of which had originated as South African surrogates. The rationale in Namibia had been to put together a conservative and ethnically or regionally based coalition that would outweigh the mass support of the South West African Peoples Organisation (SWAPO). Although SWAPO won the election, the DTA was sufficiently successful to be able to block changes to the negotiated constitution. A similar plan in South Africa, it was hypothesised, might even defeat the ANC in an election through combining the voting strengths of whites, Indians, Coloureds, Inkatha-supporting Zulus and conservative elements in the homelands.

Basson said that leaders such as Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) president Mangosuthu Buthelezi were not told of these strategies and activities. Some senior army officers were also not aware of these activities. Buthelezi said he was astounded by the allegations:

This is a horrible accusation and it is in line with the anti-IFP smear campaign that has been waged against us from several quarters for quite some time, both here and abroad. The postulation that the 'SADF strategy' is to 'build Inkatha through intimidation so as to form a strong alliance with the National Party in the first post-apartheid elections' is simply laughable.¹⁸

Later Basson argued that approval for violent destabilisation action inside South Africa went right to the top; to the State President. The story that dissident rightwing elements in the security forces were operating to their own agenda was well-planned propaganda aimed at misleading the public about the real role of the Cabinet and State President.¹⁹ Basson's revelations, if they were indeed revelations and not lies or fantasies, are congruent with more academic analyses, such as those of the Human Rights Commission (HRC) and others in various publications in the nineties.²⁰

Human Rights Commission analysis

The Human Rights Commission saw the violence from 1987 to 1992 as part of a political game of chess in which the white side cheats in a game of destabilisation similar to that operated by the South African government through its armed forces and black surrogates in Angola, Mozambique and Namibia. It saw the violence essentially as acts of repression by the apartheid state and its supporters against communities, though it acknowledged the counter violence against this repression. The HRC believed there was a correlation between various political events and the violence, such as rises in the latter associated with

- the launch of the IFP in July 1990 and suspension of the armed struggle by the ANC after the Pretoria Minute of 6 August 1990, with an enormous rise in fatalities in the Pretoria/Witwatersrand/Vereeniging (PWV) region as the IFP tried to establish a base there;
- the December 1990 ANC consultative conference;
- the May 1991 mass protests; and
- the September 1991 National Peace Accord signing; together with
- the March 1992 referendum;
- reductions in the level of violence associated with

- the October 1990 visit of de Klerk to Europe;
- the January 1991 opening of Parliament;
- the February 1991 signing of the ANC/IFP peace accord; and
- the government sponsored conference on violence.

By contrast with Natal, where there were territorial epicentres of violence, in the Transvaal the locus seemed to be mobile, suggesting a force that was continuously redeployed in a series of savage campaigns. Of Natal, the HRC report argued that the violence there had 'its origins in the rapid development of countrywide popular support for the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) from 1984 onwards, a development which did not bypass Natal, and was perceived by elements within Inkatha as a threat to Inkatha dominance in the region. That perceived threat intensified further when the ANC was unbanned in February 1990.' It saw the violence as tied up with the nurturing by the State of vigilante forces:

Vigilantism in the South African context arose directly out of the formation of Homelands administrations and Black Local Councils as essential components of the grand design of Apartheid. Those willing to participate in these puppet structures found themselves isolated from the vast majority of the black communities in which they were located. In order to defend their vested interests against the hostile rejection of their undemocratic authority, they formed private 'armies' of vigilantes drawn from traditional and conservative elements, from the unemployed and even from criminal gangs. This development is known to have received the tacit, and then the active, encouragement of the Apartheid State as an essential component of the 'Total Strategy' of the Emergency years which served also to promote the image of 'black-on-black violence' at no political cost to the government.

Vigilante groups started making their appearance in several parts of the country in the mid-eighties, the most prominent and sustained of these groups being elements, primarily 'war-lords', from within Inkatha. Inkatha-supporting vigilantes bear the prime responsibility for the spread of vigilantism in Natal during the eighties and in the Transvaal during the nineties.

The initial targets of vigilantes have been community structures, organisations and individuals that were vocal or active in calling for the dismantling of homelands and Black Councils; but subsequently, during the general destabilisation period of the last two years, the targets have become much less selective, and tactics have switched to indiscriminate terrorising of township communities.

It saw the security forces as having failed to put a stop to the violence and ascribed this either to inability, passive complicity, or active promotion of violence; or combinations of all three.

Collusion by State forces with vigilantes took the following forms:

Acts of omission

- absence from the scene of vigilante attacks or excessively late arrival;
- not responding to forewarning of attacks, or undertakings to protect communities;
- not countering, deflecting or dispersing attackers;
- not disarming, arresting or detaining attackers;
- not charging or prosecuting attackers, and refusal to accept laying of charges by injured parties;
- failure to solve murders, even when evidence was readily available;
- failure to remove weapons from vigilante bases.

Acts of commission

- indiscriminate attacks on township dwellers with teargas, guns and rubber bullets;
- dispersing, arresting or detaining township dwellers and removing their means of defence;
- escorting and even transporting vigilante groups to and from the scenes of attacks;
- collaboration in the planning and execution of attacks and in the identification and targeting of specific individuals;
- provision of weapons and other materials to vigilante groups;
- training and funding of vigilante groups.

The HRC saw a destabilisation strategy as having operated from 1990, shadowing negotiations. It was designed to produce power sharing rather than genuine democracy and was a natural outgrowth of previous strategies from the grand apartheid of the 1948–1984 period, through the total strategy of 1985–1989 to the reform strategy of 1989–1991. The destabilisation strategy aimed to achieve ‘the emasculation of the liberation struggle, in such a way as to destroy the capacity of liberation movements from translating their grassroots support into organised political support and ultimately into voter support at the ballot-box.’ The HRC noted, however, that the reform strategy had gone out of control and become counter-productive, failing to reverse the outflow of foreign capital, a crucial goal.²¹

In summary, this kind of analysis saw the government (or at least powerful components within its security apparatus) engaging in classic counter-revolutionary strategy using a range of social and political agents to carry out low-intensity conflict (LIC) as a means of maintaining political control. Such analyses saw Inkatha as a powerful weapon of this strategy, both in Natal

since 1987 and subsequent to the unbanning of the ANC when its activities were exported from Natal to the PWV. It was a powerful weapon because of its previous political track record, high international profile, acceptability to the business community, charismatic leader, and ability to use ethnicity effectively. However, Inkatha's very strengths also meant that it was not entirely controllable as a weapon and this may explain the periods when it seemed to be out of favour with the government.

Evaluating the third force conspiracy interpretation

It may be trite to say that there must be some truth in the supposition that at least some people in State structures were engaged in a conspiracy to harm radical forces, particularly the UDF, COSATU and the ANC, as much as possible. The series of revelations about police hit squads, the CCB, Inkathagate, Adult Education Consultants, and finally, the sacking of a number of senior South African Defence Force (SADF) personnel in late December 1992 by de Klerk, make it impossible to discount the accuracy of at least a proportion of the allegations made in analyses such as those of the HRC.

The evidence of such a conspiracy at an operational level in Natal is harder to evaluate. In 1986 two hundred men were sent secretly by Inkatha/KwaZulu for special forces military training in the Caprivi. Subsequently, in mid-1991 a training camp and base was discovered at Mkhuze in Zululand. However, there is scant evidence of this paramilitary force having engaged in actions in Natal, although this does not mean that they did not take place and remain undetected.

The most obvious case is that of the Trust Feed massacre of 3 December 1988. The trial record indicates that the conspiracy that led to the deaths of eleven people was hatched by Captain Deon Terblanche in the riot unit with David Ntombela, member of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly and the local Trust Feed Inkatha chairman Jerome Gabela. The attack was then implemented by the local police station commander, Lieutenant Brian Mitchell, assisted by four special constables. After the massacre, in which the wrong house, containing mainly Inkatha supporters, was targeted there was a police cover-up in which the Pietermaritzburg security police, the KZP, a police captain, a colonel, a brigadier and a general all played a role.²²

Mitchell had been a representative on the regional Joint Management Committee as well as chairman of the Local Management Committee.²³ In the course of the trial he stated in evidence: 'I saw myself on the side of

the Government ... I sympathised with Inkatha. They never made areas ungovernable.' Mitchell's statement raises the issue whether his actions were part of a conspiracy in the literal sense or rather the natural behaviour of a person who had been indoctrinated into the verities of apartheid and counter-insurgency thinking of the McCuen and Lass type. That there were many policemen who thought like this is the only plausible explanation for their abysmal failure to bring political murderers to book. After more than three years of political murder in the Midlands, the Deputy Minister of Justice, Danie Schutte, who was from Pietermaritzburg, proclaimed that in 1990 thirty-six cases dealing with the murder of people in political unrest had been initiated in the Pietermaritzburg courts that year.²⁴

The black-on-black violence interpretation

The idea that the violence was the result of blacks being blacks had a powerful hold on the white South African, and white European and American, imagination. When allied to an aggregation of stereotypes about the Zulus, it became potent indeed.

This interpretation was fuelled by two forces: racist attitudes; and intellectual and journalistic laziness. Its propagation was solidly in the interests of the government because it gave it little by way of bad publicity and masked the existence of a massive civil war in Natal at the height of an otherwise supposedly effective State of Emergency.

Racist attitudes and ethnic stereotypes grow from a variety of sources. One example is Jim of *Jock of the Bushveld* who looms large in the subconscious of most white English-speaking South African children. Zulu Jim is volatile, always in a fight, whacking lesser breeds like Shangaans (for contemporary purposes interpolate Xhosas) and generally a fine robust fellow, but regrettably rather unreliable and hence not to be trusted with real power. More generally, the South African and international press found it much easier to note a black-on-black killing than to explore the social, political and regional complexities that underlie violence. In 1990 the Association of Democratic Journalists (ADJ) produced a useful report on the misreporting of the Natal conflict to add to the work of Emdon and Mkhize.²⁵

However, there is a certain substratum of truth in the black-on-black violence argument that has to be excavated and addressed. It is clear that South Africa was a very violent society as a whole with amazingly high levels of personal violence in black communities seen particularly in murders, stabbings, assaults

and rapes.²⁶ In 1986 in the Pietermaritzburg area there were already at least three hundred murders per annum before the serious unrest began. One obvious explanation is that policing was so politicised, undermanned and ineffective that violent behaviour was allowed to reign almost unchallenged. Justice, of a rough and ready sort, had to be achieved personally and inevitably violently. Moreover, psychological explanations that can trace their lineage back to Franz Fanon see enormous amounts of anger and aggression turned inward against more immediately accessible enemies. This tendency was enhanced by the realities of a group areas segregated society. For great numbers of unemployed people and youth, white society was over a horizon.

In Natal there was also the genuine existence of the so-called faction fight. There have been a number of studies of faction fighting, the type locality of which (to use a biologist's term) was the Msinga area in central Natal. There an impoverished set of clans battled for scarce resources in a seemingly unending chain of blood feuds. In relation to faction fighting, an interesting study by Minnaar²⁷ includes amongst the historical antecedents of the late twentieth century political violence the following:

- the violent formation of the Zulu kingdom;
- a martial ethic instilled by Shaka and his heirs;
- results of the Anglo-Zulu war;
- dispossession of tribal land;
- the historical split between Natal and Zululand;
- rivalry between mission-educated amaKholwa modernists and the more rural tribal-orientated traditionalists;
- traditionalist and segregation supporting policies of Theophilus Shepstone and his apartheid heirs that worsened problems of land tenure and chiefly resources; and
- toleration by the State (colonial, Union and apartheid) of so-called faction fighting.

Another proponent of faction fighting origins was John Argyle, who argued strongly that political violence was the latest form of a blood feud (a term he preferred to faction fight) in which members of corporate groups or categories engage in violent conflict that, whatever its source (and Argyle seems to suggest that the source is cultural rather than material factors such as land shortage), was motivated principally by the desire for revenge. He identified a number of features that he saw as characteristic of Natal blood feuds: seriality, binary opposition of groups (usually linked to territorial affiliations on the pattern

of local group organisation in rural areas of Natal), group solidarity, revenge as a shared value, group or category definition and identification, avoidance of provocative behaviour, and provocation as a defence to charges of faction fighting. He also noted the intensification of faction fighting since the 1890s, growing use of guns, hired killers and motor vehicles, and amoralisation: women and children being killed and homesteads burned. He regarded, on the basis of court records of feuds in the past, the statements by combatants as invariably untruthful.²⁸

The picture Argyle painted was a very rigid and static one and rather mechanically imposed on the political conflict. Curiously, by his own admission the historical evidence suggested that faction fighting was largely confined to Natal (as distinct from Zululand) and mainly found in the Msinga and Port Shepstone areas. He offered no explanation for this apart from thinking that 'there is something distinctive about the "culture" of the Msinga people.' How this can then explain the Natal violence, some of the worst of which occurred in Zululand itself and in areas not previously linked to feuds, is hard to ascertain. A reasonable conclusion is that faction fights of this tribal type, more correctly of a tribal society in disintegration, are characteristic of only some of the more traditional rural areas.

The CAE database has extraordinarily few references to faction fighting. Even the police unrest report, prone to ascribe unrest to conflict between factions in cases where this was clearly not the case as in the KwaShange massacre of 25 September 1987, blames faction fighting for a very small percentage of the unrest.²⁹

However, in mid-1989 it became apparent that the Inkatha/UDF conflict was spreading to rural areas and some of the violence in these areas became a mixture of tribal disputes/faction fighting and political violence.³⁰ But it seems clear that whilst the essentially modern political conflict began to ingest or overlay such faction fighting, the two can be clearly distinguished. This can be seen in two particular areas near Pietermaritzburg, Table Mountain (Maqongqo) and Richmond. In Table Mountain, the Inkatha supporting tribe, the amaNyavu, which attacked the community led by CONTRALESA leader Chief Mhlabunzima Maphumulo claimed the pretext of an old land dispute. In Richmond, some underlying tribal friction and faction fighting took on the lineaments of conflict between comrades and the rural old guard.

The socio-economic interpretation

In March 1989 the head of the KZP, Jac Büchner, previously better known as an expert prosecution witness on the ANC's total onslaught conspiracy against South Africa, said that he remained firmly convinced that only long-term socio-economic upgrading of the area and the declaration by the community that they had had enough would bring the politically motivated violence to an end. In seeing socio-economic conditions as a primary causative factor,³¹ he thus allied himself with the view avidly propagated by the Inkatha Institute, whose executive director, Gavin Woods, produced a number of papers on the subject.³²

In one of Woods' documents, after some preliminary sniping at the media and political opportunists for persuading the public that the conflict was an ideological struggle for supremacy, and extolling the effective methodological techniques employed by the [Inkatha] Institute's multi-disciplinary research teams, which are nowhere described in detail, Woods presented the following argument on the causes of the violence.³³

First, he claimed that 90% of all types of township violence were perpetrated by youths aged 15–24 deeply angered and frustrated at their lives and insecure because of alienation and anxiety due to the absence of future purpose; that is, they were latently aggressive. These negative emotions were instilled by poverty and destitution. He claimed also that it 'is a universal phenomenon that severe poverty radicalises and in so doing breeds anger and aggression'. The fact that this poverty lay cheek by jowl with affluence gave impetus to the anger and dissatisfaction. Unemployment, inadequate education and lack of opportunities increased insecurity, frustration and purposelessness while youth had time on their hands to kill. Lack of political rights meant there were no ways to change the situation. On top of this, overcrowding caused more tension and conflict. The family structure had been broken down by apartheid and traditional authority structures, whether connected to respect for the older generation or to tribal hierarchies, had their power eroded. These alienated and aggressive youths then gravitated towards group formation where they took on identity and purpose, often of a gang or criminal type.

Second, he claimed that up to 50% of the unrest violence deaths were gangster or crime related and many criminals operated using the name of a political body. Third, these youths, subconsciously looking for an outlet for their pent-up aggression and frustration, were easily caught up in mob violence. The irrationality of much of the violence could not be sufficiently

explained as a simple clash of political ideologies.

Fourth, individuals 'playing any one of a number of agendas and who use an issue that is sensitive to the community' instigated action and mobilisation for reasons of territorial or personal power, revenge, punishment or political subversion. They offered material rewards or drugs to those they recruited to these purposes. Both criminal and political instigators capitalised on the predisposition to aggression among the youth.

Fifth, Woods drew a profile of youth combatants that summarised the previous points:

- scant formal or ideological connection with the established UDF and Inkatha movements;
- no vision for a future South Africa, not consciously fighting for black liberation or for any other political aspiration;³⁴
- material gain as an incentive to involvement in violence;
- enjoyment out of what they were doing: the power and the camaraderie of being in a group and the meaning that lives gained from group activity;
- almost all activities were either in response to serious issues that someone outside the group had advised, or a reaction to something bad that some other person or group had done (retribution); and
- a compulsion to be destructive.

If one accepts this explanation at face value and assumes the data and statements to be accurate, then one can only conclude that it does explain the violence; but its explanation is so complete that it explains everything and therefore nothing.

The depiction of the alienated, frustrated, angry black youth in desolate material and social surroundings is surely common cause. Nobody in their right mind would dispute that poverty and the destructive effects that apartheid caused could have an influence on the violence. Further, if seen within the broader context of social and economic change within South Africa and the collapse of the remnants of traditional society, the socio-economic deprivation thesis illuminates many aspects of the violence. What it does not explain is why Pietermaritzburg; why Natal; and why the State was unable to stop the conflict. The issue of when is also an important question left unanswered. However, one does not have to accept the empirical validity of the data Woods presents. Whilst many of the combatants were indeed such youths, many were not. While the profile may well illuminate the psychology of the more humble UDF comrade, it throws very little light at all on many of the Inkatha

combatants who were often mature men. A further point is that this material and social deprivation thesis does not explain why some of the places where the violence began were relatively better off materially (Mpumalanga compared with Shongweni and Ehlanzeni; and Imbali compared with Vulindlela).

Also, oddly enough, this socio-economic deprivation interpretation contradicts the explanation, essentially a conspiracy theory, frequently enunciated by Buthelezi, that the violence was the result of an ANC drive, part of its armed struggle to render South Africa ungovernable and, more specifically, to smash Inkatha. Even odder was Woods' tendency, when pressed, to argue in conspiracy theory mode. This was clearly illustrated in the full transcript of the debate between Aitchison and Woods subsequently published in May 1990.³⁵ Can one conclude from this that Woods did not in fact really believe in the socio-economic material deprivation theory he publicly espoused? Several of Woods' papers were schizophrenic because interwoven with the socio-economic interpretation is indeed a thinly disguised and highly political conspiracy theory as held by Buthelezi. There is, however, a certain affinity between the social deprivation thesis, which sees poor people as incapable of understanding their own predicament and dealing with it, and the conspiracy theory of bad outsiders misusing these ignorant people.

There are other variants of the socio-economic interpretation, ranging from attempts to describe the violence as the action of criminals (also a component of Woods' story), a generational conflict, or part of a battle for scarce material resources.³⁶ Material deprivation and scarce material resources interpretations have been used or critically examined by a number of writers. Most of them see socio-economic factors as important though in a complex interplay with ideological ones.³⁷ Morris and Hindson provide a neo-Marxist analysis which, though operating at a macro-level, tends to use the situation of the squatter settlements around Durban as a model. Unfortunately for an understanding of the Midlands conflict, there were no real squatter settlements in the Pietermaritzburg region when the violence began. The problem with the Morris and Hindson approach was aptly put by Terence Beard: 'One of the deficiencies manifest in most neo-Marxist writing on South Africa is the tendency to work solely at the structural and macro-level with class concepts such as capital and labour, and when moving to lower levels of analysis to break capital and labour into class-fractions, avoiding reference to actors, particularly to political actors.'³⁸

The final form of interpretation, by contrast, does concentrate on the political actors.

The political interpretation

The political interpretation is the simplest, the most obvious and, in a common sense way, the most convincing. There is, after all, a sound argument for accepting that political explanations of political phenomena are to be preferred if they are available and powerful.

Unmistakably there was a violent political clash between Inkatha and the UDF/COSATU, and, after 1990, the ANC. The parties involved, in their own words, perceived this as a political clash and the common people concurred with this perception. Even the Inkatha Institute, after some years of denying a political causation of the conflict, regularly published lists of Inkatha office bearers and members killed in the violence. Putting some stress on the political nature of the conflict does not mean rejecting the influence of criminal activity in the violence, nor the socio-economic factors which fuelled it, nor indeed the messiness in any conflict that makes apportionment of blame a risky undertaking. It also certainly does not mean ignoring the role of the State as a catalyst and perpetrator of violence.

Two surveys, one undertaken in 1988 in Natal and its KwaZulu areas and one in 1991 in the Pietermaritzburg region, underscore the assertion that political factors were commonly perceived as crucial.

The first report, published on 2 November 1988, *inter alia* examined the issue of violence.³⁹ Based on a sample survey of 802 adults (58% of them female), a picture emerged of an increasingly youthful and unemployed (61%; 72% in rural areas) population with very low levels of household income (60% earned less than R500 a month) and low education levels (only 15% had finished primary school.) Respondents rated house ownership (58%), money to buy things (51%), a good job (43%) and education (37%) as the highest needs, with political factors a low 8%. A list of fears showed that losing a job (94%), having your house burned down (94%), not having enough money (89%), being caught up in street violence (89%), being hurt or killed in political violence (88%), or being put into detention (86%) were more real than fears of imposed white rule (49%).

The report claimed that respondents agreed that one should respect tribal elders (96%) and let them tell one how to live one's life (80%), and that indunas were useful and necessary (75%). These propositions were universally agreed upon with the only fall-off coming from the small group of post-matriculants. In answer to the question 'Which political parties or organisations do you think most blacks should support?', Inkatha gained 38%, UDF 6%, ANC 6%,

COSATU 7% and UWUSA 2%, with 29% saying none and 20% refusing to answer. Leaders that respondents would like to see involved in a future government and chosen from a list were: Buthelezi 64%, Nelson Mandela 40%, Desmond Tutu 30%, Oliver Tambo 34% and Archie Gumede 34%. The church was perceived as one of the most important agents for change (51%) as compared to the black labour force (22%).

Responses to a range of statements on different types of violence aimed at producing change showed that the overwhelming majority rejected violence regardless of its purpose. Black-on-black violence was most unacceptable (only 3%); violence against whites (20%), the white government (22%) or defending oneself against forced recruitment (22%) less so. Some 43% agreed that consumer boycotts were not a good way to bring about change and only 11% supported sanctions. Respondents agreed that the army helped make the township safe for residents (64%), as did the SAP (62%). The interesting thing about some of these responses is the high recognition, and fear, of political violence; and the belief, among 22% of this seemingly relatively conservative sample, that violent defence against forced recruitment was permissible.

The second survey was a perception study of policing.⁴⁰ This survey was done some time after the period under review, the unbanning of the ANC and traumatic experiences in the region during March and April 1990, but it still gives a useful picture of common perceptions of the conflict as largely political, although aided and abetted by a third force believed by many to be embedded in the SAP.

Some 364 respondents (204 males and 160 females) were surveyed, randomly chosen from the Sobantu and Imbali townships of Pietermaritzburg (150 from Sobantu and 214 from Imbali.) Sobantu was generally considered ANC dominated and Imbali mixed between ANC and Inkatha, the latter probably less than 20% of the population. Permission was refused by the chief of the Mpumzuza area in Vulindlela for this Inkatha-dominated area to be surveyed. Instead, the researchers were invited to interview the chief and one of the local indunas who, they were assured, were able to communicate precisely the views of the community. The age and occupational breakdowns of the respondents were congruent with census data.

Political affiliations were as follows:

Name	ANC	Inkatha	None	AZAPO	SACP
	53.5	20.9	20.1	3.1	2.4

Causes of the conflict were seen by 52.9% as political rivalry between the ANC and Inkatha, a perception generally shared by all but particularly by ANC supporters. Other factors, such as apartheid, unemployment and poor communication between leaders and supporters were cited by 32% as causes. Another 15%, all ANC supporters, blamed forced recruitment by Inkatha. Thus a large majority saw an essentially political cause to the conflict.

Few people had confidence in the peace accord of 29 January 1991, 44.2% with no confidence at all and only 28.6% optimistic. Those lacking confidence were mainly ANC supporters (65.3%) with 9.6% of Inkatha sharing this view. A main reason given for the lack of confidence was entrenched bitterness from years of conflict.

Belief in a third force was shown by 48% of the sample (and by 75% of the ANC supporting respondents); and 66% of the believers in a third force identified it as the SAP. Only 11.5% denied the existence of a third force, but a fairly large group (40.5%) claimed not to have heard of allegations about it. On allegations of police partisanship, 71.3% believed the police were partisan and only 14.3% said they were not. ANC supporters were more inclined to say that the police were partisan (78.4%). In contrast, only 4.6% of Inkatha supporters said that the police were partisan. Of the total sample, 29% said the SAP supported Inkatha, 1.1% the ANC and 33.4% were not specific. The degree of satisfaction with the behaviour of the SAP in relation to the conflict was low: 29.4% saying they did nothing to stop it and were happy to see it continue, 51.7% simply dissatisfied, and only 18.9% content with the SAP.

The perceptions of common people may of course be wrong, as wrong as the universal one that the sun rises in the east. But endorsing the importance of this political interpretation of the conflict does not mean rejecting its obvious multi-causal origins, nor the complex intertwining of material and ideological conditions that create the environment in which violence, once ignited, can cause a conflagration. This point needs to be strongly made because some critics of the political interpretation seem to assume a shallow or naive understanding on the part of its adherents.

Taylor and Shaw⁴¹ argue that there is a widespread and uncritical acceptance of a simplistic, reductionist political interpretation of the violence built on an empiricist base and that this perspective is supported by social research findings as typified in the work of Aitchison and Kentridge.⁴²

However, Taylor and Shaw, in arguing against this supposed political interpretation presented criticisms of it that reproduce core components of its very position: the State's role in fomenting violence; violence not being in

the long-term interests of either the ANC or Inkatha; the multiple causation of conflict and so on. They also appear to have ignored substantial sections of this author's work that had already addressed many of these criticisms such as Woods' claim that because as many as 75% to 80% of the combatants could not explain the ideologies to which they were politically aligned or name the leaders of Inkatha or the UDF they were therefore not political actors in the conflict.⁴³ Another weakness of their critique of the political position, in which they underplay the role of identifiable political actors, lies in over-reliance on a single study by Antoinette Louw using data from a major Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) database project on patterns of collective action. Relying mainly on press reports, she claimed that half of the violent events remained unexplained and that in only 8.6% of cases was the cause reported as an IFP-ANC clash. This latter figure is in itself misleading in that it refers only to fights or battles and does not include other attacks on ANC or Inkatha people.⁴⁴ Taylor and Shaw also tend to accept, uncritically, estimations of the scale and nature of certain other conflict such as UDF versus Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) in the Pietermaritzburg region. Evidence from the CAE database clearly indicates the small scale and very localised nature of UDF/BCM clashes in the region.

However, Taylor and Shaw, correctly dismissing the parody they had constructed of the political interpretation as an over-simplification of the nature of the conflict, do then engage in an interesting attempt to understand the underlying dynamics of the 'active constitution of political identification in the context of specific material conditions'.⁴⁵ This they do by stating that the Natal violence concentrated on the border of the KwaZulu homeland and on the margins of the industrialised centres along the Pietermaritzburg-Durban corridor. They provide a brief history of the dispossession of the peasantry, the attempt to reverse black urbanisation and remove blacks from white rural areas by the NP, and the general impoverishment of blacks. With the breakdown of influx control huge squatter settlements arose around Durban. They also note some degree of socio-economic differentiation, particularly between those with and without formal jobs and between those in townships, squatter settlements and rural areas. Up to this point their argument is very similar to the socio-economic ones of Stavrou and Crouch, Hindson and Morris, and also, occasionally, Woods.⁴⁶

Though Taylor and Shaw suggest that the ANC had support from the more urbanised and skilled workers and Inkatha from the lumpen and dispossessed in squatter settlements, they argue that it is a fallacy to see settlements as

neatly divided into formal townships and informal settlements, which were internally undifferentiated. Rather, settlements were internally differentiated, fragmented and divided and both the ANC and Inkatha had a pan-class nature. Support crossed not only class, but also generation, gender and regional divisions. They also argue that class analyses such as those of Morris and Hindson do not begin to unravel the way material conditions intersect with the constitution of political identity. Whilst case studies such as those made by Stavrou and Crouch and Stavrou and Shongwe⁴⁷ recognised the importance of rapid urbanisation and socio-economic differentiation, they all failed to explain exactly how this has manifested itself in political conflict. Taylor and Shaw blame this on the use of classical Eurocentric class configurations rather than the inappropriateness of a materialist Marxist analysis *per se*. Hence, they see the need to develop more rigorous categories of differentiation.

Taylor and Shaw attempt to do this by looking at linkages to land (tribal tenure, occupational rights, leasehold, freehold), housing forms, sources of income (wage labourers in large industries, long-term migrants, frontier commuters, informal economy earners) and the role of the KwaZulu regime as a creator of patronage networks, controller of resources and a coercive sub-system of control.⁴⁸ The KwaZulu administration was unable to meet the most basic needs of most of the region's inhabitants, particularly those living outside KwaZulu. In particular, the needs of the following were not represented by Inkatha: the fully employed industrial working class, the middle and rising professional sectors, and the residents of townships and freehold areas in white Natal. And the diversity of these people's interests had not been effectively politically represented by the State-repressed ANC/UDF/COSATU opposition.

Their conclusion is that overall, given the constraints that faced both Inkatha and ANC/UDF/COSATU structures, grievances were often not clearly channelled through any form of political organisation. And that, in reality, there was a large element of spontaneity that only takes political forms over time. For many people, firmly articulated political identification took place only after the outbreak and through the course of conflict. Thus, political identities should be seen as emergent features of collective action.⁴⁹

Whilst not necessarily agreeing with the details of this analysis, which generalises too much about the region and does not penetrate the dark complexity behind the violence in the Midlands, it has the merit of seeing the political conflict as the result of a complex interaction between socio-economic and political factors. It also suggests that much more detailed academic work is needed to explore the construction of that heart of darkness. One such exploration is into the original support base that Inkatha had in the region.

Early signs of the attrition of Inkatha's support base

A key contention in the UDF and COSATU arguments on the Midlands violence is that Inkatha had considerably less support than it claimed in the region. Alternatively, if it once had support it was in the process of losing it. The contention is then used to back up the argument that when Inkatha tried to recruit members in 1987 it had to resort to violence and engaged in the dramatic attacks of late March 1990 as an attempt to counter the massive support given to the by-then unbanned ANC.

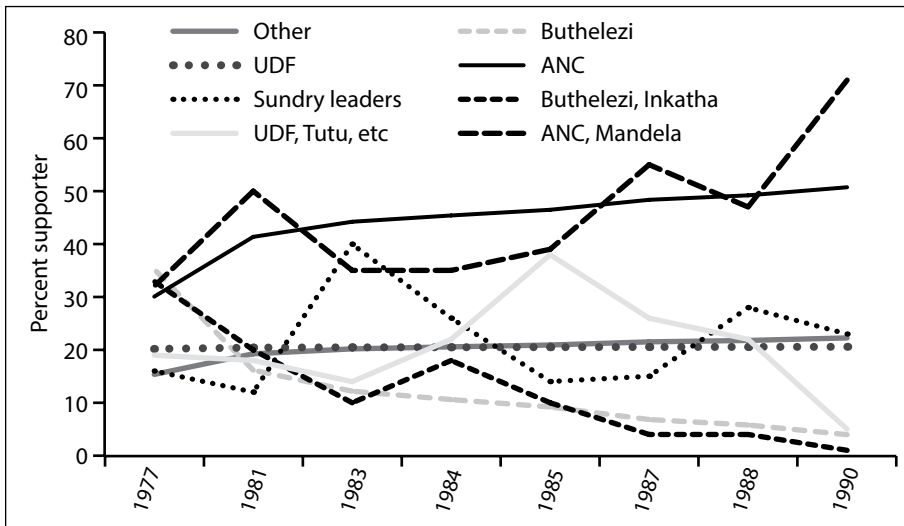
In a more normal and democratic society such a contention would have been tested by free elections for various levels of government. Bereft of such opportunities, indications of support for various political groupings had to be gleaned from market and other surveys and from the observations of reporters on attendances at political rallies (this latter method, of dubious accuracy as it is at the best of times, being rendered totally unreliable for most of the post-1986 Emergency period because the UDF and COSATU could not hold rallies.)

Evidence of surveys

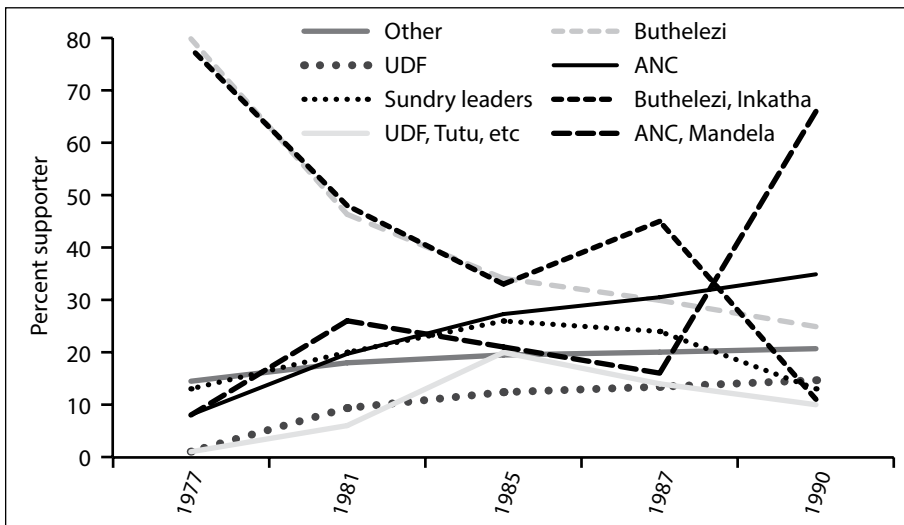
There were a number of surveys in which questions of political affiliation or support were asked in addition to other questions more directly related to the purpose of the survey (often about support and opposition to disinvestment and sanctions as means of changing South African state policies.) What illumination, if any, was shed by surveys and opinion polls on black political tendencies in the Midlands? In a direct way very little because most surveys tended to have their samples located in, or heavily weighted towards, metropolitan areas. Nationally, surveys tended to reflect tendencies in the PWV complex and if Natal people were sampled, they were usually found in the Durban area. However, indirectly and with obvious qualifications, survey results may show tendencies that developed in the Midlands as well.

Orkin in a survey of polls showing support for the ANC, UDF and Inkatha for the period 1982 to 1988 said it was clear that the ANC and UDF were gathering more and more support and that Inkatha was tending towards a level of terminal decline as a national political force.⁵⁰ However, most of these surveys were conducted in the PWV area and hence inevitably underestimated support for Inkatha in Natal. Yet it is important not to underestimate the import of these more national trends and it is quite legitimate to hypothesise that similar trends were at work in the Midlands over this period.

The author's October 1991 study of opinion polls on political support in South Africa examined seventeen surveys from April 1990 to mid 1991 as well as Orkin's updating of his survey to June 1990 (see graphs 34 and 35).⁵¹ The trends Orkin described continued to operate.

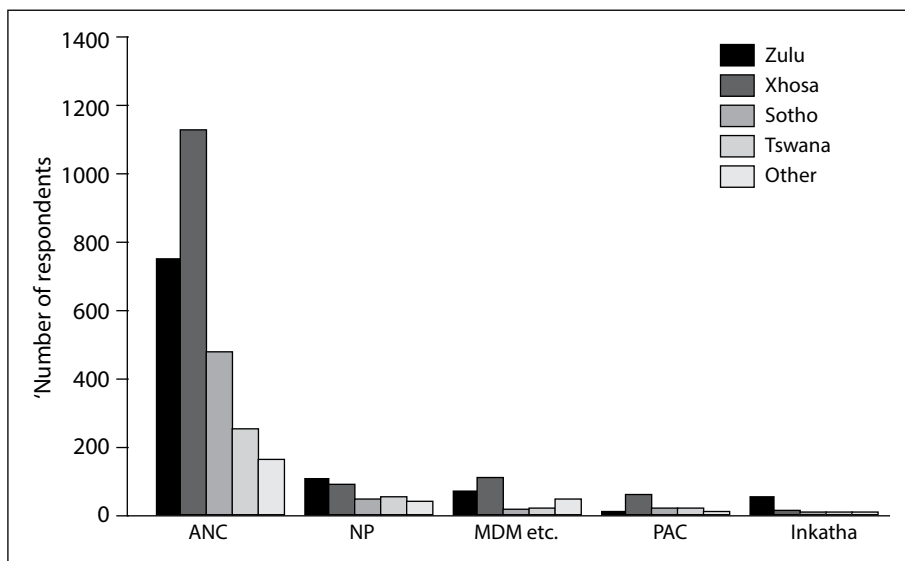


Graph 34 Metropolitan Africans' political allegiance, PWV, 1977-1990
(Source: CASE)

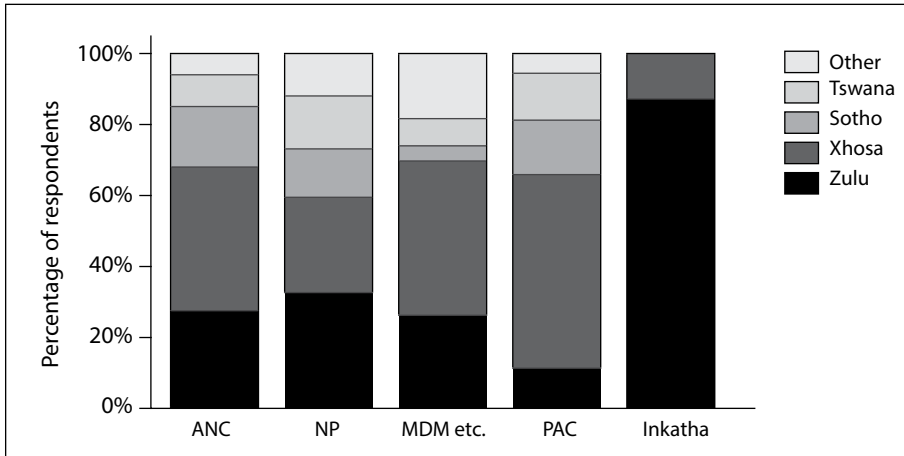


Graph 35 Metropolitan Africans' political allegiance, Natal, 1977-1990
(Source: CASE)

One study, by Markinor in April 1990, did survey Durban respondents and confirmed the rise of the ANC's appeal and the decline in Inkatha's: nationally, Buthelezi and Inkatha could only muster about 1% support compared to Mandela's 58% and the ANC's 64%. In an unpublished paper by Mark Orkin of the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) on this April Markinor survey and a later one in June, the ethnic composition of support is examined and it is clear that the ANC had substantial support from all black ethnic/language groups by comparison with Inkatha, which was solidly Zulu. But nationally the number of Zulu-speaking supporters of the ANC far exceeded those supporting Inkatha and even the NP had more Zulu supporters than Inkatha (see graphs 36 and 37).



Graph 36 Distribution of ethnic groups within political tendencies, 1990
 (Source: Orkin (1990) based on Markinor data, 1990)



*Graph 37 Distribution of ethnic groups within political tendencies, 1990
(Source: Orkin (1990) based on Markinor data, 1990)*

In October and November 1990 Markinor conducted the South African component of a World Social Value Study, initiated by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, which spanned 42 countries. The sample comprised 1 236 whites (rural and urban), 200 coloured residents of Cape Town, 200 Asian residents of Durban and 600 black people in major urban centres. All respondents were aged 16 years or older.

This confirmed previous surveys showing that Inkatha had little black support. Urban blacks were no more likely to see Inkatha as a second option than as their first choice, which tended to be the ANC. The survey results made it clear that although Inkatha had an overall 6% of the vote, this was based in the rural areas. Among urban blacks the overall support was 1%, rising to 3% in the Durban area, and was exclusively Zulu. Although details are not available, it is likely that Inkatha's rural base was equally regional and Zulu-specific. Much as Buthelezi had a national media presence, his electoral potential appeared considerably narrower. However, white respondents showed a real interest in Inkatha as their party of second choice, a full 8% selecting it.⁵²

The unpopularity factor

An important issue, even if the trends reflected in national surveys hold true in the Midlands, is the base from which Inkatha support rose or fell. A number of the journalistic accounts speak fairly assuredly of Inkatha having undisputed dominance of the region prior to the rise of the UDF in 1983. Nzimande,

though disputing that Inkatha controlled Edendale, makes no clear finding on the wider region. Inkatha's own claims on membership figures demand a fair degree of scepticism.⁵³

A small attitude survey by Aitchison in December 1981 sheds a small circle of light on the question.⁵⁴ The one hundred black schoolchildren surveyed had not been readmitted to school in 1981 or earlier (most of them had failed Standard 8 or 9 and there was an acute shortage of places in the schools), but had continued as private candidates studying virtually full time through a University of Natal student run teaching scheme (Students of Pietermaritzburg Social and Educational Club (SPASEC)) and a KwaZulu registered adult centre in Edendale (Dalisu).⁵⁵ They were not, at least superficially, particularly radical: 73% of them said that schoolchildren should not take part in politics and 61% said they never discussed politics. Only 20% thought that the school boycotts of recent years had been done for good reasons. They were asked a number of carefully worded questions about which political parties or groupings they saw as agents of productive change both now and potentially in the future.

One of the key questions was phrased thus: 'Which of the following organisations and political parties has caused the most change that helps the black people in this country? (you do not have to agree with the organisation or political party.) Also mark the organisation or political party that has caused the least change that helps black people:

- African National Congress (ANC)
- Black Peoples Convention (BPC)
- Broederbond
- Communist Party (CP)
- Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP)
- Inkatha
- New Republic Party (NRP)
- Pan African Congress (PAC)
- National Party (NP)
- Progressive Federal Party (PFP)
- South African Council of Churches (SACC)

The intriguing results are shown in tables 31, 32 and 33.

	All			SPASEC			Dalisu		
	F	%RF	%AF	F	%RF	%AF	F	%RF	%AF
Inkatha	16	16	38.1	10	12.5	32.3	6	30	54.5
ANC	14	14	33.3	13	16.2	41.9	1	5	9.1
SACC	9	9	21.4	6	7.5	19.4	3	15	27.3
BPC	1	1	2.4	–	–	–	1	5	9.1
PFP	1	1	2.4	1	1.2	3.2	–	–	–
Broederbond	1	1	2.4	1	1.2	3.2	–	–	–
No response	58	58	M	49	61.4	M	9	45	M
Totals	100	100	100	80	100	100	20	100	100
Notes: F = Frequency (number of responses); %RF = Relative frequency of responses (including no response) as a percentage; %AF = Adjusted frequency of responses (no responses missing) as a percentage; M = Missing.									

Table 31 Political party or organisation causing most good change, 1981

	All			SPASEC			Dalisu		
	F	%RF	%AF	F	%RF	%AF	F	%RF	%AF
Inkatha	18	18	60.0	16	20.0	59.3	2	10.0	66.7
ANC	3	3	10.0	3	3.7	11.1	–	–	–
BPC	2	2	6.7	2	2.5	7.4	–	–	–
NRP	2	2	6.7	2	2.5	7.4	–	–	–
PAC	2	2	6.7	2	2.5	7.4	–	–	–
NP	2	2	6.7	2	2.5	7.4	–	–	–
SACC	1	1	3.3	–	–	–	1	5.0	33.3
No response	70	70	M	53	66.2	M	17	85.0	M
Totals	100	100	100	80	100	100	20	100	100
Notes: as in table 31.									

Table 32 Political party or organisation causing least good change, 1981

They show that relatively few respondents had clear political preferences, though of course the few responses may be conditioned by caution about revealing their political alignment, with Inkatha slightly ahead of the ANC in the popularity stakes but overwhelmingly down in the unpopularity listing.

If the parties mentioned are grouped into the following crude categories – black radical, black conservative and white – the radicals emerge as the most popular grouping.

	Most		Least	
	F	%AF	F	%AF
ANC	14	33.3	3	10.0
SACC	9	21.4	1	3.3
BPC	1	2.4	2	6.7
PAC			2	6.7
Inkatha	16	38.1	18	60.0
PFP	1	2.4		
Broederbond	1	2.4		
NP			2	6.7
NRP			2	6.7
No response	58	M	70	M
Totals	100	100	100	100
Notes: as in table 31.				

Table 33 Political party or body causing most/least good change, 1981

The following tentative conclusions can be derived from these statistics. Among such extruded students the loudest voice is a radical one (57% of those who responded) and Inkatha comes only second in support (38%), but has an even larger negative vote against it (60% of those who responded). Given that Inkatha had enjoyed six years of freedom to organise in the area and that radicals had experienced heavy repression since 1976, radical support was impressive. In terms of future prospects the really bad news for Inkatha was the negative vote. A lot of people did not like it. By contrast very few people actively disliked the radicals.

In retrospect the configurations of the forces involved in the conflict of 1987 can be perceived to be in formation. Inkatha is powerful, but not all that powerful; and the radicals are presented with the opportunity to mobilise an even more powerful anti-Inkatha tendency. Within the radicals the ANC tendency is numerically stronger than the BCM/Africanist one and explains the dominance that the UDF came to exercise in the region. Considering that the militants in the conflict in 1987 and 1988, particularly on the UDF side, were often such extruded students – young, unemployed and yet with big aspirations – the answers given to this survey are suggestive of what was to come.

Also interesting is the extent to which black political groupings were central in their perceptions. In spite of the reality that it was the NP that was responsible for most change at the time, it is not central to the respondents' political perceptions. That the perceived enemy might be taken to be another

black political grouping rather than the white government was also a tendency that would come into its own with deadly effect in 1987.

Why Natal?

In this final section, within the broad perspective of a political interpretation of the causes of the conflict, a response is outlined as to why a conflict with the peculiar character and dimensions of that in the Midlands should have emerged in Natal, rather than elsewhere in South Africa.

The sixties and the seventies were very successful years politically for the NP. Demographically, of course, they failed: how could they not when a poor migrant from Transkei ended up 200% richer after a couple of years in Durban or Cape Town even if a large percentage of his time was spent in jail for a pass offence. And there were more and more of these poor illiterate migrants who destroyed geographical segregation: their parents, being illiterate too, had not imbibed the middle class wisdom which said that more than two children per family interfered with the accumulation of capitalist consumer goods.

In Natal things were complicated by the province not having a real independent black state. Buthelezi, a hereditary chief from the heart of Zululand had, in the most principled way, resisted the imposition of all the preliminaries for nominal independence, adroitly gained control of the nascent bantustan's legislative assembly, and cunningly avoided any lethal confrontation with the NP government. In 1975 he set up the Inkatha National Cultural Liberation Movement after much toing and froing to Kenneth Kaunda in Lusaka and undoubtedly received the silent consent, if not outright blessing, of the ANC in exile.

Inkatha was formed at a peculiar conjunction both nationally and internationally that enabled it to articulate its mission with a curious variety of discourses. It used the language of black consciousness and black identity in such a way that it avoided head-on confrontation with the white government, which had ruled out the possibility of white/black political togetherness. It employed the para-political language of cultural liberation, which came largely from Paulo Freire's work within the World Council of Churches after he was expelled from Brazil. And at the same time it had legitimated itself as an authentic expression of the largely ANC tradition of inclusive black nationalism through its negotiations carried out with the ANC and Kaunda as well as through Buthelezi's own connections with the ANC and Nelson Mandela. Its language of non-violence also spoke to business interests and foreign powers intent on constructive engagement.

It was an interesting mixture. Black consciousness, in spite of its positive identity building character that did much to liberate psychologically, had within it a wellspring of simple resentment that later was to develop within Inkatha into a near pathological dislike of clever leftist whites and Indians and any black radicals associated with them. Cultural liberation as a code word for political awareness raised within a tight and repressive political situation very soon lost any critical edge once Inkatha, or more accurately Buthelezi, had consolidated its seizure of control of the traditional tribal structure that now worked through the apartheid regional and territorial authorities.

For a time, about four years, Buthelezi rode high and indeed excited many blacks, both in Natal and nationally. An opinion poll on the Witwatersrand in 1977 showed him as probably the most popular black politician in South Africa next to Mandela. In Natal he had managed to please both trade unionists and capital's managers, the latter seeing him as a (hopefully loyal) Zulu with whom they could do business; and, happy thought for they all really disliked apartheid, maybe he could enable Natal escape the worst of Afrikanerdom's economically disastrous ideological excesses. Natal is essentially a black province and it is likely that some people genuinely thought that some kind of multi-racial region free of apartheid could be allowed there.

Handling Buthelezi was no doubt a major pre-occupation of a number of security officials and agents, many of them already deeply embedded within Inkatha. In the mid-sixties it was quite clear that the security police loathed Buthelezi (he had after all been an ANC supporter and Mandela had visited him when underground) and smeared, harassed and tried to frame him. There is some evidence that assassination was also planned. By the early eighties it was obvious that Buthelezi was being handled by the agencies of the State in a different way and with great subtlety they used his own strengths and weaknesses against him.

Buthelezi's personality was a crucial factor in the whole saga. It is likely that the Inkatha-UDF war might never have happened if he had possessed a different temperament. A number of features stand out as influencing future events. Regrettably many of the actions and statements of the Left in South Africa interacted with that peculiar temperament in a disastrous way. If they had been more political, rather than rhetorical and doctrinaire, then maybe the disaster could also have been partially averted. Buthelezi is an amazing blend of humanity, magnanimity and near paranoiac oversensitivity. The blend was, in troubled times, absolutely lethal. His devotees could only see this marvellous man as the victim of the vituperations of those they personally

despised and feared, while his opponents rubbed him up in every wrong way. Increasingly isolated at the time of the Conference for Democracy in South Africa (CODESA), by the beginning of 1993 he was surrounded by sycophants, spies and Iagos and his life can but strike one as, in the correct sense of the word, tragic. Under a different constellation he might have been South Africa's hero and saviour. Instead, he became one of the last and greatest victims of apartheid.

In the early eighties Buthelezi was clearly making less and less effort to be seen as overtly in tune with the liberation movements. In terms of actual events, the break is often identified as coinciding with the late 1979 meeting with the ANC in London at which Buthelezi quite obviously made a claim for political independence. There are differing accounts of the meeting with the ANC portraying Buthelezi as simply being unreasonable and Inkatha claiming that their leader refused to be a pawn of the ANC. But in this whole period there were signals that Buthelezi was taking an increasingly hard line against any black radicals who gave him lip (and many were doing so in a most offensive way, particularly those coming out of the black university black consciousness tradition.) With the unionists there was also an abrasive tango. Buthelezi disliked being obviously manipulated and some of the early unionist intellectuals had schemes for Buthelezi's political role they had not run by him first. He in turn seemed to get on famously with white businessmen in a way that did not endear him to the vanguard representatives of the working class. By the time of the formation of the UDF, attitudes were already icy between Inkatha and the Left. It is known that some suggested to Archie Gumede, a prominent national and Natal UDF leader who was inclined to a particularly moderate and non-violent variant of the ANC tradition, that it was essential that some sort of concordat be arranged with Buthelezi. But already political conditions rendered such a deal impossible and it was never really tried.

In the interim Inkatha was going full steam ahead with its own brand of a cause that had remarkable longevity, the Natal option.⁵⁶ The early attempts in the twentieth century were quaint efforts by English-speaking colonials to avoid Boer dominance and be left to run their own feudal paradise in which they could have Zulu royalty to tea unrestricted by apartheid, but still have Zulu retainers serving the sundowners. In the immortal phrase of the United Party it was 'white domination with justice'. Buthelezi's variant of the Natal option was undoubtedly more attractive for it posited a non-racial province within a federal South Africa that would be the testing ground to prove to the more conservative forces in the rest of the country that non-racialism

was alright. Grounded on the findings of the Buthelezi Commission, which had some genuinely good suggestions particularly in its education report that proved stunningly superior to the HSRC's de Lange report, the KwaNatal Indaba could, some years earlier, have been genuinely progressive. But its inaugural meeting on 3 April 1986 was too late: by the time KwaZulu Cabinet minister Samuel Jamile had appended the first signature to the declaration its historical moment was past. The NP was too tardy in its blessings, though later its own constitutional proposals often echoed Buthelezi's; the UDF was already mobilising the youth with extravagant success; and the decline into civil strife was already rapid. The demise of the Indaba is perhaps best symbolised by that first signature, followed by Natal business luminaries and a no longer morally acute Alan Paton. In 1990 Jamile was arrested, tried and convicted of murdering some of his political opponents.

Inkatha had been unprepared for the massive revival of anti-apartheid mobilisation that occurred in 1983 with the formation of the UDF. Nor, finally, was Inkatha prepared for the consequences of the government making a direct deal with the banned ANC. The attack on students by followers of Buthelezi at the University of Zululand in 1983 was an indication of already souring relationships and the eighties saw a steady attrition in Buthelezi's national support. This enhanced what had probably always been an ambiguity within Inkatha and Buthelezi himself – a tension between national and regional politics. Later, deliberate stress on Zulu ethnic identity showed that the regional stress was the more powerful.

The Indaba proposals would have given Buthelezi a considerable base from which to exert power nationally. Their acceptance would have abolished the bantustans as a cornerstone of continuing political development. As prime minister of a federal state established outside apartheid he would have had a secure base from which to enter national politics. But the NP government simply refused to accept the proposals. If they had, the course of South African history would have been completely different.

Predisposing factors

It is often asked: why Natal? Surely, Natal was relatively peaceful? Surely, even though Buthelezi and Inkatha might not be the ideal solution, there was a sense in which some of the worst and abrasive features of apartheid had been tempered in its sub-tropical climate? Whilst there is predictably some truth implicit in these questions, it does need to be said that Natal had some very

basic problems which, even if there had not been a State agenda for political destabilisation, would certainly have inclined the region to conflict at some stage or other. Some of these predisposing factors include the following.

First, the rapid urbanisation of Natal which meant that, short of some apocalyptic destruction of the core urban infrastructure and industrial dynamo, urban people resident in Durban, and to a lesser extent the Pietermaritzburg, Ladysmith, Newcastle and Richards Bay metropolitan areas, would control the destiny of the province. Second, the growing adherence of urban black people in Natal to the broad ANC and UDF position, which they perceived as modern, progressive and national. Linked to growing urbanisation this made inevitable friction with Inkatha, a movement psychologically linked to the past, a discredited tribal system and the rural hinterland.

Third, the urbanising imperative allied to the failure of both central government and the KwaZulu administration to provide housing led to the development of a huge squatter belt around Durban, which would become a place of political and resource contestation. The dynamics of this scenario would inevitably put Inkatha on the defensive and prone to rearguard action to retain support as its local structures lost control in urban areas and were pushed further away from the cities.⁵⁷

Fourth, government and administrative superstructures were simply inappropriate to the situation, both politically and economically. The white Natal administration seemed honestly to believe that there was a white Natal and a black KwaZulu, which was led by an astute and moderate, yet paradoxically belligerent, Buthelezi who was fawned upon as the great moderate black hope; yet never given the real resources soon enough that would have enabled him to deliver to black people. The majority of black people in Natal were poor, illiterate and burdened by unemployment, either directly or through the unemployment of a close family member. This situation was not exactly one of the irreversible breakdown of a community's ability to support itself, for on the macro level absolute poverty had in fact lessened over the past few decades, but rather one leading to a growing unwillingness to tolerate perceived deprivation relative to the position of whites and Indians. The general level of ignorance among the Natal population meant that the understanding of the real causes of relative deprivation might have been faulty and itself a cause of further stress.⁵⁸

Social stress required relatively minor triggers to unleash massive forces of destruction. Among them were: a tribal system that was in the process of disintegration (and had been so for more than a century) turned into a

vehicle for essentially modern political ambitions; a growing gulf between the schooled and the unschooled (in KwaZulu it appeared that as many as 40% of the children of school-going age were not at school);⁵⁹ a growing divide between settled urban township dwellers, squatters and the rural poor in KwaZulu and white farmlands; a growing gulf between a highly politicised youth culture and a more traditional parental one without effective institutions through which this conflict could be mediated, particularly in tribal areas; unemployment; and lack of housing.

Fifth, Natal's poor ability to lobby nationally had the consequence that the province was underserved and underfinanced by central government, including the revenues transferred by central government to KwaZulu. Although the actual formulae involved were complex, it was argued that many services such as hospitals, education and roads received up to 25% less than was equitable in terms of population.⁶⁰ Historically, Natal was punished after 1948 for being non-NP supporting and after Buthelezi came to power in KwaZulu his administration was punished for not taking independence.⁶¹

Non-sustainable strategies of political activity for gaining or retaining political power and control in the province were those that were internally contradictory and self defeating. The ready recourse to violence by Inkatha supporters from the early eighties was a classic example of a self-defeating strategy that had gone through four predictable stages. First, when initially under stress Inkatha relied upon familiar coping mechanisms, in this case a regression to tribal/vigilante discipline. These strategies caused some short-term losses but did not seriously affect long-term assets such as the support of white businessmen. Indeed, early manifestations of Inkatha violence (the suppression of school boycotts in 1984 and 1985) were often seen as positive indications of both Inkatha's control in the region and its pragmatic realism. But this coping alienated huge sections of the township youth and their parents.

Second, in the Midlands war of September 1987 to January 1988 Inkatha's assets as a non-violent, moderate organisation (its real long-term assets) were traded off in a desperate attempt to retain control of the Pietermaritzburg and Hammarisdale region, a strategy which failed dismally in spite of overt State support and began to lose it support from the white business community, who backed Inkatha as a defuser of political conflict, not a major actor in it. Third, Inkatha then became more and more reliant on outside help in the form of the South African government and its police and foreign right-wing funding, but in the process destroyed more and more of its credibility with blacks generally (national surveys showing that Inkatha was now regarded by the

majority of blacks with fear and loathing) and led to the ironic situation of the most obstinately resistant of the traditional leaders, Buthelezi, becoming the closest to the NP and even the more right-wing Conservative Party. Fourth, the last stage saw attempts to mobilise, usually through artificially grouped Zulu-speaking migrant workers in other regions where the same counter-productive strategies were redeployed anew.

Needless to say, a number of self-defeating strategies were also used by the UDF to try to take on the State and Inkatha without the material base to sustain such a struggle or to provide benefits to those whose support they gained.

It is such an argument that suggests an answer to the 'Why Natal?' question. It provides a context to the answer to the question 'Why Natal in 1987?' that has already been addressed. The latency for violence in Natal became manifest in September 1987 in Pietermaritzburg. It is an answer that described a situation boding ill for the future of an old traditional system, which lived on dreams of heroism and dignity and was dying and riddled with an incurable cancer of corruption and ignorance. Revanchism in these circumstances was the worst inheritance its supporters could possibly have in a new South Africa.

ENDNOTES

- 1 J.J.W. Aitchison, 'Interpreting violence: the struggle to understand the Natal conflict'. Paper presented at the Conference of the Association for Sociology in Southern Africa, University of Stellenbosch, 1-4 July 1990.
- 2 *Natal Witness* 3 September 1992.
- 3 *Natal Witness* 25 January 1990; *Echo* 1 February 1990.
- 4 *Natal Witness* 9 April 1988.
- 5 *Natal Witness* 27 February 1988.
- 6 Until the end of his control of law and order in a cabinet reshuffle in July 1991 after the Inkathagate scandal.
- 7 *South African Update* 2(7) April 1990: 8.
- 8 See Josette Cole, *Crossroads: The Politics of Reform and Repression* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1987).
- 9 *Kitskonstabels in Crisis: A Closer Look at Black on Black Policing* (Cape Town: Institute of Criminology, University of Cape Town, 1990).
- 10 United Nations Children's Fund, *Children on the Front Line: The Impact of Apartheid, Destabilization and Warfare in Southern and South Africa* (New York: UNICEF, 1987): 19-20, 29-31.
- 11 Human Rights Commission, *The CCB: Origin, Actions and the Future of the Civil Co-operation Bureau* (Johannesburg: HRC, 1990; Special Report SR-9).
- 12 J.J. McCuen, 'The art of counter-revolutionary war' (1966; typescript summary distributed to government officials and members of parliament by the State Security Council in 1988); and an undated document by H.R. Lass, 'Die grondleggers van revolusionere oorlogvoering': summary 28, 32 and 63.

- 13 R. Lawrence, 'South Africa through the looking glass' *Reality* 15(2) 1983: 9–13.
- 14 *Natal Witness* 29 January 1990.
- 15 D. Everatt, M. Orkin and S. Pityana, *CASE Perspectives on Transition Politics in South Africa: Party Power and Prospects* (Johannesburg: CASE, 1991).
- 16 *Natal Witness* 12 and 15 June 1991; *Echo* 13 June 1991; *New African* 13 June 1991; *New Nation* 14 June 1991.
- 17 *Natal Witness* 12 June 1991.
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 N. Basson, 'De Klerk's double agenda' *Work in Progress* 79 (1991): 12.
- 20 P. Zulu, 'Behind the mask: South Africa's third force' *Indicator South Africa* 10(1) 1992: 8–14. Zulu makes the important point that 'given the capability of the South African security forces, neither the ANC nor the IFP has the capacity to sustain violence on the scale that has been witnessed in the past three years [1990–1992]. There must be, therefore, other forces at work that are engaged in a process of destabilisation in order to scuttle the negotiations that are underway, or work to maintain the status quo of white domination.' (9).
- 21 Human Rights Commission, *Checkmate for Apartheid?: Special Report on Two Years of Destabilisation, July 1990 to June 1992* (Johannesburg: HRC, 1992): 4, 10, 20, 23, 32.
- 22 M. de Haas, 'The ghosts of Trust Feed' *Indicator South Africa* 9(3) 1992: 65–68; Zulu, 'Behind the mask: 8–14.
- 23 The National Security Management System was first exposed and explained in Anton Harber 'The uniformed web that sprawls across the country' and Moira Levy 'How it works' *Weekly Mail* 3 October 1986: 12–13.
- 24 *Natal Witness* 14 July 1990.
- 25 Association of Democratic Journalists. 'Press release: newspaper coverage of the Natal violence' (Durban: Association of Democratic Journalists, 25 April 1990); C. Emdon, 'Obstacles in the way of understanding the violence' in *Violence in Natal: Counting the Cost/Assessing the Future* (Durban: IDASA, 1990): 43–57; C. Emdon, 'The Natal violence: developing a model for evaluating newspaper information' in *Media matters in South Africa* edited by J. Prinsloo and C. Criticos (Durban: Media Resource Centre, Department of Education, University of Natal, 1991); K. Mkhize, 'Ways of seeing: ethnicity and violence' *Indicator South Africa* 8(1) 1990: 11–13.
- 26 In 1991 South Africa had 14 693 homicides, 488 of them whites. The annual average of political fatalities from 1985 to 1992 was 1 684, compared to Northern Ireland's 136. Source: *Work in Progress* 86 (1992): 9.
- 27 A. de V. Minnaar, *Conflict and Violence in Natal/KwaZulu: Historical Perspectives* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1990). Other publications by Minnaar touch on faction fighting as an influence on the modern conflict: A. de V. Minnaar, *Squatters, Violence and the Future of the Informal Settlements in the Greater Durban Region* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1992); A. de V. Minnaar, M. Wentzel and D. Coombe, 'The ethnic factor in hostel conflict on the Reef'. Paper presented to the Project on Contemporary Political Conflict in Natal Conference: Ethnicity, Society and Conflict in Natal, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 14–16 September 1992.
- 28 J. Argyle, 'Faction fights, feuds, ethnicity and political conflict in Natal: a comparative view'. Paper presented to the Project on Contemporary Political Conflict in Natal: Ethnicity, Society and Conflict in Natal, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, 14–16 September 1992.
- 29 *Sunday Tribune* 27 September 1987; *Natal Witness* 28 September 1987.

- 30 J.J.W. Aitchison, 'The civil war in Natal' *South African Review* 5 (1989): 457–473.
- 31 Though one notes here the mixture of interpretations: socio-economic and political.
- 32 G. Woods, 'Pietermaritzburg: the other side of the story' *Clarion Call* 2(1988); G. Woods, 'Identifying all the players in a typical South African township conflict'. Paper presented at the National Conference on Negotiation and Mediation in Community and Political Conflict, University of Durban-Westville, 6 July 1988; G. Woods, 'The politics of negotiation: an outline of Inkatha's position'. Paper presented at the National Conference on Negotiation and Mediation in Community and Political Conflict, University of Durban-Westville, 6 July 1988; G. Woods, *A Position Paper on Research Findings into Black Township Violence in Natal/KwaZulu* (Durban: Inkatha Institute for South Africa, [1989]); G. Woods, 'Rebels with a cause: the discontent of black youth' *Indicator South Africa* 7(1) 1989: 62–65; G. Woods, 'Causes and potential solutions of violence'. Paper presented to the Association for Sociology in Southern Africa, University of Stellenbosch, 4 July 1990.
- 33 Woods, *A Position Paper on Research Findings into Black Township Violence in Natal/KwaZulu*.
- 34 D. Butler and D. Stokes magisterial work, *Political Change in Britain: The Evolution of Electoral Choice* (London: Macmillan, 2nd ed., 1974) provides a useful corrective to assumptions made by Woods (and also by S. Stavrou and A. Crouch, 'Molweni: violence on the periphery' *Indicator South Africa* 6(3) 1989: 46–50) that black survey respondents' inability to identify leaders or the policies of the political groups they supposedly supported somehow indicated that they have no or little political consciousness. Butler and Stokes describe surveys of the British electorate (probably the best read in the world) showing that a majority in 1962 could not name any figure in either party other than the party leaders themselves. Many respondents in 1963 could not identify Harold Macmillan after he had been prime minister for seven years. Two thirds of Americans do not know that members of the House of Representatives are elected every two years.
- 35 *Leadership* 9(4) 1990: 40–42. The full transcript was made by Carmel Rickard, at that time a journalist working for the *Natal Witness*.
- 36 The *Sunday Tribune* reported Musa Zondi, national chairman of the IYB, saying that criminals who claimed to be members both of the UDF and Inkatha made up the third force: 'A third force, the criminals who further their own ends, profit by this violence. These criminals, parading under the banners of political organisations, are often involved in looting and then burning down houses' (27 November 1988). In an interview, KwaZulu Legislative Assembly member Velaphi Ndlovu stated that 'the violence is actually between children and adults. One thing you must know is that our people were never born killers. They are being used to kill.' (*Echo* 2 February 1989). Here the generational conflict is allied to a conspiracy interpretation.
- 37 Among them are: C.R. Cross et al., 'Conflict and violence in Pietermaritzburg: the development factor' *Working Document in South African Politics, Department of Development Administration and Politics, University of South Africa* 2(1988); N. Gwala [B. Nzimande], 'Inkatha, political violence and the struggle for control in Pietermaritzburg' *Workshop on Regionalism and Restructuring in Natal Paper* 30 (1988); N. Gwala [B. Nzimande], 'Inkatha, confrontation and the struggle for control in Pietermaritzburg'. Paper presented at the Centre for Adult Education Seminar on Violence, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1988; N. Gwala [B. Nzimande], 'Class alliances in the struggle against Inkatha' *South African Labour Bulletin* 13(3) 1988; M. Morris and D. Hindson, 'Political violence and urban reconstruction in South Africa' *Economic Trends Working Paper* 3 (1991); J.L. Olivier, 'Political conflict in South Africa: a resource mobilisation approach' in

- Capturing the Event: Conflict Trends in the Natal Region, 1986–1992* edited by S. Bekker (Durban: Indicator South Africa, University of Natal, 1992): 1–14; ‘Political conflict and civil unrest in African townships in Natal’ *Reality* 18(5) 1986.
- 38 T. Beard, ‘The heart of darkness?’ [Review of J. Butler, R. Elphick and D. Welsh (eds), *Democratic Liberalism in South Africa*] *Reality* 20(2 and 3) 1988: 33.
 - 39 *Black Attitudes in KwaZulu Natal, September 1988: An Analysis of the Needs, Fears, Aspirations and Socio-Political Attitudes of Black Adults in the KwaZulu Natal Region, Prepared by the KwaZulu Natal Indaba*, published on 2 November 1988 by Research International.
 - 40 S. Jagwanth, *Report on the Perception Study on Policing* (Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Criminal Justice, [1991]).
 - 41 R. Taylor and M. Shaw, ‘Interpreting the conflict in Natal (South Africa)’. Paper presented to the Project on Contemporary Political Conflict in Natal Conference: Ethnicity, Society and Conflict in Natal, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 14–16 September 1992.
 - 42 Most of Aitchison’s papers on the Pietermaritzburg conflict were largely based on the CAE database and statistics derived from it. Whilst an empirical grounding clearly forms an important component of this approach, the parallel attention given in many of the papers to the methodological issues arising out of monitoring indicate that it is not an unexamined empiricism; M. Kentridge, *An Unofficial War* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).
 - 43 J.J.W. Aitchison, ‘Interpreting violence: the struggle to understand the Natal conflict’. Paper presented at the Conference of the Association for Sociology in Southern Africa, Stellenbosch, 1–4 July 1990.
 - 44 Antoinette Louw, ‘Monitoring conflict in Natal’ *Indicator South Africa* 9(1) 1991: 43–45.
 - 45 Taylor and Shaw, ‘Interpreting the conflict in Natal’: 15.
 - 46 Stavrou and Crouch, ‘Molweni’; Morris and Hindson, ‘Political violence and urban reconstruction in South Africa’.
 - 47 S. Stavrou and L. Shongwe, ‘Violence on the periphery: part two, the greater Edendale complex’ *Indicator South Africa* 7(1) 1989: 53–57.
 - 48 A number of papers by Blade Nzimande [aka Nkosinathi Gwala] posit that because the freehold area of Edendale was relatively immune to these KwaZulu systems and networks of coercion and patronage it became a site of successful resistance to Inkatha.
 - 49 Two papers based on a survey of schoolchildren in a Pietermaritzburg township present some interesting findings on this issue of the construction of political identities in relation to more traditional ones: L. Piper, S. Shange and V. Wedekind, ‘Ethnicity and the contest over meaning: considerations on ethnicity based on a case study of school-going youth in the greater Pietermaritzburg area’. Paper presented to the Project on Contemporary Political Conflict in Natal Conference: Ethnicity, Society and Conflict in Natal, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 14–16 September 1992; V. Wedekind, S. Shange and L. Piper, ‘Ethnicity, identity and schooling: reflection on a case study in Pietermaritzburg’. Paper presented to the Kenton Conference, Broederstroom, 1992.
 - 50 M. Orkin, *Sanctions Against Apartheid* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1989).
 - 51 J.J.W. Aitchison, *The Opinion Polls: How Do the Parties Fare?* (Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal, 2nd ed., 1991). Graphs 34–37 were constructed from data kindly provided by Mark Orkin of CASE.
 - 52 The loss of Jurie Mentz, the NP member of Parliament for the northern Natal constituency of Vryheid to the IFP on 28 January 1993 is an interesting confirmation of this tendency, doubled by the similar defection of Mike Tarr from the Democratic Party a short while after.

- 53 Gwala, 'Inkatha, political violence and the struggle for control in Pietermaritzburg'; Gwala, 'Inkatha, confrontation and the struggle for control in Pietermaritzburg'; Gwala, 'Class alliances in the struggle against Inkatha'; P. Forsyth, *Inkatha Membership* (Pietermaritzburg: Research Project on Contemporary Political Conflicts, Department of Historical Studies, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1990). See also the letter by Musa Zondi (*Sunday Tribune* 3 March 1991) and Anton Harber's reply (*Sunday Tribune* 19 May 1991).
- 54 J.J.W. Aitchison, *The Pietermaritzburg Conflict: Experience and Analysis* (Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal, 1989).
- 55 SPASEC had originally been an illegal night school run by university students in Sobantu. From 1962 until 1982 it functioned on the university campus. Dalisu, which loosely translated means 'make a plan', was an adult education centre run in a former Indian school under the auspices of the KwaZulu department of education.
- 56 See P.S. Thompson, *Natalians First: Separatism in South Africa, 1909–1961* (Johannesburg: Southern Books, 1990).
- 57 Once the war began, after the initial struggle for the urban townships was over, which was the case by the end of 1987 except at Imbali, Inkatha did in fact form defensive lines in semi-rural areas such as Vulindlela and by the nineties the battles were taking place in rural areas and rural towns such as Greytown, Estcourt, Mooi River and Richmond.
- 58 After the Seven Day War at the end of March 1990, the author did an analysis using census data of the literacy levels of the attacked and attacking areas in the Edendale Valley and Vulindlela. There was a clear correlation between the attacking (Inkatha) areas and very low literacy levels and the attacked (non-Inkatha) areas and much higher educational levels. At an anecdotal level, to indicate the extent of popular perceptions of the linkage between illiteracy and political backwardness, take the remark by Ben Jele (an Inkatha leader in Imbali who became more conciliatory as the war progressed and whose son was later assassinated by more militant Inkatha members as a consequence), when a visitor to his house was gunned down by Inkatha hit man Skweqe Mwel: 'This shows the cruelty and madness of illiterate people. At the time when we as blacks are suffering, a straight-minded person – if this incident was politically motivated – should not have done this' (*Echo* 5 January 1989).
- 59 G. van Heerden, *Non-Formal Education in Pietermaritzburg* (Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal, 1990).
- 60 As detailed in a report released in early January 1993 by the consulting firm Deloitte and Touche for the KwaZulu/Natal Joint Executive Authority.
- 61 Natal's lobbying position was weak not only in relation to government. Even within the mass democratic movement there was a common perception that the big centres of power, particularly Soweto/Johannesburg, did not take their Natal comrades seriously enough. There was a certain local *schadenfreude* when the Natal violence seemed to spread to the Reef in July and August 1990. Now perhaps 'they' would understand what people in Natal had endured for three years.

LOOKING BACK AT the events of 1987–1989 in the Natal Midlands, features of an unofficial war emerge.

The nature of the conflict and its causes

The Midlands conflict was not simply a late upsurge in a different part of South Africa of the general revolt against apartheid and its structures that originally flared up in late 1984 and which a succession of States of Emergency had suppressed elsewhere. It had its own sources and fuel, though the ungovernability revolt was a portion of the tinder.

Although there were clear antecedents to the war in the Pietermaritzburg region, it can be considered to have started in earnest in September 1987.¹ There was a powerful political dynamic to the conflict, particularly in its inception, the major overt conflict being between Inkatha and the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Generally, the political violence seems to have had a strong connection with Inkatha's attempt to maintain, or increase, its influence in the region.

The role of the political actors

Inkatha, although it was not until 1990 formally constituted as a political party, had a firm party structure with a stable hierarchy of leadership and chains of command. In spite of the Emergency, it was allowed to hold regular public meetings and rallies and engage in para-military activities on these occasions. Many of its local leadership carried licensed firearms. Increasingly during the years 1987 to 1989 certain individuals, invariably holding office in the organisation, came to be known as warlords; that is people in the leadership engaged in warlike activities against the UDF and other opponents.²

The UDF was never a political party, but an extremely loose alliance of small and large organisations with different agendas. What appearance it had of political and organisational coherence in Natal, and this appearance was a powerful one, was largely a concoction of the intellectuals and para-

intellectuals in its leadership. During the State of Emergency, the Front was declared a restricted organisation and therefore forced to act largely underground. Combatants on the UDF side were poorly armed.

Even allowing for the deaths of those whose affiliation was unknown, evidence points to Inkatha killing far more UDF comrades than vice versa. This was probably a function of Inkatha's access to firearms and its relative immunity from police interference.³

COSATU, as a UDF ally, was involved in the violence in five ways: first, through the ongoing impact of the BTR-Sarmcol strike; second, through the important role the bus drivers of the Transport and General Workers Union played in making stayaways a success and in transporting people to rallies; third, in the impact on the membership once the September violence started (COSATU played an important role in the defence of communities because of its members' experience of democratic organisation); fourth, in its energetic role in peace negotiations; and fifth, in its attempts to interdict Inkatha warlords.

Role of the security forces

For various reasons the State, through its police and other security forces, some of them possibly covert, handled the violence in the Midlands in a different way to its harsh repression of the 1984 to 1986 revolt, largely through tolerating the Inkatha movement as a surrogate force to enforce order (which Inkatha signally failed to do.) In practical terms this meant that the due processes of arrest, awaiting trial and prosecution lapsed into disorder: many active combatants and killers appeared to have total immunity from arrest, detention and prosecution. This paralysis of the system of justice, with probably less than a hundred prosecutions for over 1 800 murders, had the consequence that revenge and rough township justice seemed overwhelmingly more effective.

The use of Emergency powers was directed almost solely at one of the political groups in the conflict: the non-Inkatha forces, in the main comrades supporting the UDF. The existence of a high level of passive collusion by the police in the violence can be considered proven. The extent of this passive collusion between the security forces and Inkatha is well illustrated by the police and army's tolerance towards large meetings and rallies held by Inkatha, which were clearly illegal in terms of the Emergency regulations, and in their failure to confiscate Inkatha weaponry. Much of the collusion may not have been conspiracy as such, but rather a natural consequence of police members having been reared in an apartheid society and indoctrinated with apartheid, total onslaught and counter-insurgency thinking.⁴

It is possible that certain hidden and nefarious political agendas were at play in determining the role of the security forces. At the very least, some of the police leadership in the Midlands played an active role as conspirators in illegal and murderous support of Inkatha as in the Trust Feed massacre. This collusion was officially encouraged by the Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, when, addressing a police ceremony in Pietermaritzburg on 26 February 1988, he said that the police would support moderates and fight against and destroy radical groups and that they had already started doing this in the Pietermaritzburg region, which they would eventually win.⁵

The KwaZulu Police (KZP) did not play as active a role in the conflict as they were later to do in other parts of Natal, partly because they were only substantially deployed in Mpumalanga after February 1989.⁶ It was mainly the South African Police (SAP) riot units and kitskonstabels whose activities were regularly condemned by witnesses and residents.

The geography of the violence

The initiation of the conflict appears to have taken place largely in Imbali. Two other, essentially urban townships in the Pietermaritzburg area, Ashdown and Mpophomeni, the latter particularly associated with the BTR-Sarmcol strike, were also early sites of violence. Urban township strife spread outward, first into the densely populated freehold area of Edendale and later into peri-urban and semi-rural KwaZulu areas such as Vulindlela, until even the most conservative tribally controlled territory was no longer exempt from turmoil.

The infection of rural areas, such as Richmond, Swayimane, Ehlanzeni and Fredville took place on an increasing scale in 1989. By the end of 1989 it was clear that if the conflict continued in the broad band of territory around Durban and Pietermaritzburg, and in particular in the corridor between the two cities, there would not be a single area that would be exempt from declaring allegiance (even if only nominally so in tribal areas) to either Inkatha or the UDF/COSATU. The creation of the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA), then led by Chief Maphumulo, and the rapprochement between the exiled ANC and the Transkei regime, was likely to escalate this pressure. The speed with which the violence spread into previously peaceful areas may indicate the existence of considerable stresses and latent conflict in African communities in the whole region. The situation was ripe for violence.

The areas with the most deaths were Imbali (172), Edendale (257), Vulindlela (526) and Hammarsdale (414). Imbali, Vulindlela and Hammarsdale were all

areas that were either Inkatha dominated or with a substantial Inkatha presence. Edendale was not so dominated and deaths declined significantly after the UDF gained control there in 1987. The high death tolls in Imbali, Vulindlela and Hammarsdale cannot be explained as simply the result of Inkatha being under pressure or attack in these areas. The evidence, particularly from Imbali, is that the worst excesses and many of the killings appeared to be conducted by Inkatha vigilantes and warlords. The police were on numerous cases accused of highly partisan behaviour in these particular townships and areas.

The violence, and in particular bus stonings, that continued in Edendale was often associated with young refugee comrades from the more outlying areas. The extent to which such comrade refugees merged into comtsois and criminal gangs is unclear.

Embedding of violence

Over three years, from 1987 until 1989, political violence became embedded in the social fabric of the region and it is likely that a substantial proportion of the regular monthly killings reflects this situation. This residual, embedded violence, more characteristic of sectarian conflict in deeply divided societies such as Northern Ireland, threatened to be an ongoing problem for the region. Anecdotal evidence from a variety of witnesses and observers in Natal confirmed this disturbing phenomenon.

The failure of peace initiatives

There is only one plausible explanation for the failure of peace initiatives during this period: that it was not in the perceived interest of one or more of the parties, including the police and government. While a variety of factors made the peace process difficult and complicated, it is difficult to see why more substantial progress could not have been made if a genuine and shared desire for peace had been present.

Some of these complicating factors are undoubtedly the business sector's tendency, for a variety of reasons, to favour Inkatha and in particular Mangosuthu Buthelezi, and to discount negative reports about them; as well as its cowardice in refusing to confront the security establishment. Other problems related to the difficulty of communicating with and disciplining UDF supporting comrades when the Front was both restricted and structurally not organised as a coherent political party.

While it is probably true that many Pietermaritzburg region UDF supporters at the end of 1987 had a flush of triumphalism at having beaten off – and what is more apparently beaten – Inkatha, the reality of 1988 and 1989 made it clear that peace was in their interests. There was no way they could take on both Inkatha and the State and still triumph. COSATU had from the start a vested interest in peace and appears to have consistently worked for it. Of all the parties, COSATU was the most honest peace broker.

The specific reasons for the breakdown of peace initiatives included the activities of local gunmen who ignored the peace moves; the regular resetting of conditions for a peace settlement by the high leadership of Inkatha; and State disdain, often manifested in the detention of or refusal to release peace talk delegates from the UDF side. Generally, most stumbling blocks appear to have been provided by Inkatha and the State.

The one peace initiative in Natal that seems to have worked during this period was at Shongweni. It was between local Inkatha and comrade leaders, and allowed to happen by the SAP. Ulundi apparently disowned the agreement. Actual peace negotiations or ceasefires were accompanied by declines in the death rate, as in the Midlands in June 1989 and in Hammarsdale in December 1989, thereby reinforcing the supposition that there was political control of the violence.

The role of the State

The State appeared paralytically unable to halt the violence. Various commentators ascribed this to factors ranging from Machiavellian planning to preserve continuing white power (keep the radicals and Inkatha busy destroying each other and use dirty tricks to halt promising peace initiatives); to faulty mind sets (conservative tribalists, however heavily armed and murderous, are by definition good and radicals however reasonable and peace loving, bad and working for the ANC); and the sheer incompetence of a hopelessly undermanned police force.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Ordinary township dwellers in the Pietermaritzburg region tended to associate the start of the war with a coercive recruiting drive by Inkatha that was resisted by young comrades and residents who, though perhaps not particularly attracted to either Inkatha or the UDF, decided they had had enough and fought back.
- 2 Some of the more prominent of these were Abdul Awetha, Joseph Mabaso, Jerome Mnewabe, Thulani Ngcobo, Skweqe Mveli, Shayabani Zuma, Sichizo Zuma, David Ntombela, Chief

Shayabantu Zondi and Lawrence Zuma. Allegations of direct involvement in killings were made against all of these people.

- 3 In an analysis of 88 incidents in 1987 in which Inkatha was alleged to be the initiator and in which people were killed, 35% of incidents involved guns (with 30% involving knives or hand weapons and 35% unknown weapons.) By contrast in the 29 incidents alleged to have been initiated by the UDF or COSATU in the same period, only 21% of the incidents involved guns (with 48% involving hand weapons and 31% unknown.) In the first three months of 1989 there were forty incidents in which people were killed by Inkatha supporters and 45% involved guns. In seven incidents initiated by comrades, only 14% involved guns.
- 4 An example of the natural tendency of an apartheid nurtured police force to side with what they perceived as the forces of conservative tribalism is the amazing statement by Colonel J.J.A. Fourie made in Durban after killings in KwaMashu. He said that though an Inkatha crowd might have looked to outsiders as though it was armed, it was not in fact an armed group because 'traditionally Zulu men carry arms' (*Natal Witness* 19 June 1989).
- 5 *Natal Witness* 27 February 1988.
- 6 The transfer of the policing of Mpumalanga from the SAP to the KZP in February 1989 led to no problems at first. The KZP there acted in a non-partisan way, so much so that it was objected to by local members of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly and a new batch of police arrived from Ulundi. They acted independently of the local KZP station commander and created havoc, assaulting many people. Then the (white) SAP took over again and openly sided with Inkatha. Violence again escalated in the township, which had before that become relatively peaceful again after Inkatha was reduced to controlling only two sections of the township, sections that remained violent.

SENZANI NA? IN WHOSE INTERESTS?

THERE IS A SOUTH AFRICAN protest song called *Senzani na?* It is gentle song, a sad hymn, and was customarily sung as protesters were about to be arrested and loaded into the 'mellow yellow' police vans. The Zulu words mean 'Why are you doing this to us?' and it is the cry of the innocent heart against the forces of the apartheid state's transgression of a greater moral order.

It is the question that the voices of 1 810 dead in the years 1987 to 1989 ask, and is echoed by the voices of their bereaved families, scattered in refugee misery in the backyards of the Natal Midlands. The choir was swelled constantly by new arrivals as the deaths and destruction continued in the first three years of the new South Africa. It is a question about whose interests were served by this unofficial war and its continuation.

It seems an inescapable conclusion that the conflict was not in the interests of the United Democratic Front (UDF), the African National Congress (ANC) or any other of the unbanned organisations. In the Midlands whole layers of their local leadership were eliminated. It was not in the interests of anybody espousing the idea of a democratic, non-racial, unitary state. Nor was it in the interests of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which consistently strove to get peace negotiations under way and whose members suffered from the damage done to the economy of the region.

It was not actually in the interests of Inkatha, for apart from destroying the very basis of its realpolitik moderation – its non-violence and associated willingness to enter into acceptable compromises with the existing white order, particularly in the economic sphere – it fast lost international credibility and fashioned for itself a long-term burden of revengeful hatred in Natal and later in the Transvaal. It made its chances of governing Natal in some compromise or federal settlement fraught with danger. Worst of all, the conflict made Inkatha increasingly dependent on the South African regime so that Inkatha's role was turned from that of an independent black force into a surrogate. The violence was not in the interests of the people Inkatha represented, some of the poorest and least well educated in South Africa, particularly in rural areas, for

whom the conflict was regressive and destructive in the extreme.

By contrast, the violence can be seen to be in the short-term interests of the South African government for the following reasons. First, it was cheap compared to the costliness of reconstruction. The state did not pour material resources into Natal to mop up the oil-spots as it did in other troubled localities in the eighties. Second, it kept Inkatha and hence also KwaZulu occupied so that it did not have the time or energy to address the long-term cost benefits of its relationship to the South African state. Third, it kept pressure off the State: it was a great accomplishment that comrades in Natal saw Inkatha rather than the apartheid government as the enemy. Fourth, it prevented the Left from capitalising on the inevitable movement towards a negotiated settlement in which, ultimately, all parties would have to compete for votes; and in this sense it was yet another in a long line of obstacles to the exercise of ordinary politics for the mass of people in the region.

The South African government had built up a fairly formidable body of expertise in setting up and co-opting traditional elements in collapsing tribal societies. It had decades of experience with bantustan systems that led to remarkable stability and inhibited any serious opposition in rural areas. It had growing experience with destabilisation, often of a violent kind. In these terms the Midlands conflict could be seen as one of apartheid society's greatest achievements.

In the heady days of F.W. de Klerkian glasnost immediately after 2 February 1990, it was easy to overlook the long-term damage done in Natal, damage whose possible impact extended far into the future. One of the most destructive effects was the perception that it was because black life was not valued that the violence had been allowed to continue. If nearly two thousand whites had been shot, stabbed and mutilated, then surely something would have been done about it.

In 1989, the author was told that *Senzani na?* was no longer as popular a song as before. Comrades did not need to ask why this was being done to them. They knew.

THE INFORMATION UPON which this study is based was collected for the Unrest Monitoring Project (UMP) of the Centre for Adult Education (CAE) on the Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of Natal. The project, which was started at the author's initiative in September 1987, attempted to monitor political violence and unrest in the Natal Midlands. It began in a fairly informal way, but over the next two years became more formal and systematised. Because this study relies greatly on the primary sources tapped by the project, the issue of the trustworthiness and comprehensiveness of the information obtained from them is crucial. Hence, methodological considerations were openly and rigorously examined at the outset of the UMP and continued to be so.

This chapter accordingly addresses the important methodological issues implicit in the project's attempt to monitor and document political violence and to report on it in a systematic way. The first section begins by describing the motivational origins, methods and operations of the UMP in the South African context. The second deals in a more general way with monitoring methodology.

The methods of the Unrest Monitoring Project

Motivation and objectivity

Why monitor at all? There are a number of reasons why one might want to monitor and document political violence and these would include a humanitarian desire to intervene in some way to halt the violence; the intention to be a partisan force on one side of the conflict, providing appropriate propaganda; concern to document systematically the truth beyond the episodic reportage of an Emergency-muzzled or self-censored press; and academic career purposes.

None of these reasons are necessarily mutually exclusive and any monitoring project needs to consider them all.¹ In this case the concern initially was an interventionist one. This meant that the way the monitoring was done, and

the methods used to collect and report the data, had to conform to certain criteria. In particular, reports had to be accessible to and understandable by interested parties, avoid scholarly terminology, and use definitions and accept assumptions that would not be partisan or contentious.

The project started in September 1987 because first, staff at the CAE had prior connections to church, human rights, service and community organisations in the Pietermaritzburg region knowledgeable about the growing crisis in the Midlands and, indeed, were already engaged in various forms of monitoring on their own. Second, staff knew people, including those on non-formal courses being taught at that moment, who had experienced and suffered from the political violence. Staff wanted to do something about it.

What to monitor?

The next stage was to decide what to monitor. Clarity at this stage of any documentation project is important and saves much time later. There was particular success here in that prior thoughts about what information to collect and how and under what categories it would be stored, did on the whole hold up to the great strain imposed on the project when the political violence exploded with previously unimaginable intensity in December 1987 and January 1988, and of course later in March and April 1990. The information recording system worked.

The geographical area to be monitored was clearly delimited as Pietermaritzburg and Hammarsdale, as they fell into the same police district, and the rest of the Midlands. The events to be monitored required a definition of political violence or unrest, a definition that itself had to be understandable to all parties because a partisan conception was of no use. Then the details to be documented had to be established. Because of the volume of information needing to be recorded, and because information on what is commonly described as political conflict tends to be built up from a variety of sources at different times, it was necessary to be able to access and search records quickly. A computerised system was therefore obvious with an appropriate database programme (Pro/Tem's Notebook II) to handle this.

Careful design of the database record format right at the start paid off, saving much time later. It was also important that the software used and the record format fitted in with records kept by other monitoring groups elsewhere. Consultation took place with the UMP at the University of Natal in Durban and the record format adopted was congruent with theirs. Where things differed,

clear definitions of terminology were provided: for example, for event and incident.

The geographical area is illustrated in the five maps on pages viii to xii and is what is popularly known as the Midlands with the Pietermaritzburg region at its centre. The then official boundaries of the Midlands as adopted by the KwaZulu/Natal Joint Executive Authority² included the following magisterial districts: Mooi River, Lions River, Pietermaritzburg, Vulindlela and Camperdown; Kranskop, Umvoti, New Hanover and Mapumulo; Impendhle, Underberg, Polela, Hlanganani (in four bits), Richmond and Ixopo. In addition two parts of Mpumalanga (Table Mountain and Swayimane in the one, Mpumalanga in the other) that are technically in subregion E4 (Durban) were included, partly because both fell into Midlands police districts (Table Mountain and Mpumalanga into Pietermaritzburg, Swayimane into Wartburg).

The area included the city of Pietermaritzburg (and the township of Sobantu); the Edendale complex (including the black-owned freehold area of Edendale itself, the adjoining freehold area of Slangspruit and the two townships of Ashdown and Imbali), and the Vulindlela area (previously known as the Zwartkop Location or Reserve); townships located near such places as Hammarsdale (Mpumalanga township), Greytown (Enhlalakahle), Howick (Mpophomeni), and Mooi River (Bruntville); and the areas of, or adjacent to, Hopewell, Mpolweni, Swayimane (near Wartburg), Trust Feed (near New Hanover), Impendhle, Bulwer, Inchanga, Fredville, Georgedale, Thornville, Richmond, Ixopo, Bishopstowe, Table Mountain (Maqongqo) and Ehlanzeni (in the Umgeni/Msunduzi valley near Cato Ridge and Camperdown).

The north-western boundary of the monitored zone was not very distinct and it tended to fade out at Mooi River because of the lack of information from further afield. Records were kept in the database of events in the Estcourt and Klip River districts and further north. These areas all lie outside the Midlands in the Thukela subregion (E2) and were not included in the statistics.

The events monitored were delimited by the definition of violence and unrest used, namely: all acts of political violence and intimidation that would be generally accepted as illegal in most societies, whether performed by the State, its supporters or its opponents, whether organised by groups and parties or by individuals. Unrest therefore included illegal acts performed by the police and army such as assaults, unjustified shootings, torture and collusion with civilians engaged in violence; and acts clearly contrary to the regulations of the 1986–1990 States of Emergency (such as illegal gatherings).³ This definition of violence and unrest was meant to overcome the problem that

these terms were commonly used in South Africa, but only to describe the activities of opponents of the State.

Identifying political violence as distinct from ordinary criminal violence was often a difficult task and certain analysts, such as Gavin Woods of the Inkatha Institute, ascribed much of the Natal conflict violence to criminal responses to socio-economic deprivation.⁴

In practice what is monitored is a sorry array of activities including abduction, murder, shooting, unjustified security force shooting, assault, whipping, batoning, tear gassing, torture, stabbing, hacking, decapitation, mutilation, arson, stoning, petrol bombing, burning, breaking, raping, fighting, attacking, robbery, theft, extortion, intimidation and collusion between security forces and people engaged in violent criminal acts and actions aimed at defeating the ends of justice.

The details recorded are best explained by the use of a blank database record:

Date
 Town
 Suburb
 Place
 Type
 Initiator
 Number of initiators
 Names of initiators
 Affected
 Number affected
 Names affected
 Consequences
 Source
 Contact
 Event
 Statements
 Event number
 Cross reference
 Remarks

These nineteen fields can be defined thus:

- Date is obvious;
- Town includes built up residential areas, such as Edendale, as well as large sprawling peri-urban, semi-rural areas such as Vulindlela. Suburb includes

suburban or township subsets of towns or large residential areas as well as, within the Vulindlela area, sections of heavier settlement. Place gives more exact geographical reference such as a street address;

- Type lists the kind or kinds of violent activity monitored in the particular record, or notes that the record contains comment, background or statistical information;
- Initiator names, where identifiable, the political affiliation or connection of the initiator of the violent activity or activities. Number of initiators speaks for itself, as does name of initiator. Ages are given if known;
- Affected names the affiliation of those affected by the violence, that is, the victims. Number and name affected are straightforward;
- Consequences lists the type of consequence suffered by those affected by the violence, and in some cases by the initiators of the violent event, including arrests and convictions;
- Source lists the sources of information. Contact gives the name and sometimes the address as well of people who can be contacted for further information about an event;
- Event provides as detailed as possible a description of the event recorded and of the people involved, including age, sex and affiliations;
- Statements notes any legal statements available on the event, although frequently these were already noted in the Source and Event fields;
- Event number gives a sequential number of actual events recorded in the database for the year. Records that are purely comment, background information or statistics have no event number;
- Cross reference indicates other records (usually by giving a date) that refer, for example, to the same people affected, initiating, or part of a causally linked sequence of events;
- Remarks is a catch-all field for notes about possibly duplicated records, queries about the reliability of a record, and so on. Details of death certificates and provisional burial orders are often also recorded here.

Each record attempts to describe an event more or less synonymous with what the press and police unrest reports describe as events or incidents. When compiling statistics from these records, events are distinguishable from incidents. Some events, because of their nature, contain one or more or indeed a series of incidents (such as the petrol bombing of a house followed by the murder of the household head and the stabbing of the other occupants followed by the arrival of the police who shoot one of the attackers); or may lump

together what must have been several incidents (say the burning of ten houses scattered along a long street). Hence, more discrete incidents are tabulated in the tables and graphs in this study than there are records of events.

Who monitors?

Effective monitoring by groups or individuals in a conflict-ridden situation such as that of political violence necessitates good community links and credibility. This cannot be manufactured overnight and thought must be given to who actually runs and owns a monitoring project. What may seem strange about a university-based adult education centre engaged in work perhaps more appropriate to a criminal law or political studies department becomes less so when years of legwork, meeting and interacting with community organisations, is taken into account.

Linked to the issue of who is to monitor are questions of bias, non-partisanship and neutrality. University and church-based projects may be perceived as more objective, a significant consideration where the aim is to influence a wide range of audiences. The CAE UMP tried to be as objective as possible and honestly acknowledged that its direct sources did not often include Inkatha structures. Such recognition of potential bias is important though it is not believed this had any significant impact on accuracy.

Perceptions of objectivity are, however, subject to change over time. One reality that the CAE's project had to face was that some organisations did not like its findings. More specifically the CAE was the object of attacks from various Inkatha and Inkatha Institute spokesmen who claimed that it and its staff were partisan and biased. Examples of this were first a press release from Oscar Dhlomo claiming that the CAE was a 'group of pro-COSATU and UDF academics' that had refused to note complaints of casualties by Inkatha and that 'many of their statistics have in the past proved baseless'.⁵ Second was a paper by Gavin Woods, in which either directly or by innuendo this author was described as naive, not serious, politically partisan, an executive member of the UDF, opportunistic, a promoter of hate against some black people, a propagandist against Buthelezi (by comparison Hitler was made to look angelic), a contriver, a deceiver, unrealistic, owner and fabricator of false perceptions, one-sided, uninformed, unable to respond to challenges to provide evidence, well-financed, blamer of all deaths on Inkatha, con man, superficial, poser as a neutral academic, by-passer of proper research, UDF propagandist, devoid of truth, unintelligent, not really concerned about the

ravages of the war, and simplistic.⁶ A later example of this abuse was the description by Suzanne Vos of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) of a 'rabid anti-IFP monitor'.⁷ However untruthful and utterly bizarre these accusations were, undoubtedly they caused some damage to the CAE's reputation among the more credulous. Vos's attack was probably based on a detailed Inkatha Institute paper attacking a report written by David Everatt of the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) that analysed media reports of the violence in the Transvaal.⁸ The paper is interesting in that it codifies Inkatha Institute complaints against other monitoring groups, though it does little to prove them in any methodologically sound way and relies largely on innuendo and abuse.⁹ This problem of the growing criticism of monitoring groups, however suspect the source of some of that criticism, was an important issue in a number of initiatives during 1991 and 1992 to encourage co-operation amongst them.

From 17 to 19 June 1991 the Centre for Intergroup Studies at the University of Cape Town sponsored the First National Workshop on Monitoring and Research into Political Violence. The workshop, held in Pietermaritzburg, was intended to encourage information sharing, including methodologies and their evaluation, and co-operation. Many of the invited organisations did not attend including the Inkatha Institute, although it had been represented on the planning committee, and a non-participating Inkatha Institute observer was present at the workshop. The South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) and the Human Rights Commission (HRC) were also absent. Several participants, particularly those representing monitoring groups that were later to form the Network of Independent Monitors (NIM), thought the workshop, in terms of its original objectives, a failure if not indeed a fiasco. A major motivating reason for the workshop was the potential for dialogue and links between monitoring and research organisations perceived, correctly or incorrectly, to be on different sides in the conflict. This objective was clearly not met. However, the following draft code of conduct was agreed upon.

Draft code of conduct for monitors and researchers

We the undersigned agree to uphold and apply the following principles:

Using others' information: acknowledgement in own work of sources of material where applicable, whether other researchers or monitors.

Sensitivity to real costs of monitoring, consultations, retrieval of data; re-imburse (where appropriate and possible) research costs to groups producing data; the difficulty of requesting data from others in a form which is incompatible with the way data is stored; caution in sharing sensitive or confidential data.

Reciprocity: a general commitment to reciprocity.

Access to information: a commitment to public access to publications and data except where legitimately confidential.

Social responsibility: recognition that researchers and monitors have a deep social responsibility to work for the protection of human life.

In mid-1992 there were a number of attempts⁸ to enhance monitoring capacity in South Africa, partly in response to the South African government's recognition that international monitors needed to be accepted into the country.¹⁰ One of the most important of these attempts, which promised to strengthen local capacity to monitor, was the Norwegian government's decision to support: the creation of a co-ordinating network of human rights and violence monitoring organisations; a national documentation facility that could act as a focal point for research work and dissemination of information; and training on human rights, monitoring and paralegal work, conflict resolution, documentation and the use of modern information handling technology.

The Norwegian government requested the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (IDASA) to hold a conference to initiate the formation of such a network and generally facilitate the start up phase of such a network.¹¹ The conference, the National Forum on International and Domestic Monitoring of the Violence in South Africa, took place on 23 July 1992 in Johannesburg. After the conference a number of the potential network members, particularly the smaller non-governmental human rights monitoring groups, expressed wariness at coming too directly under the umbrella of the State-supported National Peace Accord (NPA) apparatus that brought together the political actors, the security forces and business sector facilitators. In

practice, the NPA structures had showed scant interest in using the services of independent monitoring groups in spite of the latter's experience and frequently superior information about what was going on. Independence from the NPA structures was therefore strongly affirmed, as was 'the fundamental notion that the objective of a proposed new national monitoring initiative should be about establishing truth verification mechanisms about violence',¹² which had not been adequately reflected in the draft summary of the conference proceedings.¹³ There were also worries that there was a possibility of confusion if facilitation and mediation were bracketed with monitoring.¹⁴ In this author's response¹⁵ to the draft summary there was concurrence with these criticisms and an argument for clearly distinguishing: field monitoring (observation); field mediating and trouble shooting (preventative operations); field legal work; documentation and analysis; research; legal work; mediation and negotiation; and conciliation. In the letter it was argued that these functions could not be collapsed into one and that the real problem was the complex relationship between these various functions and the organisations doing them. A practical example from the monitoring work of the CAE exemplified this complex interaction:

We get information from field monitors (say a Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA) staff member or Revd Tim Smith), we discuss this information with Imbali Support Group members (field mediators and trouble shooters), check it out with John Jeffery of Cheadle, Thompson and Haysom (field legal work of a pro-ANC tendency) and then document and analyse the information ourselves. This is fed to the press and anti-apartheid organisations (thus falling into the category of what Gavin Woods calls finger pointing and I would call telling the truth insofar as one can ascertain it) but also to the Natal Church Leaders Group who use it to inform their approach to behind the scenes mediation and conciliation by Athol Jennings of the Vuleka Trust and Frank Chikane of the South African Council of Churches (SACC). I am also asked by Howard Varney of the Legal Resources Centre (LRC) in Durban to give evidence in a legal case brought against the State President.

It was also argued that small, independent monitoring organisations should be recognised as a sector on its own with a vital role to play and that the very disempowerment of such monitoring by NPA structures in late 1991 and in 1992 needed to be redressed.

What happened was that once started the big NPA initiatives, although prompted into existence by the noise the monitoring sector was making, dumped this whole sector and employed babes in the wood to play mediation and conciliation games with murderers. Of course, this did not work. The monitoring sector may not have been neutral and most of those involved were

not fond of Inkatha, but they were the bodies with lesser axes to grind than the other actors. Without their insight, experience and expertise there was a fatal gap in the whole peace process. After a series of meetings, both regional and national, a network of about fifty organisations was constituted. In the preamble to its constitution NIM described itself thus:

It is an association of domestic monitoring organisations with the principal objective of monitoring with the aim of reducing political violence in South Africa. Monitoring violence and mediating violence are different processes. This network consolidates the monitoring work of participating monitors while respecting their autonomy. All member organisations and their individual monitors will be bound by the Monitors' Code of Conduct.

Another undated document from NIM in 1992, describing the new network, gave the following definition of monitoring: 'Human Rights organisations have always attempted to establish what or who is behind these senseless attacks and then pressed for successful prosecution. The attempt to find out the truth through collecting evidence and eye-witness accounts is what has become known as monitoring the violence.' The network approved the following aims and objectives and a monitors' code of conduct. Its aims and objectives were to:

- improve the effectiveness of independent monitoring through strengthening the recognition, identity and status of monitoring;
- heighten awareness and understanding of violence, uncover the truth and generate and encourage effective investigation that will result in the prosecution of the perpetrators of violence;
- build the capacity of monitors by assisting in the provision of required resources and services;
- harness existing experience and resources;
- establish an effective communication network between monitors;
- encourage co-ordination of information;
- collect and disseminate resource information needed by monitors;
- liaise with the international community and their monitors and refer information and cases to the relevant commissions and groups;
- identify sites of violence and attempt to have these monitored;
- assist in building the capacity of community based monitors.

In Natal fifteen organisations affiliated to the network.¹⁶

The NIM code of conduct read:

- committed to the principles of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights;
- committed to independent monitoring: that is, not to work for the advancement of a particular political party or state structure;
- monitors will be accessible to all parties being monitored;
- pledge to promote peace and work to end violence;
- are committed to non-violent action and methods of monitoring;
- will report truthfully and accurately on situations;
- will strive to act confidently, calmly and diplomatically;
- will display sensitivity and empathy to the particular vulnerability of victims of violence;
- will respect the need for confidentiality;
- will not publicly display any party preference (either in words or by wearing party badges or clothing) while monitoring;
- will respect the role of and refer to other structures that exist to deal with conflict resolution and mediation;
- will not publicly undermine monitors who are a part of the network.

The Ecumenical Monitoring Programme in South Africa (EMPSA) had a somewhat different conception of monitoring and stated that 'a clear distinction between "fact finding" and "monitoring" needs to be upheld throughout the programme' arguing that the programme should gear its activity towards the latter, though this distinction was never clearly explained.¹⁷ The objectives and functions of EMPSA were described as follows:

- to provide a mechanism of monitoring violence and repression in South Africa within the broad context of the political processes;
- to monitor and report on the process of negotiations for a peaceful transition to a democratic, non-racial South Africa, according to universally accepted democratic principles;
- to monitor and report on the electoral proceedings that are determined by the negotiating parties, so as to assist the participation of all South Africans in the electoral process;
- to provide a continuous presence in the country and, in general, monitor violence taking into account its political impact as well as the social and political factors which contribute to it;

- to respond to situations of potential or actual violence in a speedy manner, in co-operation with local monitoring groups;
- to provide pastoral support to victims of violence;
- to be a moral presence in situations of conflict in a manner that could act as a deterrent to the escalation of violence;
- to collect information on incidents of violence and make independent inquiries that would inform the analysis and judgements as may be appropriate;
- to be alert to situations of potential violence and ready to use influence and expertise to defuse tensions leading to the resolution of conflict;
- to maintain contact with all agencies, governmental or otherwise deemed to be important to the search for peace and, where necessary, make representations to authorities and political organisations;
- to monitor and report on the work of statutory peace-creating structures such as the National Peace Secretariat and the Commission of Enquiry on Public Violence and Intimidation (Goldstone Commission);
- to monitor and report on the processes of negotiation and forthcoming elections;
- to facilitate the dissemination of information on the situation in South Africa to the wider ecumenical movement; and
- to monitor and report on any elections that may issue from the negotiations process.

In the report of the Committee on Monitoring set up at a meeting of the National Peace Secretariat and Chairpersons of the Regional Dispute Resolution Committees on 29 and 30 July 1992 (released in late August 1992) it is argued that monitoring should not be confused with facilitation, conflict resolution or criminal investigation. While it is acknowledged that the lines between these different activities do tend to blur at times of crisis, it is necessary that any initiative on monitoring should be carefully constructed to minimise that tendency.

This report lists the core objectives of monitoring as to:

- place under scrutiny and thereby to influence the behaviour of different actors;
- monitor all activities that could possibly result in violence to assist in ensuring that all parties to the NPA comply with the codes of conduct set out in it;

- ensure that the security forces perform their tasks in a manner that contributes to the ending of violence and the establishment of sound security force community relations;
- ensure that political parties and organisations conduct their activities in a manner that contributes to the ending of violence;
- ensure that incidents of violence are effectively dealt with in a manner that contributes to the ending of violence; and
- report factual observations on any possible breach of the accord.

The report includes among the tasks of monitors the following:

- field observation of public gatherings, marches, demonstrations, actions and security force activities relating to occurrences of political violence;
- occasional crisis facilitation where violence has broken out;
- monitoring police investigations of political violence and the processing of these investigations through the judicial system; and
- gathering information regarding the state of violence and reporting accurately and factually without drawing subjective conclusions.

Where should the project be based?

A monitoring project ideally needs to be physically based in a place with adequate security, although it needs to be remembered that nothing is secure from a really determined saboteur, and accessible to people who need to visit it. In Pietermaritzburg the University of Natal campus was a reasonable base on both grounds. Resources such as computers, photocopiers, telephones and fax machines were also available.

How the monitoring was done

Essentially the monitoring undertaken by the project involved three phases: collecting raw information; analysing the material and making basic sense of it; and reporting the findings. The system of monitoring relied upon collecting information from a variety of sources. These were mainly the following:

- newspaper reports of unrest, mainly from the Pietermaritzburg daily, the *Natal Witness*. These were normally based on the South African Press Association (SAPA) version of the official police unrest report released in Pretoria each day and on murder and public violence trials;
- the SAPA version of the police unrest report and the report itself;¹⁸
- accounts from witnesses and victims of political violence and their relatives recorded by PACSA, an organisation that had particularly good contact

with township people, and from the closely associated Crisis Committee fieldworker;

- other reports received from organisations and individuals in Pietermaritzburg, particularly from the Detainees Support Committee (DESCOM, later the Detainees Aid Committee or DACOM), the Crisis Committee, the Democratic Party, lawyers, trade unionists, clergy, political activists and, for several months after March 1990, the Ad Hoc Crisis Committee that became the Midlands Crisis Relief Committee;
- affidavits placed before courts by lawyers working for the firm Cheadle, Thompson and Haysom on behalf of COSATU and other applicants in attempts (often legally successful, but practically disastrous for the witnesses) to gain interim interdicts against Inkatha-linked vigilantes in the region;
- Inkatha documents and reports and Inkatha Institute publications;
- reports in the Black Sash (Natal Coastal region) Repression Monitoring Group bulletin, and various press releases and publications of the HRC. After 1991, the *South African Conflict Monitor* produced by the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies of the University of Natal, Durban and the *Natal Monitor*, compiled by a number of monitors based in Durban, were also cross checked.

Collecting the information and inputting it onto the computerised database was a time consuming and depressing job. At various times during the project part-time help was employed to assist in this primary task. The daily procedure was to clip the *Natal Witness* each morning, input the reports onto the database, and then, the same day, or more usually much later on, add reports from informants and lawyers. This required a lot of cross checking as more information came in from different sources and follow up work to fill in gaps. Such cross checking is almost impossible without a very good filing system. Having this on a computerised database was almost indispensable. The database used enabled access to information using a wide range of entry points including dates, areas, groups involved, type of violence and names of people. This cross checking, editing and cleaning up of the database was a time-consuming and skilled job. It was done almost entirely by the author.

It was recognised that all sources have an element of bias and any collection of information involves selection of information. For the project the real issue was whether one anticipated and corrected for bias, including one's own. However, general experience was that reports from the non-press sources of information listed above were reliable and that cross checking provided

evidence of their integrity. Most of the non-press sources were organisations or individuals sympathetic to (or at least, not hostile to) the UDF/COSATU alliance (and later the ANC/SACP/COSATU alliance) and corrective measures had to be taken to compensate for the absence of a local official Inkatha source.

The actual material collected and the statistical summaries based upon it were in principle open to verification and falsifiability. It is perhaps notable that not once after the setting up of the project was any empirical finding put out in project publications publicly challenged.

Because of reliance on SAPA and press versions of the police unrest report for much information, the following need to be noted. First, press articles based upon it are almost totally devoid of detail other than general area, the cause of death and the sex and sometimes the age of the victim. A *Natal Witness* report of 28 September 1988 was a typical example of police reluctance to provide more detail. The newspaper reported that the SAP refused to disclose the names of people who had been killed or injured in political violence in Natal in the past few days. A police spokesman said it was not police policy to reveal the identity of any unrest victim, or the person's address. Local police spokesman Captain Pieter Kitching said he was not authorised to give out the names of the people killed, but would be able to confirm the deaths of people if their names were supplied to him. The *Natal Witness* noted in October 1988 that police did not name any of the victims in an upsurge of violence in Hammarsdale. In a telex from the police public relations division in Pretoria, the *Natal Witness* was informed that 'for various reasons, names of unrest victims are not made public. All murders reported to the police under circumstances which relate to unrest, are reported in the daily unrest report.' Another telex a week later reiterated, 'We once again wish to point out that we do not elaborate on our unrest reports or identify victims killed in unrest-related incidents.'¹⁹

Second, press reports were not infrequently garbled, generally when the reporter or sub-editor tried to summarise or provide a cumulative account; and third, when compared with independent accounts, events noted in the police unrest report sometimes bore little resemblance to what really happened as suggested by the evidence.²⁰ A good example of this is the shooting of Simon and Smalridge Mthembu on 24 January 1988 by Inkatha vigilante Sichizo Zuma. The police unrest report of 25 January 1988 made no mention of their being shot and wounded, but incorrectly claimed that one of the vigilantes (presumably Zuma) sustained serious injuries when struck on the head with a bush knife (in reality he received a minor cut on the leg.) The *Natal Witness* report of 26 January 1988 followed the story given in the police report.

Without evidence from affidavits in an application to the Supreme Court for an interdict this inaccuracy might never have been revealed. The inadequacies of police unrest reports were worse in relation to events other than deaths and serious injuries. As a police spokesman put it 'we obviously do not report on every stone-throwing because we do not want to give these people unnecessary publicity. We simply say it was between groups or factions.' The lack of full information from the police led to the press being blamed for poor reporting. Vitus Mvelase, a member of the Inkatha Central Committee, claimed that township residents were beginning to hate the press for not reporting on all township unrest: 'The police are not telling you [the Press] everything. A lot more is happening than is appearing in unrest reports and people are beginning to hate you guys. The township residents, Inkatha, the UDF: we're all sick of the violence and the people are getting angry. I frequently have to explain to them what the emergency regulations are all about.'²¹

Such difficulties in monitoring were well expressed by Roy Ainslie, head of the Unrest Monitoring Action Group of the Progressive Federal Party (PFP), who was reported as saying that 'Several killings have been committed by people who are difficult to place politically ... Instigators of violence appear to either have no political affiliation, or they are just loosely connected with conservative or progressive forces.' He added that 'the danger in compiling unrest death figures and investigating attacks is how to distinguish between politically-motivated attacks and criminal assault.' He said that some unrest killings had been found to have been criminally inspired, 'but there is an even greater danger that many murders the police believe to have been criminal are in fact political.'²² Attempting to compile statistics on the political violence was also hindered by official antipathy.

On 1 March 1988, Brigadier Leon Mellet, spokesman for the Minister of Law and Order, said 'There is a definite indication that the unrest in the townships around the city is dropping off,' but added that it might only be temporary. He would not release statistics about the unrest because this could 'create the wrong impression'.²³

On 8 April 1988, replying in parliament to a question by Tiaan van der Merwe (PFP Green Point), the Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, said that although unrest had decreased, the revolutionary climate remained unacceptably high and unrest-related incidents still occurred. Hence he did not consider it in the interest of safety and maintenance of order to reveal information about unrest-related deaths and injuries during 1987. The publication and distribution of information about the number of deaths and

injuries in unrest-related incidents in each police district during 1987 might help increase the revolutionary climate.²⁴

The claim by the CAE that 1 622 people had been killed in unrest incidents in Pietermaritzburg and the Midlands between January 1987 and October 1989 was much higher than figures drawn from the daily police unrest reports, which stood at 994 deaths for the period January 1987 to 18 November 1989. A request by the *Natal Witness* to the SAP public relations directorate to supply figures was turned down. Asked to explain why there were discrepancies between the figures drawn from unrest reports and monitoring groups, Major Marius Bonthuys said discrepancies might arise from boundaries that did not coincide; deaths that later proved not to have been unrest-related; deaths later found to be unrest-related, but not initially regarded as such and consequently not carried on the daily unrest report; and incidents in KwaZulu that were not attended by the SAP.²⁵

Another explanation was recorded by the SAIRR in a footnote to its own summary statistics on unrest fatalities: 'Police spokesmen say that the difference between their fatality figures and those of other agencies can be explained by the fact that the police have a legal procedure which they have to follow regarding unrest fatalities. This involves documentation as well as photographs of each body found.'²⁶

Not mentioned is the possibility that during most of this period the police were generally not very keen on the public knowing what was going on. An interesting example of their antipathy to monitoring was a police spokesman's remarks about the Imbali Support Group (ISG) who visited and stayed with residents in Imbali in the hope of providing some sort of witness and protection against attack.²⁷ He said that the presence of white people in Imbali served no purpose in the current political climate and was only polarising the community. Brigadier Gerrit Viljoen, responsible for unrest-related units in Natal, said he had information that members of the ISG, who had said they would stay with anyone who needed protection, had so far only stayed with supporters of the UDF. 'Problems will not be solved in this way and it serves no purpose in the present political climate,' he said. He added that police had noticed that members of the support group had been following SAP patrols in the area: 'This creates the impression that they are monitoring police actions. The community does not benefit from this because it restricts policing in the area.' He appealed to the community to direct complaints about the police to the commander of the unrest unit and said any complaints would receive immediate attention and be thoroughly investigated.

A reluctance to provide even aggregate statistics on the death toll was shown in a bail application in August 1989²⁸ at which Captain H.R. Upton, a branch commander of the SAP, was asked by the magistrate how many people had died since the unrest began in 1987. Upton was very unwilling to divulge information about the number of deaths and had to be reminded by the magistrate that he was under oath. The actual number was arrived at by a tortuous process with the magistrate suggesting increasingly large figures until the figure of a thousand was arrived at. The day after a press report on this appeared the SAP issued a statement saying that Upton's figure of a thousand dead was not the figure for the greater Edendale Valley alone.

Analysis of the information was done by this author. It involved four main stages: compiling descriptive statistics; outlining a narrative history from the records; noting major themes in their contents; and examining trends, sometimes using statistical tools. Compiling descriptive statistics was laborious as this had to be done by hand (one drawback of the database program used was that it was essentially designed for text rather than numbers) onto paper and then transferred to a spreadsheet program (Supercalc 5) before tables summarising the statistics were drawn up and sometimes graphically displayed with charts generated with the Harvard Graphics (version 2.12 and Harvard Graphics for Windows version 1) program.

Outlining a narrative history involved a sequential study of all the records aided by one's general knowledge of the times enriched by conversations and interviews with many of the actors in the conflict, as well as access to a number of attempts to narrate the crisis, largely superficial journalistic accounts. While working through the first two stages one was also engaging in a largely intuitive process of content analysis (the third stage) and a number of major themes emerged that tended to revolve around issues such as the following: the origins of the conflict and their relationship to political affiliations, geographical location, and socio-economic situation; the roles of political groups involved and the police; and efforts to bring peace. Last, in the fourth stage, trends were examined, particularly in relation to these themes and, where possible, portrayed in graphic and statistical form (again, often using the Harvard Graphics program.) Examining trends often led to considering the Midlands violence in the context of, and in relationship to, the violent conflict in South Africa as a whole.

Reporting took a variety of forms, ranging from talking to a constant stream of visitors to the CAE offices, to writing academic conference papers and passing on information to national monitoring projects such as the Indicator

South Africa project located at the University of Natal, Durban, as well as feeding back information to sources in the Pietermaritzburg area. At a very simple level the UMP fed back to its sources, and particularly to the newspapers, preliminary and crude estimates of monthly death tolls.

A large number of people, particularly those with church and diplomatic connections, asked for briefings on the violence. A number of papers and talks were given to organisations and academic seminars and conferences. Four of the papers written by the author were key.²⁹ However, these papers and reports were too few and too slow to appear. This out of date situation was a serious, but perhaps unavoidable, failing of the project. Any monitoring project needs to plan for and have the infrastructure to support a fast throughput of reports and interim reports. However, the reports that did come out made a significant impact and were widely publicised. This is partly because they were as factual and as objective as possible, and even quoted by the police on one occasion.

Other academics and researchers made use of the CAE database to compile specialised papers.³⁰ The publication of registers of political violence and unrest in the Midlands for 1980–1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991 and 1992 (these registers being straight printouts of the database) meant that a more accessible resource became available to academics and human rights organisations.

Effective reporting of monitoring work also needs to be planned. Reports have to be accessible to the intended readership and relationships with the press have to be cultivated to ensure adequate coverage. It is often useful to release a report at an event considered newsworthy by the press, be it a conference or other gathering. Press conferences may need to be arranged both to engage interest and provide reporters with the necessary background material. This may mean amongst other things providing dossiers of material to them.

The financing of monitoring

Any project requires money. The CAE's UMP was underfunded, in effect subsidised by the CAE and the self-exploitation of its staff. Given the interventionist aims, this was understandable and acceptable, but not in the long term.

The project received a very limited amount of money from the University of Natal Research Committee (R3 000 in 1988 and R6 000 in 1989) as well as R15 000 from donor organisations during 1988 and 1989. The difficulty of soliciting substantial support from the Research Committee is indicative of the

low priority of such vital contemporary documentation work and the difficulty in slotting it into conventional academic research pigeonholes. In late 1990 a sum of R30 000 was granted by the SACC for ongoing documentation.

Monitoring methodology

Examining monitoring methodology

At the time there was very little material on violence monitoring methodology. Some publications were available from Human Rights Information and Documentation Systems International (HURIDOCs) based in Oslo. The best known of these was Stormorken's book, essentially about the library and information science aspects of human rights documentation. Verstaappen reported on an October 1991 HURIDOCs meeting of a task force on human rights databasing and *HURIDOCs News* expanded on various training courses and the need for a thesaurus of human rights terms, but little actual detail on methodological issues was given.³¹

Other information was sometimes gleaned from academic and journalistic accounts of human rights work in repressive societies such as various Keston College publications that monitored the repression of religion in communist countries and accounts such as those of Simpson and Bennett and the *Nunca Más* report by Argentina's National Commission on Disappeared People on the victims of Argentina's secret war.³² The Human Right Commission produced a useful taxonomy of repression, but no advice on monitoring methods.³³ There were a number of ephemeral publications that mentioned the importance of human rights documentation in the Philippines during the struggle against the Marcos regime, but very few details about actual methodology were given. The paucity of publications on monitoring was perhaps predictable; after all monitoring usually takes place in circumstances not exactly conducive to carefully planned research. The need for monitoring is often unanticipated and a response to obvious needs within a crisis situation by people who have been overtaken by events. There are no manuals and relatively few monitoring agencies are explicit about their methods.

In 1988 a workshop was held on the University of Natal, Durban campus.³⁴ The papers presented were published and provide a valuable collection. The author's contribution is reflected upon and expanded in this chapter and the papers by Steven Collins and Michael Sutcliffe reflect on research methodology appropriate for monitoring purposes.³⁵

Sutcliffe's paper raises questions about objectivity and academic detachment in monitoring. While he stresses traditional research criteria of representativeness, reliability, validity and the reduction of bias he sees no apparent problem in a monitoring project being in a structured and accountable relationship with one of the parties to a conflict. This position is seemingly based on the assumption that all academic research has a political alignment. However, the integrity of the research is based on a traditional view of academic standards not being compromised. In another, unpublished, paper Sutcliffe (1989) warns against the supposition that the more distance academics have from engagement with the parties on the ground the more objective they will be. The point needs to be taken that objectivity is not the same as being emotionally detached.³⁶

The invaluable work by Bennett and Quin contains only one paper concerned with methodological issues, that by Ruth Tomaselli.³⁷ Tomaselli makes the apposite point that interpreting the violence relies on 'mediated reconstructions of what happened' and notes 'the sheer impossibility of reflecting the complete truth (even in a statistical, let alone interpretive manner) under circumstances in which it is in the state's interest to disguise much of what is happening around us.' Her paper mentions some of the different approaches used by monitoring agencies with which she was familiar in Natal.

Sutcliffe's paper was part of a University of Natal initiative to co-ordinate or encourage co-operation between a number of university-based or -linked monitoring groups and provides brief summaries of various functions that monitoring agencies perform, but little detail about the methodological issues involved.

Wayne Saffro's report made severe criticisms of a number of monitoring groups for not recording attacks on black town councillors, policemen or their families and, particularly in respect of the HRC, for ascribing a large number of deaths to vigilantes on scanty or no evidence.³⁸ The latter criticism was perhaps merited as explained below. However Saffro's own methodology left much to be desired: quoted statistics and comparisons both unsourced and patently and glaringly inaccurate or inappropriate; generalisations made about human rights monitoring groups without any real indication of the source of information (and from the author's experience of several monitoring groups, false generalisations); and a fatally flawed methodology used to select samples from which various deductions were made.³⁹

An article by John Kane-Berman and two other SAIRR writers argued that it was becoming more and more difficult to distinguish between rumour,

propaganda and fact in the media reports of violence and again criticised the way that 'some agencies' identified aggressors and victims. The CAE project sought, using strict criteria, to identify aggressors on the one hand and victims or targets on the other. Unless the identities of the groups were clear or beyond any reasonable doubt, the SAIRR

was unwilling to speculate on them. As a result, it was in most cases impossible to identify aggressors and victims in acts of violence ... Some agencies monitoring violence have identified aggressors and victims to a much greater extent than has the Institute. Our scrutiny of their analyses shows that they have been able to do so only by accepting unsubstantiated accusations or media attribution at face value or by the simple expedient of classifying all unidentified victims of violence as having been attacked by either vigilantes or state-supporting forces.⁴⁰

A further controversial publication by the SAIRR also launched an attack on the HRC and claimed that its methodology, and particularly its use of the term vigilante-related activity, 'explains how the HRC is able to attribute blame for 86% of the deaths in violence to surrogate state forces and effectively to exonerate the ANC and its allies from any liability.'⁴¹ The problem of the HRC system of classification is clearly perceived in its reporting of incidents of political violence and the way the death toll is consistently categorised, for example:

Security force actions	1 790 incidents responsible for 352 deaths (5.7%)
Vigilante-related actions	2 782 incidents responsible for 5 060 deaths (81.2%)
Hit squad attacks	225 incidents responsible for 126 deaths (2.0%)
Right-wing attacks	207 incidents responsible for 44 deaths (0.7%)
Other	696 incidents

Only close reading reveals that Inkatha supporters and security force members figure in the casualties, particularly within the vigilante-related actions category.⁴²

The SAIRR report by Anthea Jeffery of September 1992 is, apart from its justified irritation with the HRC's ways of categorising political violence, not a particularly helpful contribution to monitoring methodology as was more than adequately pointed out by a critique of the document by a number of angered SAIRR staff who described it as partisan.⁴³ Other critics were less kind.⁴⁴

Some intractable methodological problems

Reconstructing a picture of what happened through the pinhole lens of the official police unrest report or by listening to the gut-wrenching yet often

tendentious testimony of a victim or bereaved relative is not a precise scientific activity, nor politically neutral. We enter such activity with pre-existing mind-factored templates and assumptions.

As outlined above, ensuring that the data collected was accurate and, in standard scientific terminology, reliable, valid, representative and unbiased was a difficult task even at the most empirical level. It required a self-critical approach on the part of researchers and sensitivity to those parts of the evidence that were especially open to bias.

Perhaps one of the most problematic tasks, which relied heavily on researcher assumptions, was identifying the political affiliations of aggressors and victims in the various events recorded. Can one make the assumption that there are discrete sides or parties and that one can identify them? Is it meaningful to say, for example, that there is clear evidence that Inkatha supporters killed at least 128 people in the Pietermaritzburg area in 1987 and UDF supporters killed at least 67? It was certainly true that most influential actors in the region did make the assumption that there were clearly identifiable sides; and indeed aggressors. Of course, the exact identity of the aggressor varies: from 1987 to 1989 for the UDF and COSATU it was Inkatha; for Vlok it was radicals; and for Mangosuthu Buthelezi the ANC (external mission). Most monitoring and human rights groups during this period identified both Inkatha vigilantes (*otheleweni*) and the UDF comrades (*amaqabane*) as involved in the violence, but tended to place more blame on Inkatha. By contrast, Gavin Woods of the Inkatha Institute in a number of papers claimed that the people involved in the violence were not acting as members of a particular group, but for reasons of crime or a more generalised response to their conditions of dreadful poverty.⁴⁵

It was perhaps inevitable that participants in and observers and reporters of the conflict saw the sides as clearly delineated. Journalists enhance the polarities for effect and servants of the State, whether they are ministers of police or riot police about to go into action, are natural believers in a side that is the enemy. The common people certainly believe in sides and parties, particularly when these political constructs have the concrete ability to stick a spear through you, blow your head off with a shotgun, or burn you to death. As one refugee, the previously quoted Clementine Khumalo from Nxamalala near Pietermaritzburg, so eloquently put it when asked her opinion of the causes of violence: 'If there were no political parties – or just one – there would be no violence. They just give you labels and then they come and kill you.'⁴⁶

There clearly are sides, people can identify them and they did.⁴⁷ Some arguments for engaging in this identification are these. First, invariably the

people one has spoken to from the affected areas identify sides. Second, commentators and witnesses from the Pietermaritzburg region, such as journalists, clergymen, policemen and witnesses in interdict applications, testified that political allegiances were crucial in deciding who should live and die. Whilst some of these accounts were extremely anecdotal (one thinks particularly of a number of articles by Khaba Mkhize, the editor of *Echo*, on the conflict) they have the feel of honest and accurate reflections of reality. Minister of Law and Order Vlok said in an interview with a Black Sash researcher in August 1991 that 90% of the violence was political and only 10% criminal.⁴⁸

Third, Catherine Cross noted that in her analysis of letters from readers to the *Echo* that referred to the violence a clear majority identified political allegiance as a key factor in the conflict.⁴⁹ A later study by the Centre for Criminal Justice of the University of Natal confirmed this view with 53% of 364 survey respondents clearly identifying the conflict as the result of political rivalry between the ANC and Inkatha and a further 15% blaming the conflict on a forced recruitment drive by Inkatha.⁵⁰ The remaining 32% blamed such things as apartheid, unemployment and poor communication between leaders and supporters. Thus a clear majority saw an essentially political cause for the conflict.

Fourth, it is a common procedure in assessing the authenticity of variant readings in textual sources, as in biblical studies and other literary disciplines, to accept the more difficult reading, the one that is not in the apparent interests of later editors, compilers or users of the material. In assessing the Inkatha Institute's position of denying political allegiance as a major factor in the violence one needs to take into account that it could be in the interests of this pro-Inkatha body (but one which is sensitive to the world of academia and overseas contemplators of South Africa politics) to deny that Inkatha, which in the late seventies and for much of the eighties was proclaimed as a model of moderation and non-violent peaceful approaches, was involved in horrific and barbaric killings of political opponents. By contrast, though the UDF/COSATU alliance could derive satisfaction from blaming Inkatha for much violence, their willingness to accept a political source for the violence can be seen as offending some of the interests and dominant ideological tendencies within the alliance. In the late eighties under Emergency rule it was very much in the UDF and COSATU's interests to deny any involvement in violence given both their public espousal of non-violence and the State's frequent attempts to depict them as violent revolutionaries. Yet they had to admit that murders

had been perpetrated by their members, whatever qualifications about self defence were made; while recognition of the importance of ethnic, nationalist and political (as against class and economic) dimensions and sources of the conflict certainly contradicted much of the Marxist and class-based rhetoric and analyses that tended to dominate UDF and COSATU speeches and writings of the time. Because it is a difficult reading for the UDF and COSATU, it has more of the ring of truth about it than the Inkatha Institute's denial.

Concluding that one should identify political affiliation in recording and monitoring political violence does not necessitate rejecting the influence of criminal activity, the socio-economic factors that fuel it, nor indeed the messiness in any conflict that makes the apportionment of blame a risky undertaking.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Mark Butler in his *Report: IDASA National Forum on International and Domestic Monitoring of Violence in South Africa* written after the forum was held on 23 July 1992 notes that the particular goal of monitoring is dependent on a prior understanding of at least the following: the nature of the political violence (is it about misunderstandings between political actors, lack of information for the powerful who do not experience the violence directly, or destabilisation?); the location of violence within wider social processes (is violence caused primarily by poverty and rapid urbanisation, driven by political and military strategies of a ruling or dominant group, or is it a mixture of both?); and the vision of the future of the existing society (whether it be maintenance of the status quo, reform that leaves existing relations of power intact or slightly changed, or radical social transformation). While it may be impossible not to concede Butler's points that all monitoring must be based on some prior understandings and assumptions, they raise crucial methodological problems of bias and filtered perceptions.
- 2 Also known as development subregion E3 in Development Bank publications.
- 3 Bearing in mind acts that any authority trying to restore civil order might legitimately want to suppress or contain because of their potential for public violence. In practice open air gatherings, rallies and demonstrations were under consideration here rather than the many other technical infringements of the State of Emergency regulations aimed more at suppressing dissent than violence.
- 4 G. Woods, 'A theoretical analysis of the violence around Pietermaritzburg'. Paper presented at the Centre for Adult Education Seminar on Violence, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1988; G. Woods, 'Identifying all the players in a typical South African township conflict'. Paper presented at the National Conference on Negotiation and Mediation in Community and Political Conflict, University of Durban-Westville, 6 July 1988; G. Woods, 'Black township violence in South Africa: a comprehensive model with particular reference to Natal' *South African Update* 1(2) 1989: 7; G. Woods, 'Rebels with a cause: the discontent of black youth' *Indicator South Africa* 7(1) 1989: 62-65; G. Woods, 'Causes and potential solutions of violence'. Paper presented at the Association for Sociology in Southern Africa Conference, University of Stellenbosch, 4 July 1990.
- 5 *Weekly Mail* 5 April 1990; *Sunday Tribune* 8 April 1990; *Natal Witness* 9 April 1990.

- 6 G. Woods, *Township Violence in Natal: Towards a Correction of Manufactured Perceptions* (Durban: Inkatha Institute, 1990).
- 7 *City Press* 31 October 1991.
- 8 'Monitors, media and violence reporting: more than a war of words: at stake is the manufacturing of perceptions' *South African Update* October 1991; D. Everatt, *Who is Murdering the Peace: CASE Research Statistics* (Johannesburg: CASE, 1991).
- 9 The list of complaints against such monitors and monitoring groups included the following: usually covertly aligned; all, to varying degrees, in the pro-ANC and anti-IFP political camp (except for the SAIRR, described as a 'politically neutral and famed anti-apartheid organisation'); monitor only the violence that can be used to boost the political position and image of the political group to which the monitor is aligned; misrepresent the Natal and Reef violence; falsify the nature of the violence by putting Inkatha/UDF/ANC labels on conflicts best described in other ways; fail to contextualise the violence; ignore ethnic conflict (and therefore non-political violence) as an explanation of some violence; cynically manipulate information; rely on a generally biased anti-Inkatha press; use the press to destroy the political credibility of Inkatha and Mangosuthu Buthelezi; indiscriminately blame Inkatha for the bulk of the violence; selectively quote from victims, observers and commentators to reinforce claims of Inkatha's aggression; falsely accuse Inkatha of attacks; refuse to cover Inkatha deaths and injuries in a fair fashion and ignore Inkatha refugees; refuse to highlight the assassination of 175 Inkatha leaders; ignore claims by Inkatha that the vast majority of incidents in which Inkatha supporters are involved in violence are responses to others' violence or intimidation; protect the ANC and its allies by omitting reports of violence by comrades or excuse it; sanitise attacks by comrades; when reporting non-Inkatha attacks never blaming the ANC; only calling for police protection for ANC aligned people.
- 10 These included the Norwegian government and IDASA initiative that resulted in NIM; and EMPSA, sponsored by the SACC, SACBC, WCC and the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace.
- 11 M.K. Wilhelmsen of the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Paul Graham of IDASA, 20 July 1992.
- 12 Mark Butler of PACSA to IDASA, 28 July 1992.
- 13 IDASA, *Summary Report of a National Forum Held on July 23, 1992*.
- 14 In a response from David Everatt, deputy director of CASE, to the draft report he states that the disagreement evident at the conference, and not adequately reflected in the draft report, appeared to be as follows: 'The nature of monitoring and the process of conciliation are not the same thing. Monitors, many participants felt, strive at all times to establish what took place; if party X is clearly found to have committed an act of violence, it is the responsibility of the monitor to say so. (This is what Inkatha calls finger-pointing since the finger points so often at them.) Conciliation within a community is not the task of the monitor but of a (restructured and reworked) National Peace Accord body. An alternative view was also stated that placed monitors squarely within the conciliation process. In this case, whatever findings monitors derive are kept quiet and passed on to the NPA or equivalent so that conciliation can take place: the monitor operates as little more than a set of eyes and ears on the ground (and has of course little guarantee that her/his material will be used).'
- 15 John Aitchison to Paul Graham of IDASA, 28 July 1992.
- 16 Organisations in Natal forming part of NIM were Black Sash (Natal Coastal and Natal Midlands); Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, University of Natal, Durban; CAE, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg; Diakonia; HRC; ISG; ILEFO; IDASA; LHR; LRC; Natal Monitor; PACSA; Practical Ministries; UMAG.

- 17 EMPSA, *Ecumenical Programme on Monitoring in South Africa: Programme Description* (Johannesburg: EMPSA, 1992): 3.
- 18 The police unrest report was issued in Pretoria each day and covered incidents over the preceding 24 hours. On 16 August 1990 SAPA reported that the police unrest report would no longer be issued by the SAP public relations division in Pretoria and that in future regional liaison officers would be responsible for media statements about unrest related incidents in their own regions. The reasons for so doing were given as practical and 'as a result of requests received from media representatives'. However, the police public relations division continued to send out an unrest report, though the media could now embellish it with details provided by the various regional liaison officers. The reliability of statements made by police liaison officers had always been contested. In Pietermaritzburg, one example of a dubious report was that relating to the death on 2 May 1990 of Drake Ntombela, a special constable and son of a prominent Inkatha leader. The SABC news report on the incident, presumably provided by the police, stated that Ntombela had been trying to rescue an Inkatha member who was being attacked when they were caught up in an ambush by alleged ANC members and both were killed. The local press liaison officer, Major Pieter Kitching, described Ntombela as a diligent and courageous worker who always strived for peace among his people: 'He died in an attempt to restore peace. Although his father is a prominent Inkatha leader, this did not affect Constable Ntombela's execution of his duties and he did not use the South African Police to achieve goals of the organisation,' he said (*Natal Witness* 7 May 1990; *Echo* 10 May 1990). Subsequently, informants revealed a different story. Another kitskonstabel, Ntombela and Sizathu Bhengu, the son of Councillor Bhengu, went together and robbed a shop at Mafakathini, killing a young man called Shezi in the process. The next day when they came to divide the spoils there was a conflict when Ntombela tried to keep it all. It was this quarrel that sparked off the shooting and killing of Ntombela by Sizathu Bhengu. The reliability of reports from local officers is placed in further question if the following report taken from the *Natal Witness* of 10 September 1990 is any indication. It claimed that in order not to scare Transvaal holiday makers away from South Coast resorts the regular names of places on the South Coast given in police reports were being replaced by the police with obscure rural place names.
- 19 *Natal Witness* 28 October 1988.
- 20 Useful accounts of the difficulties Pietermaritzburg journalists experienced in reporting the violence were written by Khaba Mkhize and David Robbins. Both Mkhize and Robbins were reporters on the *Natal Witness*, an independent and privately owned newspaper generally considered to have maintained high standards of journalism, particularly during the Emergency periods from 1986 onwards. See K. Mkhize, 'Reporting the violence: an insider's problems'. Paper presented at the Centre for Adult Education Seminar on Violence, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1988; K. Mkhize, 'Looking back at the violence from inside' *Echo* 12 May 1988; D. Robbins, 'Reporting the violence'. Paper presented at the Centre for Adult Education Seminar on Violence, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1988.
- 21 *Natal Witness* 29 September 1987.
- 22 *Sunday Tribune* 12 June 1988.
- 23 *Natal Witness* 2 March 1988.
- 24 *Natal Witness* 9 April 1988.
- 25 *Natal Witness* 21 November 1989.
- 26 *Race Relations Survey* 1991–1992: 486–487. This procedure may partly explain Wendy Leeb's contention that official reports often did not take note of deaths that occurred in hospitals after clashes had taken place (*Financial Mail* 28 October 1988).

- 27 *Natal Witness* 28 November 1989.
- 28 *Natal Witness* 24 and 25 August 1988; *Echo* 25 August 1988.
- 29 J.J.W. Aitchison, 'Numbering the dead: patterns in the Midlands violence' (May 1988); 'The Pietermaritzburg conflict: experience and analysis (December 1989); 'Interpreting violence: the struggle to understand the Natal conflict' (July 1990); and "'They just give you labels and then they come and kill you": a failed search for ethnicity in the Natal Midlands violence' (September 1992).
- 30 Of note are the following: Wendy Leeb's three papers concentrating on the conflict's impact on refugees and children: 'Misplaced, displaced and abandoned: the problems of refugees in Pietermaritzburg' (April 1988), 'Death, devastation and destruction: refugees in Natal' (January 1989), and 'Daily life, daily death in Pietermaritzburg' (March 1989); Michael Hart and John Gultig's papers on the disruption of schools by the violence: M. Hart, 'The impact of the violence on schooling' (April 1988), M. Hart and J. Gultig, 'The effects of the violence on black schooling in Edendale and Vulindlela' (November 1988), M. Hart and J. Gultig, 'The effects of the conflict on schools and schooling in the Edendale/Vulindlela districts of Natal' (March 1989), J. Gultig and M. Hart, "'The world is full of blood": youth, schooling and conflict in Pietermaritzburg, 1987-1989' (Summer 1990), J. Gultig and M. Hart, 'Battleground pedagogy: schooling, conflict and people's education in Pietermaritzburg, 1987-1990' (1991); David Maughan Brown, 'An unfinished mourning: *Echo* "Poems from Pietermaritzburg"' (April 1990, 1992); Clive Napier and Phil Mtinkulu, *Pietermaritzburg's Sobantu Village: A Case Study of Control and Violence in a Natal Township* (1989); Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War* (1990); Vaughn John's three papers related to refugee monitoring: 'Pietermaritzburg's refugees: a profile' (1990), 'Databases in small organisations: keeping a count of deaths' (1990) and 'Natal's war: monitoring internal refugees and assessing their distress' (1990); Sally Jacques, 'Preliminary research into how the violence has affected the housing crisis in the Pietermaritzburg townships' (November 1990); Debbie Bonnin, "'We are not interested in old women, we want to kill the husbands and sons": women and the war in Natal' (June 1991); A. de V. Minnaar, *Conflict and Violence in Natal/KwaZulu: Historical Perspectives* (1990), *Squatters, Violence and the Future of the Informal Settlements in the Greater Durban Region* (1992).
- 31 B. Stormorken, *HURIDOCS Standard Formats for the Recording and Exchange of Information on Human Rights* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1985); B. Verstappen, 'Report on the second meeting of the task force on databasing, Oslo, 18-20 October 1991' *HURIDOCS News* 13 (1991): 5-8. Alongside the renewed interest in mid-1992 in internal and international monitoring was an offer by the HURIDOCS secretariat to the Centre for Applied Legal Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand to 'organise together with local groups a training course on human rights information handling.'
- 32 J. Simpson and J. Bennett, *The Disappeared: Voices from a Secret War* (London: Robson, 1985); *Nunca Más: a Report by Argentina's National Commission on Disappeared People* (London: Faber and Faber in association with *Index on Censorship*, 1986).
- 33 HRC, *Anatomy of Repression* (Johannesburg: HRC, 1991; Information manual M-1).
- 34 *Talkshop: How to Conduct Monitoring Research* (Durban: Education Projects Unit, University of Natal and Career Information Centre, 1988).
- 35 S. Collins, 'Research strategies appropriate for monitoring research' in *Talkshop*: 19-26; M. Sutcliffe, 'Unrest monitoring research: problems and potentials' in *Talkshop*: 27-33.
- 36 M. Sutcliffe, 'Monitoring violence in Natal/KwaZulu: the principal's initiative'. Unpublished report, University of Natal, Durban, 1989.

- 37 Ruth Tomaselli, 'Reconstructing political violence: difficulties in data and definition' in M. Bennett and D. Quin, *Political Conflict in South Africa: Data Trends 1984–1988* (Durban: Indicator Project, University of Natal, 1988): 19–25.
- 38 Wayne Saffro, *Special Report on Violence Against Black Town Councillors and Policemen* (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1990).
- 39 J.J.W. Aitchison, *Response to a South African Institute of Race Relations Publication, 'Special Report on Violence Against Black Town Councillors and Policemen' by Wayne Saffro* (Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal, 1991); J. Wentzel, 'History of attacks on black local authorities' *Spotlight 2* (August 1991) provides a methodologically sounder survey of attacks on black local authority councillors and concedes most of the author's criticisms of Saffro's paper. However, her work does not address the issue of violence monitoring organisations.
- 40 J. Kane-Berman, E. Potter and P. Pereira, 'Violence and intimidation' *Fast Facts 5* (June 1991): 1–3.
- 41 A. Jeffery, *Spotlight on Disinformation About Violence in South Africa* (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1992): 7.
- 42 *Checkmate for Apartheid?: Special Report on Two Years of Destabilisation July 1990 to June 1992* (Johannesburg: HRC, 1992): 2 and 4.
- 43 *Critique of 'Spotlight on Disinformation About Violence in South Africa by Dr Anthea Jeffery'* (Johannesburg, 1992). This critique concludes that 'Firstly, it is clear that Dr Jeffery does not apply the same rigid criteria to information which she uses to support her argument as she demands of the organisations she criticises. She ignores information which does not support her argument and she elevates to fact information which may not be reliable. Secondly, she makes damning judgements of these organisations, assigning underhand motives to them without bothering to get their point of view. Thirdly, her argument in many cases is unsound. It is based on insufficient and unreliable information. It decontextualises events and policies and makes unfounded leaps of judgement.'
- 44 Such as D. Davis and G. Marcus, 'Selective quotations damage Jeffery's credibility' *Star* 22 September 1992.
- 45 G. Woods, 'The festering sore – and politics only a part' *Clarion Call* 1(1988): 11–12; G. Woods, *A Position Paper on Research Findings into Black Township Violence in Natal/KwaZulu* (Durban: Inkatha Institute for South Africa, [1989]); G. Woods, 'Black township violence in South Africa: a comprehensive model with particular reference to Natal' *South African Update* 1(2) 1989: 7.
- 46 *Natal Witness* 25 January 1990; *Echo* 1 February 1990.
- 47 Even the SAIRR, which in Anthea Jeffery's *Spotlight on Disinformation About Violence in South Africa* musters many criticisms of unfounded identification of the affiliation of victims and attackers and claimed that it found it 'impossible to identify the agent of attack in 87% of incidents', did also acknowledge that it had been able to identify a political affiliation in 67.3% of cases. It should of course be noted that the attribution of a political affiliation to a victim of violence does not necessarily show that the attack was politically motivated.
- 48 A. Truluck, personal communication, 1990.
- 49 C.R. Cross, P.F.G. Mtinkulu and C.J. Napier, 'Digging for the root causes of civil violence: an investigation into the Pietermaritzburg conflict'. Paper presented at the Conference of the Association for Sociology in Southern Africa, University of Durban-Westville, 8 July 1988.
- 50 S. Jagwanth, *Report on the Perception Study on Policing* (Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Criminal Justice, University of Natal, [1991]).

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